

UNIVERSITY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

DIVISION OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES POLITICAL SCIENCE PROGRAM

April 30, 2021

Dr. George T. French
Office of the President
Clark Atlanta University

Board of Trustees
Clark Atlanta University

Greetings Dr. French and Members of the CAU Board of Trustees,

It is an honor and privilege to support the naming of the Department of Political Science in honor of Dr. Mack H. Jones, founder and first Chair of the doctoral program. I, too, like so many other graduates, owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Jones and the Political Science faculty who influenced both my academic development and professional journey as a political scientist. As a Professor of Political Science at the University of the District of Columbia, Washington, DC., recently at the 2021 Founders' Convocation, I was the recipient of the Dr. Paul Phillips Cooke Lifetime Achievement award for 46 years of service to the institution. None of my accomplishments as a political scientist would have been possible if Dr. Jones had not contributed to the professional I have become. So, let me tell you, my Mack Jones story.

I entered graduate school immediately after completing my undergraduate studies. I was young, naïve, and in Atlanta!!! Without all the details, my transition from undergraduate to graduate study did not always reflect the required serious commitment. I struggled during my first semester and told one of my professors that I would not return to graduate school after the holiday break. Fortunately for me, he revealed to Dr. Jones, my plan. While home during the holiday break, I received a letter from Dr. Jones, that changed the course of my life and self-confidence. Because, just like him, I had been a student of Dr. Jewel Prestage, he told me about both her confidence and his, that I possessed the knowledge to perform on the graduate level but needed to dedicate myself to this goal. He told me of his observations regarding my academic skills and that I had a responsibility to myself, parents (whom he had met), and all my teachers at Southern University to achieve my graduate degree. After reading Dr. Jones's letter, I cried. I realized that if Dr. Jones had taken the time to write me this letter of compassion and confidence about my ability, how

could I disappoint him and others who believed in me. The advice of Dr. Jones' letter influenced the course of my professional life in so many ways and has been a constant guide as I have mentored students.

Dr. Jones served as the first president of the National Conference of Black Political Scientists. In his inaugural address titled, "The Responsibility of the Black Political Scientists to the Black Community", he reminded us that as political scientists, we must be both scholars and activists. He told us that we have a responsibility to dedicate ourselves to addressing the critical issues of the Black community, locally, nationally, and globally. Dr. Jones' charge to us has been the foundation of my dedication to my students and community. Under his tutelage and the political science faculty, we are the "talented tenth" in the profession of political science, a cadre of political scientists trained and grounded in the lived experiences of people of African descent.

In conclusion, Dr. Mack H. Jones represents one of the strong roots of a powerful tree of Black political scientists who anchored so many of us in the black perspective of the discipline. As his academic progenies, we represent legacy branches and each of us have added our own branches (progenies) to this tree. It is critical that this legacy tradition continues, to the next generation and generations, yet to be born. Naming the Department of Political Science in honor of Dr. Mack Jones is another way to continue this tradition, remember his contributions, and ensure his legacy. A legacy that fosters the storied history of the forefathers and mothers of our great institution, Clark Atlanta University.

Sincerely,

Shiela Harmon Martin

Dr. Shiela Harmon Martin

Professor of Political Science

Division of Social & Behavioral Sciences