

chancellor's

FEBRUARY 2021

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/Associate Dean

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Interim Vice Chancellor
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CALVIN WALKER
Executive Vice-Chancellor and
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The 1890 Universities Foundation, which represents the 19 Historically Black Land Grant Universities, extends its appreciation to the members of the 116th Congress for their continued advocacy on behalf of our 1890 Land Grant Universities. The 2021 Appropriations bill supported initiatives that will help our universities respond to many of the pressing challenges confronting the communities we serve.

Of specific significance to the 1890 community are increases in funding for: Education Grants to 1890 Universities; 1890 Extension programs, Evans-Allen Research, Facilities Improvements, 1890 Centers of Excellence and Scholarship Programs. Also of note is the HBCU Capital Finance Debt Relief bill (HR 7380), which will provide \$1.3 billion in Capital Finance Debt Relief for our universities.

“We especially want to thank U.S. Representatives Alma Adams (D-NC), Sanford Bishop (D-GA), David Scott (D-GA), Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE) and Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Doug Jones (DAL), Richard Shelby (R-AL), and Jeff Merkley (D-OR) for their unwavering support and for leading the way to enable these increases in all of our 1890 Land Grant programs. In addition, we thank the Members of Congress who continue to recognize the significant impact of COVID-19 on our students, our research, our facilities and our cooperative extension programs,” said Dr. Mort Neufville, President & CEO of the Foundation.

“Our Universities will continue to face tremendous challenges and opportunities as we rebound from the pandemic and it is important that our recovery efforts also enable us to be better prepared for all future disasters. Again, on behalf of the 1890 community, we thank the Members of Congress for their support during these unprecedented and challenging times. We look forward to continuing our engagement with our elected leaders during the FY 2022 appropriations process,” concluded Dr. Neufville.

This press release was written by Paul Brathwaite. For more information on the 1890 Universities Foundation visit: www.1890foundation.org.



**Members of the 116th Congress provides
Record number of Support to**

1890 Historically Black

LAND GRANT UNIVERSITIES



1,000 inspiring Black scientists in America

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DR. LASHUNDA HODGES

Dr. LaShunda Hodges named one of 1,000 inspiring Black Scientists

Southern University College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences Assistant/ Associate Research Plant and Soil Science Professor Dr. LaShunda Hodges has been honored as one of the 1,000 inspiring Black Scientists in America by Cell Mentor.

The list of scientists was compiled by a community of scholars and includes scientists from universities and the private sector. The December 28, 2020 article was published to “dismantle the myth that outstanding Black scientists make up a small percentage of the scientific community.”

Before joining Southern’s College of Ag, Dr. Hodges served as an Assistant and Associate Professor of Soil and Plant Sciences in Alcorn State University’s Department of Agriculture, a Visiting Scientist for the USDA-ARS Crop Production Unit and a Research Associate/ Native Grass and Wildlife Habitat Project Manager for the Southern University Ag Center.

