

Dr. Billy C. Hawkins sworn in as a member of the President's Board of Advisors on HBCUs



Talladega, AL – Talladega College President Dr. Billy C. Hawkins, who was appointed by President Donald Trump to the President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), was sworn in on June 13, 2019 during a ceremony in Washington D.C. for the new Board members.

Dr. Hawkins is one of 13 prominent leaders appointed to the board, which advises the President and the Secretary of Education on efforts related to improving the identity, visibility, distinctive capabilities, and overall competitiveness of HBCUs; engaging the philanthropic, business, government, military, homeland-security, and education communities in a national dialogue regarding new HBCU initiatives; and improving the ability of HBCUs to remain fiscally secure institutions that advance the interests of all Americans. The Board also aids in elevating awareness of and fostering appreciation of HBCUs, and encouraging public-private investments in HBCUs.

“It is a great honor to be appointed to the Advisory Board by President Trump, and I look forward to working with fellow board members to strengthen and expand the capacity of HBCUs,” said Dr. Hawkins, who has served as president of the College since January 1, 2008.

During his first year at the College, Dr. Hawkins implemented rigorous plans for renovation and growth. As a result of his vision, enrollment doubled in one semester; athletic programs were reinstated for the first time in ten years; and major campus beautification projects were undertaken. Talladega College is now listed among the Princeton Review's best colleges in the Southeast and U.S. News and World Report's best regional colleges and best HBCUs. The College recently launched its first-ever graduate program, an online Master of Science in Computer Information Systems. In addition, the campus is undergoing a major physical transformation.

A 45,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art residence hall opened in January 2019. In fall 2019, the College will open its first-ever student center, a 47,000-square-foot facility replete with a 2,000-seat arena as well as a banquet hall, restaurant, convocation center, computer lab, health care clinic, VIP suite, concession stand, coffee lounge and convenience store. The Dr. William R. Harvey Museum of Art, which will house Hale Woodruff's critically-acclaimed murals valued at 50 million dollars, is also scheduled to open this fall. To construct the museum, Dr. Hawkins secured Talladega's largest-ever financial gift, a one million dollar donation from alumnus Dr. William R. Harvey. Dr. Hawkins also secured a 1.5 million dollar contribution from Alabama Governor Kay Ivey and the State of Alabama.

Dr. Hawkins serves as chair of the 36 presidents of member institutions for the UNCF (United Negro College Fund) board of directors, and also serves as UNCF chair of the executive committee of member institutions, vice chair of the corporate board, and vice chair of the corporate board executive committee. In addition, he was appointed by Alabama Governor Kay Ivey to serve on the Alabama Opioid Overdose and Addiction Council. Dr. Hawkins is the first African American to chair the Alabama Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, the author of two books, and a member of the Talladega Rotary Club, the Delta Upsilon Boule and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. He is a recipient of the Vanguard Award from the Higher Education Leadership Foundation, the Colonel Leo Thorsness Courage Award, the Ferris State Distinguished Alumni Award, the Kent Hall of Fame, the Presidential Service Award from the HBCU Title III Administrators, Inc, the Distinguished Service Award to the Nation's HBCUs, a Certificate of Appreciation from the Anniston Army Depot, Alabama's Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc's Graduate Citizen of the Year Award, and the Theta Tau Chapter's Citizenship Award. Quality of Life Health Services named Dr. Hawkins a “Hero in Healthcare for 2018.” In recognition of his leadership in the community and the College's 17 million dollar annual economic impact in the region, the Talladega City Council presented Dr. Hawkins with the Key to the City and other awards at a special council meeting and reception held in his honor in 2019.

About Talladega College

The oldest private Historically Black College in Alabama, Talladega College was founded in 1867 by two former slaves, William Savery and Thomas Tarrant. Talladega College is the home of the renowned Hale Woodruff Amistad Murals, which received rave reviews from the *New York Times* during a three-year, eight-city tour.