



The Gourd of Wisdom Institute

FOR ACTION RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT
Harvesting Knowledge that Endures for a Lifetime!

April 21, 2021

**President, Dr. George T. French
& Board of Trustees
Clark Atlanta University
223 James P. Brawley Dr., S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30314**

Dear President French & Members of the Board of Trustees,

I write as a 1987 graduate of the doctoral program in Political Science of Clark Atlanta University, a program that is celebrating the 50th Anniversary of its founding under the leadership of Dr. Mack Henry Jones. As a proud representative of his legacy and in recognition of Dr. Jones' achievements and contributions to the discipline of Political Science, I join with former classmates, colleagues, and fellow alumni in a campaign to name the Department of Political Science in his honor.

Dr. Jones is the first person I met on the campus of Atlanta University in Fall 1978. I had accepted an invitation for admissions into the graduate program of Education but stopped in Dean Sage Hall for directions. Dr. Jones and the faculty of the Political Science were conducting Fall registration and I inquired about the touted "Black Perspective" in Political Science presented in the University Catalog. As an undergraduate from Youngstown State University with an emphasis in Black Studies, the attractiveness of this perspective, particularly as presented in a face-to-face meeting with Dr. Jones, was simply too enticing to pass up. I changed majors on the spot, and in doing so set out on a path to become a Black Political Scientist. As a graduate student I completed four courses under Dr. Jones' guidance, and he served as my M.A. thesis advisor and chair of my doctoral examinations committee.

It is safe to say that my entire "frame of reference" for viewing the world was altered and expanded by my student/teacher experience with Dr. Jones and the ongoing relationship we developed as colleagues. Emulating his model of effective teaching practices, I went on to win six (6) Teacher of the Year awards. Adopting his vision of the responsibility of Black scholars, I have proudly been engaged in the development of two community-based action research institutes. Absorbing the lessons Dr. Jones' presented on the importance of reliable and valid social research, I have enjoyed multiple opportunities to engage in qualitative research and program evaluation projects across the globe. Following his model of leadership in professional organizations, I have proudly served in numerous capacities in the organization he co-founded, (the National Conference of Black Political Scientists), including past Program Chair, Treasurer, and President. Valuing his positive mentorship example, I now try as best I can to remain "on call" for any former student that I have taught or advised over the past 40 years.

On a final note, my relationship with Dr. Jones is unique in that it evolved from an initial graduate student/teacher advisement scenario to one wherein I eventually served as his Department Chair at CAU, and to a final one where I served as his Associate Director for Research & Publications at Mississippi Valley State University's Delta Research & Cultural Institute (2004 until his retirement in 2007). The collaborative projects we worked on are still helping to clarify a range of ongoing civil and human rights challenges confronted by Black residents of the region.

It is in this light, and in light of Dr. Mack H. Jones' tremendous influence on our collective educational and professional journeys that we as alumni solicit your support in naming the Department of Political Science in his honor. It is one clear and proud way to ensure that future CAU graduates of the program continue to adopt and build upon an academic legacy he has firmly established.

Respectfully Yours,

Marvin Haire

**Marvin Haire, Ph.D., (Class of '87)
Director/Facilitator**

The Gourd of Wisdom Institute

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