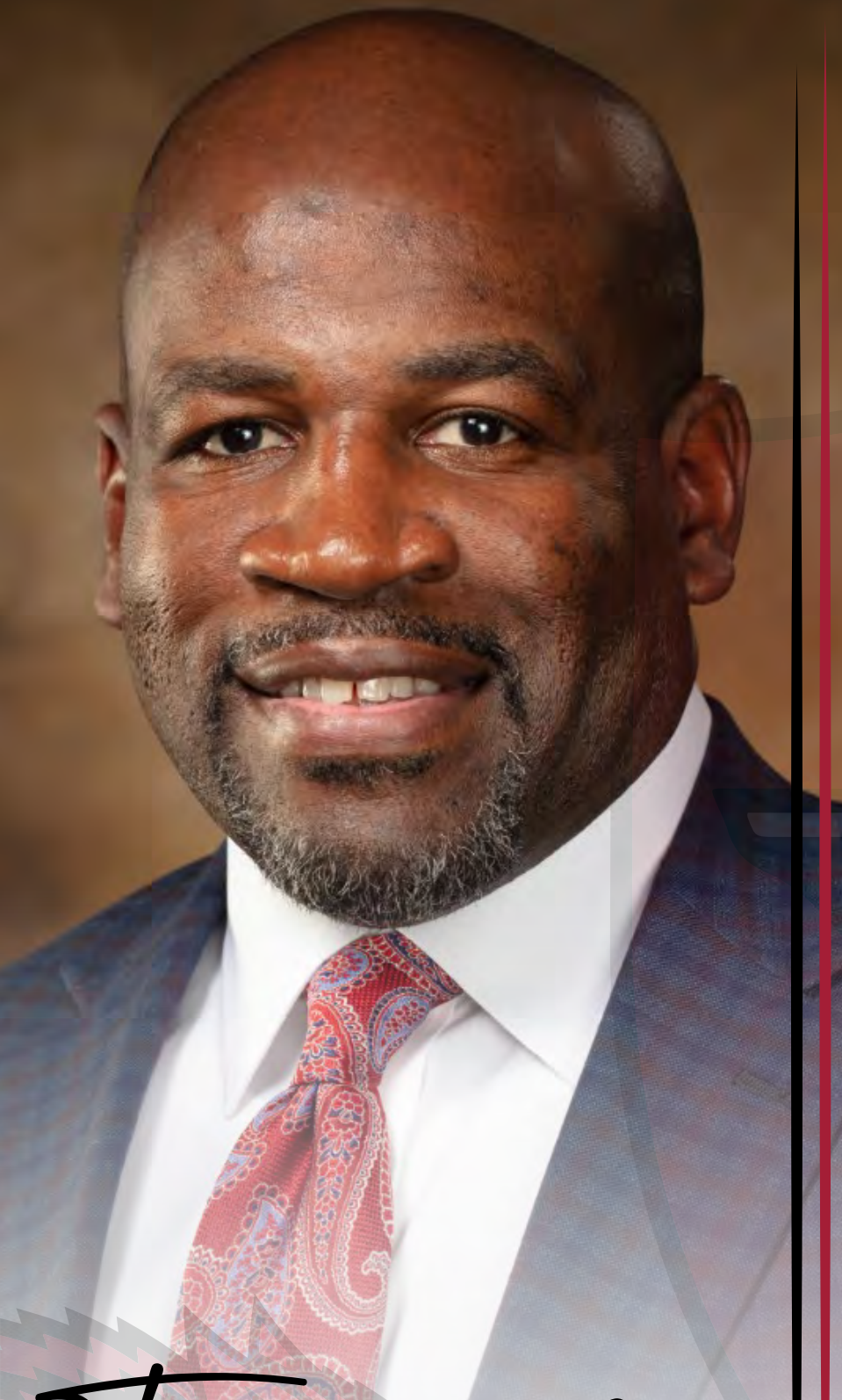
Hodges earned a B.S. in Soil and Plant Science, an M.S. in Agronomy, both from Alcorn State University and a Ph.D. in Agronomy-Environmental Planning and Management from Louisiana State University. The article and the full list of scientists are available at <http://crosstalk.cell.com/blog/1000-inspiring-black-scientists-in-america>.

“Who is Dean Deacue Fields?”

Who is Dean Deacue Fields? I’m a country boy. (laughter) I came up through Southern University, and worked pretty hard to get to where I am today. Overall, I would consider myself a small farmer from North Louisiana. I grew up in a lineage where agriculture and education was extremely important. I am a third-generation college student, however; my paternal grandmother completed her master’s in the 1940s. My maternal grandfather was also a farmer with a grade school education. He strongly believed in education and provided an opportunity for all ten of his children to attend Grambling State University to become educators. On the other hand, my dad attended Southern University, majoring in Agriculture. After seeing his solid foundation, I knew from the beginning that I would always attend Southern.

“What was your deciding factor for attending Southern University and majoring in Agriculture?”

I really developed a passion for agriculture through 4-H. I also participated in the BAYOU Program, but I knew before then I would major in agriculture. At 13 years old our family had a small cattle operation, and the cattle were hit with Brucellosis. This caused our herd to become barren, and we had to clean the place out and keep animals off the farm for a year. When it was time to start the cattle operation back up, my father gave me the honors.



