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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

June 2, 2017

Dear Southernites and Friends:

School is out, summertime has begun, and we are busier than ever. On Monday, June 5, 2017, Southern University will host SU Day at the Capitol. This is an important event for the Southern University System, as funding for higher education continues to be uncertain as the State of Louisiana continues to try to balance its budget. Please make every effort to join the Jaguar Nation at the Louisiana State Capitol as we showcase the value of our alma mater, and continue to develop a positive relationship with the Louisiana Legislature.

Last week, the Southern University Administration and the Board of Supervisors hosted Governor John Bel Edwards and Secretary of the Department of Transportation and Development, Dr. Shawn Wilson, on the Baton Rouge campus for a tour of our buildings and grounds. As everyone knows, Southern has suffered years of deferred maintenance and neglect by the State of Louisiana. It is exciting to see our Louisiana Governor showing such considerable interest in the progress of our university in working toward improving our campus infrastructure. It is important that we remain engaged in the political process of our city, our state, and our country.

In the meantime, we are gearing up for the Southern University Alumni Federation Leadership Summit scheduled for July 7th and 8th in Shreveport, Louisiana. This year's Summit Committee, chaired by Federation 1st Vice President, LaQuitta Thomas, and co-chaired by Shreveport Chapter President, Jean Ware, has been hard at work planning this year's summit. As a reminder, about six years ago, the Alumni Federation voted to host the Annual Alumni Conference every other year. Last year, we held our national conference in Chicago. In the non-Conference years, we now host a leadership summit to plan for the future and help strengthen our federation of chapters, our national Alumni Federation, and the university in general. We hold the alternating summits at our three campuses around the State. This year, the Southern University Shreveport Campus will host the Federation's Leadership Summit. While this event is geared toward chapter leaders, all alums are welcome to attend. Next year, our National Conference will be hosted in Baton Rouge, as I close out my tenure as National President.

As I approach my last year in office, a new season is beginning: campaign season. Alums around the country are beginning to campaign for national office within the Alumni Federation. Our Nominations and Elections Committee has already begun establishing the process of managing the upcoming election cycle. The Committee, chaired by Baton Rouge alumna, Linda Veal, has established guidelines and an election schedule that is included here in *News and Notes.*

Please review them carefully as there are some changes in light of the changes to the Federation's Articles and Bylaws approved last year. I look forward to a spirited election cycle over the next 14 months. As I have continued to say over the last three years, serving as National Alumni President has been the best job on the planet. It is a great honor to serve my alma mater in this capacity, and I look forward to making my last year of service even more productive than the first three. We have accomplished so much, but there is still much work to do.

I hope that you consider running for office, and join us at the Leadership Summit next month in Shreveport as we continue to "Make Our Great University Greater" by building a stronger Alumni Federation to serve our dear Southern University. See you Monday at the Louisiana State Capitol!

Sincerely,

Preston

Preston J. Castille, Jr., Esq.
National President
HBCU Alumni Coalition President