Southern University Alumni Federation

Post Office Box 9746
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70813-9746

E-mail: Preston.Castille@TaylorPorter.com
Direct Dial: 225-381-0217
Direct Fax: 225-215-8750
Mobile: 225-317-3363

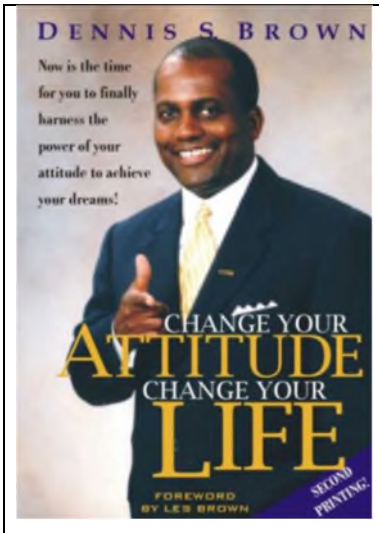
September 23, 2016

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Southernites and Friends:

My very good friend and Immediate Past President, Dennis S. Brown, called me a couple weeks ago to fuss at me. Well, not really. He did have some questions and concerns about the University and Federation. We talked for about an hour, and it was one of the best conversations we've ever had. It was a man-to-man, president-to-president conversation. If you know Dennis, he always has a positive attitude. In fact, he is widely regarded as Mr. Attitude! (You should read his book.) We concluded that our conversation was so positive that we committed to talk more often. I expressed how much I appreciated his advice and counsel as a Past National Alumni Federation President. We decided to take the conversation to another level – to extend it to all of the Past Presidents.

I asked Dennis to take the lead and reach out to the other past presidents to gauge their interest. Within a couple days, in true Dennis Brown fashion, he had confirmed that all six of the living past national alumni presidents were very much interested in such a conversation. A few days later, we had arranged a call with our group. The call was so positive we decided to meet face-to-face. Last Friday, we scheduled a dinner for all seven of us. In the spirit of Denzel Washington's new movie, I felt like we had assembled "The Magnificent Seven." Well, that might be a bit much. But, we had an incredible dinner at the City Club in Baton Rouge and have decided to attempt to formalize our group into the Past Presidents Advisory Counsel and meet at least quarterly. We realized we had more than 27 years of Federation presidential experience among us, and this was a valuable asset for the Federation and the University. Needless to say, I am pretty excited about this collaboration and the honor of having the benefit of the collective advice, guidance, and wisdom of these national presidents and Southern University leaders.



Mr. Attitude!



Shayla McCullough (center) enjoying the Birthday Soiree' with Chicago Chapter President, DuWarn Porter, and Roderica Johnson

The collaboration didn't end there. Still feeling festive, a few of us left the dinner and walked over to the Manship Theatre for the birthday party/fundraiser organized by SU Alumni Federation Chief of Staff, Dr. Shayla McCullough, and Home Chapter President, Cortny Jarrell. These two great friends joined forces with the System Foundation to raise thousands of dollars in scholarships for SU students Friday evening. It was a brilliant strategy, and I love the collaboration of the Federation and Foundation as they continue to find opportunities to partner in service for our alma mater. I really liked the fact that these Federation leaders figured out a creative way to leverage the Foundation's fundraising infrastructure to collectively raise scholarship funds for our students.



Past President Reginald Joseph & President Castille at McCullough/Jarrell Soiree following Past Presidents Dinner



Past President Domoine Rutledge (center) enjoying a few laughs with Dr. Robyn Merrick and President Castille

The weekend just kept getting better. The following morning, the Federation Executive Council (national officers and chapter presidents from around the country) met and made some great decisions. First, we decided to hold our 2017 Leadership Summit next summer in Shreveport in collaboration with our SUSLA campus. The tentative dates are July 7-9, 2017. We also decided to hold our 2018 National Alumni Conference in Baton Rouge. The tentative dates are July 12-15, 2018. Please save the dates. We decided to "circle the wagons" of our university and stay close to Louisiana to give our campuses as much support as we possibly can. As President Belton pointed out in his letter to the SU community yesterday, our campuses have faced some significant challenges over the years, but particularly over the last several months. Southern needs its alumni more than ever. The Executive Council also decided to make some significant improvements to our alumni house on campus. Please stay tuned for more details in the coming weeks about this project. As the Council was meeting in Baton Rouge, DC Chapter President Vincent Brown was recruiting students in our nation's capitol. We ended the day with tailgating and a huge victory by the Jags on the brand new turf football field.

	
DC Chapter President recruiting students at Congressional Black Caucus Foundation College Fair	Federation Officers and Staff Enjoying a Great Time Tailgating Before the Alabama State Game

On Wednesday, the HBCU Alumni Coalition met. Recall, it is the coalition of National Alumni Presidents throughout the SWAC, as well as Xavier and Dillard. We are planning our Black College Alumni Caucus which will be held at the Bayou Classic for the third straight year. Our HBCUs are facing many of the same challenges and opportunities. Many of the national presidents reported that their universities experienced an increase in enrollment this year. Our universities continue to be an incredible pathway to the middle class for so many students and families.

Today, I'm in Alabama with Huntsville Chapter President Sherley Lawrence and the Rocket City Jaguars. The chapter has scheduled student recruitment visits at local high schools including the brand new Mae Jemison High School. Tonight, the Huntsville Chapter has scheduled a fundraiser with SU alumnus and University of Alabama Basketball Coach, Avery Johnson. Avery and I were in school together here at Southern many years ago. He was a star basketball player and I was SGA president. He has obviously gone on to live an incredible life with an amazing basketball career. I am so grateful to him for his continued philanthropy and service to Southern. Last month, Avery shipped a truck load of relief supplies to Baton Rouge for flood victims, and tonight he will be raising scholarship money for SU students. He is certainly SU4LIFE, and we are proud to call him a Southern Alum.

I'm looking forward to another big win by the Jaguar football team tomorrow!

See you in Huntsville and Go, Jags!!

Preston

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