DEACUE
Fields

UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

At 13, I applied for my first Youth Loan through the Farm Service Agency for \$3,000. I restarted our cattle herd with six Bred Heifers. This was my first hands-on experience with learning how to keep good records, and manage our family farm. Of course, my dad was there to help provide financial support and guidance, but the cattle herd became my primary responsibility at an early age. Initially, I had dreams of majoring in Animal Science and becoming a Veterinarian. After arriving at Southern University and having my first dose of Chemistry, my plans changed. (laughter) Actually, I was taking an Economics course that same semester and one of my professors encouraged me to pursue Agriculture Economics. I was really good at Economics.

“You have had an impressive career after matriculating through a prominent HBCU. What does recruitment look like for you?”

No matter where I have been, I have always kept the connection to Southern University. During my tenure at Auburn University, I recruited several students from Southern to attend our Master’s Program. I will admit there are some challenges here at Arkansas with minority enrollment. In my current role as Dean of the University of Arkansas’ Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences, we are very intentional with HBCU recruitment. I personally attend the Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences Conferences (MANRRS) every year when I can. There are a lot of students in the Delta of Arkansas that I plan to get here as well. This year we are actually seeing some of the fruits of our labor in the area of recruitment. The College of Ag has seen an 18% increase in minority applications this fall. My primary goal is to let potential graduate students know that we care, and we want them here at U of A.



“In the wake of COVID many universities have improvised to make day-to-day workflow operations run smoothly. How do you feel about the sudden transition, and moving forward what will this look like for your department?”

This pandemic has changed the way that we operate forever. There will be more Zooming, and Microsoft Teams meetings whether you like it or not. During a recent staff session, we discussed, “What do we do post-pandemic?” It has been a challenge, especially for those students who have never had a campus experience. To take college courses strictly virtually can be challenging. One of the main components of the college experience is engagement, so we have to take a look at how we are doing it for the students and faculty. There are some positives of being able to have that flexibility to attract a different demographic of students. There are some students who cannot always be face-to-face in a classroom setting. It is being done at Southern New Hampshire, which is one of the largest universities that does not really have anything in terms of brick and mortar anymore. Moving forward we will have to continue to look at ways to do it better, but it will definitely be apart of who we are.

“What advice would you give someone whose primary goal is to move up in Agricultural Leadership?”

Be confident in who you are, and be yourself. If you want to be a leader, you will always have to do a little extra. I was attending Southern University when I heard this quote for the first-time, “You have to read more, study more, and look beyond what everyone else gets, because whoever prescribes to you the diameter of your knowledge, can determine the circumference of your action.” No one does it alone, and no one does it without developing good relationships and mentors. Start early developing a network of people that you know have garnered success. Take some of those attributes that can be helpful in developing your leadership style, and start creating your own brand.

The abstract, “Mathematical Proof Justifying the Modeling of Predictive Correlational Non-Causal Models and Its Application in Hydrological Data Research,” by Dr. Yaw Twumasi, Associate Professor of GIS, Remote Sensing and Hydrology in the College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences, will be presented during by The National Association of African American Studies & Affiliates’ National Virtual Conference on February 15-20, 2021.



SU Ag Center Welcomes

STATE REP. **Larry BAGLEY**

The Southern University Ag Center welcomed Louisiana State Representative Lawrence A. “Larry” Bagley on January 21, 2021. The purpose of this visit was to provide a tour of the renovations of A.O. Williams Hall’s west (research side) and east (extension side) wings. Rep. Bagley was instrumental in the foundation of securing the state funding needed for the renovations. Without this support, the completion of the renovations would have extended at least an additional 1-2 years. Renovations are slated to begin February 2021, with a targeted completion date of the west wing for September 2021 and the east wing on or before the third quarter of 2022. Bagley currently serves on several committees which include the Appropriations, Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget and Louisiana Rural Caucus.



The Southern University Ag Center and the College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences thanks the following retirees for their contributions to our Campus.

Mrs. Frankie Poland

Regional Coordinator, COC

Mrs. Linda Brown

Director, COC

Dr. Dawn Mellion-Patin

Specialist, Small Farms

Dr. Yemane Ghebreiyessus

Professor of Plant and Soil Sciences and Urban Forestry



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