

For Immediate Release  
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**Talladega College Board of Trustees honors President, Dr. Billy C. Hawkins  
by voting to name newly constructed student center/arena in his honor**

(Talladega, AL) The Talladega College Board of Trustees voted on Tuesday, March 24, 2020, to name the newly constructed 47,000-square-foot student center/arena in honor of the College's 20th President, Dr. Billy C. Hawkins.

"Dr. Hawkins took over as president in 2008 when Talladega College was struggling to survive. As a result of his leadership, the College is once again recognized as one of the most well-respected HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) in the nation," says Isaiah Hugley, chairman of the Talladega College Board of Trustees.

HBCU presidents are called upon to enhance the quality of HBCU student population, academic programs, faculty, physical facilities and financial base. Chairman Hugley states that Dr. Hawkins has not only delivered in each of the areas noted, but he has also boosted the College's ranking, enrollment and visibility, nationally and globally.

"Dr. Hawkins has not only talked the talk, but walked the walk," says Chairman Hugley. "Dr. Hawkins recently signed a \$1.8 million dollar commitment to Talladega College alleviating a future long-term contractual obligation for the Institution, established a \$50,000 endowed scholarship and up to \$100,000 in other financial commitments. Given this financial commitment along with the remarkable impact his leadership has had on the College, the Talladega College Board of Trustees agreed that the new student center should be named in his honor."

The foundation for Talladega College's most transformative era was laid in 2008, at the beginning of Dr. Hawkins's 12-year tenure. The moment he arrived on campus, Dr. Hawkins began working diligently to stabilize finances; increase fundraising; expand academic offerings; and guide the institution through the 2009 Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Accreditation. His rigorous plans for renovation and growth included assessing the Institution's assets. He had Hale Woodruff's murals, now valued at \$50 million, appraised, restored, sent on tour, and, in January, 2020, returned to campus to hang in the newly constructed Dr. William R. Harvey Museum of Art.

As a result of Dr. Hawkins's vision, enrollment doubled from approximately 300 students to 601 students in one semester; athletic programs were reinstated for the first time in ten years; and major campus beautification projects were undertaken. In 2018, the College continued soaring to unprecedented heights. The simultaneous construction of three new facilities commenced, the College's ranking rose rapidly, and Talladega's first-ever graduate program was launched. Specifically, enrollment rose from 782 students during the 2017-2018 academic year to a record-high 1217 students during the 2018-2019 academic year, and an all-time high of 1230 students during the 2019-2020 academic year. Also, in January 2019, a new residence hall opened and, on January 31, 2020, ribbon-cutting ceremonies were held for the other newly erected buildings - the Dr. William R. Harvey Museum of Art and the the new student center/arena.

Dr. Hawkins serves on the President's Board of Advisors on HBCUs and also serves as chair of the 37 presidents of member institutions for the UNCF (United Negro College Fund). His national leadership positions have allowed him to lobby effectively on behalf of Talladega College and other HBCUs. He is equally effective at building relationships on the local and regional levels, having secured a \$1.5 million donation from the State of Alabama for the new museum project, and infrastructure support from the City of Talladega for campus roads and entryway improvements. In 2019, Dr. Hawkins secured a sponsorship that allowed 23 Talladega College students to travel to Japan at no expense to the Institution.

Under the leadership of Dr. Hawkins, Talladega College is listed among Princeton Review's best colleges in the Southeast, U.S. News and World Report's most innovative colleges, and Kiplinger's Best Value Colleges. Further, due to his leadership, Talladega's 2019 SACSCOC Accreditation was reaffirmed through 2029 with no recommendations for change in any of the standards reviewed and, for the first time, the College is accredited to teach at the master's degree level.

It is because of his aforementioned extraordinary performance, \$1.8 million dollar financial commitment, and national recognition for academic leadership excellence that the Talladega College Board of Trustees voted to name the new student center/arena "The Dr. Billy C. Hawkins Student Activity Center" in honor of the College's 20th President, Dr. Billy C. Hawkins.

"We congratulate, commend and thank Dr. Billy C. Hawkins for his service to our beloved Institution," said Chairman Hugley.