

**Hutchinson and Associates
Education Policy Analysis and Research**

April 21, 2021

CAU Board of Trustees
c/o Dr. George T. French, President
Clark Atlanta University
223 James P. Brawley Dr., S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30314

Dear President French and Trustees,

This letter is written in support of naming the Clark Atlanta University Political Science Department after its founder, Dr. Mack Henry Jones. Fifty (50) years ago, Dr. Jones wrote a grant proposal to the Ford Foundation for the purpose of establishing a doctoral program in Political Science at Atlanta University. At the time, the Civil Rights Movement was winding down, and the Black Power Movement was on the ascent. With the convergence of these two historic movements, Dr. Jones understood there was a critical need to develop political scientists whose primary focus would be to interpret the tumultuous political reality facing the African American community and provide political direction to a community seeking clarity on these matters. Moreover, there was only one HBCU in the United States that offered a political science course of study at the Ph.D. level (Howard University). Fortunately, the proposal was funded, and 50 years later, Clark Atlanta University's Ph.D. program in Political Science remains on sound footing, serving largely African American students as well as students from continental Africa, the Caribbean, Asia, and the Middle East. ***In addition, Clark Atlanta University and Howard University remain the only two HBCUs that offer a political science course of study at the Ph.D. level in the United States.***

At the same time (1970), Dr. Jones also realized that black political scientists from the two doctoral degree conferring institutions, and those pursuing the study of political science at traditional white institutions, needed a public forum that would convene annually to focus on and discuss the political and economic status of the black community. Thus, he co-founded the National Conference of Black _____ predominantly white American Political Science Association.

Our Department's approach is reflective of Dr. Jones' vision for what graduate level Political Science should look like at a HBCU. Whereas at non-HBCUs the discipline of political science serves as its own foundation, at Atlanta University the ***Black experience*** formed the programmatic foundation, and political science provided the tools best suited to comprehensively understand and improve the Black condition. As such, the foundational courses were "Blacks and the American Political System" and "Government and Politics of Modern Africa". Regardless of a student's selected areas of concentration, these courses were required upon entry.

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I entered the Political Science Department in the Fall of 1979 after receiving my M.A. in Political Science from Ohio State University. I was fortunate enough to enter the department with students, who like myself, had a rich history of political activism focused on improving the Black condition. Many of us had alpha personalities and were reasonably well read. In other words, we could debate with anyone on any topic pertaining to politics, and we felt we could hold our own in any such exchange. Dr. Jones quickly humbled us, reminding us that the general condition of Black people had not substantially changed despite our best efforts. Moreover, he pointed out that our arguments were largely ideological and not sufficiently grounded in focused research. He insisted that we had an obligation to prepare ourselves to use political science as a tool to more fully understand the Black condition and to then chart out new strategies to substantially improve that condition.

Fast forward 42 years later; I look back on my lifetime of focused research and scholarly-informed activism in the service of underserved communities. I have worked as a policy analyst at a prestigious think tank in Washington, D.C., worked as a program evaluation specialist and a strategic planning specialist for a public school system, served as an elected member of my local Board of Education, and served for seven (7) years on the executive board of the Maryland Caucus of Black School Board members to mention a few of the highlights of my post graduate school career. My professional success and service to my community have been inspired and informed by my years as a Ph.D. student under the tutelage of Dr. Mack Jones at the Clark Atlanta University Political Science Department. Although the details may be different, my experiences are consistent with that of so many of my fellow students who also owe a huge debt of gratitude to Dr. Jones.

Mack Jones' vision regarding the need to develop and nurture Black Political Science, and his legacy of leadership, activism, scholarship, mentorship, and advocacy on behalf of HBCUs, makes him more than worthy of esteemed and permanent recognition. I join my colleagues in urging you to bestow this honor on Dr. Mack Henry Jones by renaming our beloved department in his name.

Respectfully,



Frederick C. Hutchinson
A.B.D. 1982