



School of Arts & Sciences

## Clark Atlanta University

May 3, 2021

RE: Letter in Support of Renaming the Department of Political Science

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to express my enthusiastic support for renaming the Department of Political Science at the university in honor of Professor Emeritus Dr. Mack H. Jones. Dr. Jones had a profound and lasting impact on many students and scholars in the field of political science. His life and work provide exemplary models of liberating scholarship, courageous leadership and service to the community. By establishing the PhD program in political science at Atlanta University, and by guiding the department for many years he built an institutional legacy that continues to inspire and inform students and practitioners of political science.

I personally met Dr. Jones on only one brief occasion at a gathering of the National Conference of Black Political Scientists where we exchanged pleasantries. However, I have had a more profound encounter with Dr. Jones through his work. I was deeply impressed upon reading his essay on "The Responsibility of Black Political Scientists to the Black Community." I have taken his charge seriously to work to unravel and expose the devious ways in which the American political system operates to benefit the many at the expense of the few. His charge has critically informed my understanding of what it means to be a responsible teacher, scholar and political scientist. The collection of articles in his book *Knowledge, Power and Black Politics* serve as brilliant examples of thoughtful conceptualization and in-depth analyses of the Black political experience. Of course many others have been influenced by the life and work of Dr. Jones well beyond my encounters.

Finally, as I see it, survival is the question of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Can we survive? The question is answerable in the affirmative, but it depends very much upon whether or not we can sustain our institutions which in turn depends upon how we regard those who pioneered and built the foundations of what institutions we have. Why should an institution be sustained if the people who actually sacrificed to build it up are disregarded or left without due respect and honor? Upon the passing of the great African polymath Cheikh Anta Diop, it was said by the noted historian John Henrik Clarke that, "We must preserve his legacy in order to preserve ourselves." The prestigious institution in West Africa at which Diop conducted research and taught, Dakar University, was later renamed Cheikh Anta Diop University in his honor. Similarly, by preserving the legacy of Dr. Mack H. Jones through renaming the department in his honor, we uplift and uphold the institutional legacy the department, and we thereby increase esteem for ourselves as persons associated with such a great legacy. It is appropriate and beneficial to rename the department in honor of Mack Jones as way of showing due regard for one who contributed so much to the discipline, the department, and to his people, and as a model of excellence for future students and scholars.

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