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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

September 22, 2017

Dear Southernites and Friends:

It's been a great week on the Bluff. On Wednesday, Governor John Bel Edwards and Secretary of the Department of Transportation and Development, Dr. Shawn Wilson, held a press conference on our Baton Rouge campus. The Governor and the Secretary announced $10 million in funding for infrastructure improvements. The funding is a collaboration of the Office of the Governor, East Baton Rouge Parish Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome, the Louisiana Board of Regents, and the University. After years of neglect by the State of Louisiana, erosion has badly damaged campus bridges and roads. Governor Edwards and Secretary Wilson further announced that construction should begin during the Christmas break, and that DOTD will take the lead on the construction project.

As National Alumni President, I am particularly heartened that this effort was led by Southern University alumni in the Edwards administration. Johnny Anderson, a former Southern University SGA President and Chairman of the SU Board of Supervisors, is Governor Edwards' Deputy Chief of Staff. Secretary Wilson earned his Ph.D. from Southern. Attorney Erin Monroe Wesley earned her law degree from the Southern University Law Center. It was great to see these SU alums at the press conference. Johnny, Shawn and Erin have been tremendous advocates for our beloved alma mater, and we owe them and our Governor an incredible debt of gratitude. During his campaign, Governor Edwards committed that he would support Southern and higher education, and he has done everything he can to uphold that campaign promise. Thanks, Governor Edwards.

This funding could not have been secured without the leadership of our Board of Supervisors and the University administration. Hats off to the Board, led by Chairwoman, Mrs. Ann Smith, and Vice Chairman, Mr. Donald Ray Henry. Many of the Board members have worked closely with the Governor's administration to persuade him and his administration to find funding for these much-needed repairs and their hard work behind the scenes has not gone unnoticed. Special thanks also to President Belton and his administration for tirelessly working with the Governor's administration to land the funding. SGA President and SU Student Board member, Armand Duncan, was on the front row of the press conference. I know that he and the entire student body are grateful to learn of this major infrastructure project.

I'll close with a quick shout out to our Central Texas alumni. Executive Director Derrick Warren and several of our Federation leaders have been leading an effort to create a Central Texas

Chapter and to revitalize the Alamo Chapter. Last weekend, many of our Texas alums met to further develop plans for the chapters. We are excited about the growth of the Federation in the State of Texas and other parts of the country.

Much of the Jaguar Nation will be on the road again this weekend headed to Lorman, Mississippi. Good luck to the Jaguar football team as SWAC competition begins against Alcorn!

Sincerely,



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