



Why Morris Brown College Should Exist

Dr. John H. Carter

It is easy to dismiss the question of the existence of a Historically Black College or University as irrelevant. After all, these questions are not often asked of other institutions. “Catholic, Jewish, and Mormon schools of higher education (many, if not most, of which are predominantly white) are not often asked whether their students will be prepared to live in a world of diverse religious orientations; if the question is not asked of these institutions by opponents of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), the question should not be asked of black colleges” (Howard, 2008).

However, we feel so strongly about the existence of Morris Brown College and all HBCUs, that we must address this question, even when it is not openly asked. It is clear that the case for the existence of Morris Brown College is not an emotional one; but simply one of economics and sociology.

Without the existence of Morris Brown College, over 2000 young Americans and international students are not being educated, over 500 jobs are lost to the Atlanta economy, and the State of Georgia is losing a potential for more than \$94 Million to its economy. This data is supported by a 2001 study of the impact of private colleges on the Georgia economy by the Econometric Center of Kennesaw State University on behalf of the Georgia Foundation for Independent Colleges (Tutterow, 2001). "The effects of these private institutions on their local economies flow through two channels: the spending by the institution on instruction, research, public service and capital projects and the spending of students, faculty and staff in the local community," said Dr. Roger Tutterow, who conducted the survey.

According to a 2005 study of public colleges in Georgia, for each job created on a college campus, there are 1.7 off campus jobs that exist because of spending related to the college or university. (Humphreys, 2005). It is doubtful that the City of Atlanta or the State of Georgia would allow any industry that provides this kind of economic growth to die without a major effort to save it.

This economic impact does not consider the value of the educated workforce that the college generates. The over 20,000 alumni of Morris Brown College and the countless number of attendees that have either graduated from other local Atlanta institutions or simply gravitated to the Georgia work force have contributed greatly to the diverse educated workforce of the State.

Like other HBCUs, Morris Brown College has established a results oriented history throughout its 129 years of existence.

- The College was listed #2 in awarding law and legal studies degrees, and #8 in awarding mathematics degrees to African Americans, according to a study released by “Black Issues in Higher Education.”
- The College has graduated more Certified Public Accountants than any other HBCU
- The College was ranked number thirty-two on the “Black Enterprise” list of the top 50 institutions in America to provide the best educational opportunities for African Americans.

According to the United Negro College Fund (UNCF), the 105 HBCUs remain one of the surest ways for an African American, or student of any race, to receive a high quality education. The evidence clearly demonstrates that black students who attend HBCUs are more likely to aspire to finish college, pursue professional education, and pursue more ambitious careers than their peers at traditional white institutions. (Wenglinsky, 1996).

While the 105 HBCUs represent just 3 percent of the nation’s institutions of higher learning, they graduate nearly one-quarter of African Americans who earn undergraduate degrees. HBCUs, because of their unique sensibility to the special needs of young African American minds, remain the institutions that demonstrate the most effective ability to graduate African American students who are poised to be competitive in the corporate, research, academic, governmental and military arenas. (UNCF, 2008)

The following data on can be found on the UNCF website regarding HBCUs:

- HBCUs graduate over 50 percent African American professionals.
- HBCUs graduate over 50 percent of African American public school teachers and 70 percent of African American dentists.
- 50 percent of African Americans who graduate from HBCUs go on to graduate or professional schools.
- HBCUs award more than one in three of the degrees held by African Americans in natural sciences.
- HBCUs award half of the degrees held by African Americans in mathematics.
- Overall average graduation rate at HBCUs is higher than the average graduation rate for African Americans at majority institutions

Up until 2003 and beyond (as the school has never closed), Morris Brown College was one of these HBCU’s that contributed to the growth and health of not only the Atlanta economy but the world economy as a whole. Because of its connection with the Worldwide African Methodist Episcopal Church, Morris Brown College has been in the forefront of educating a significant number of prominent African leaders in all walks of life. The institution’s Hospitality and Travel Program also resulted in the recruitment of a large number of Caribbean students. Some of these leaders include:

Areas of Education

- Joel Standifer, Principal Hightower Elementary, Dekalb County Schools
- Betty Rucker, Principal Pine Ridge Elementary School, Dekalb County Schools

- Dr. Edward L. Bouie, Jr., President, Argosy University, Atlanta, GA Campus

Areas of Business

- Pedro Bryant, CEO Louisville Community Development Bank, Tulsa, OK
- John H. Carter, Vice President ~ AT&T (Retired), Atlanta, GA
- Lt. Gen. Albert J. Edmonds, USAF Ret., CEO, Edmonds Enterprise Services, Alexandria, VA
- Sharon S. Hall, Managing Director, Spencer Stuart, Atlanta, GA
- Robert James, President, Carver State Bank, Savannah, GA
- Gregory Jackson, CEO Prestige Automotive Group, Detroit, MI
- Lennox G. Jackson, Founder, Pres.& CEO, Urban Equities Construction, Co., Chicago, IL
- Mrs. Lelia M. Jones, Asst. Vice President, Federal Reserve Bank, San Francisco, CA
- Jethro Joseph, Senior Manager Diversity Supplier Development, DaimlerChrysler Corporation, Auburn Hills, MI
- David Kemp, President Bankers Management, Inc., Atlanta, GA
- Louis Skinner, III, CEO, Skinner Development, Stone Mountain, GA

Areas of Politics

- Eldrin Bell, Chairman of Clayton County, GA Board of Commissioners
- Honorable Donzella James, Georgia State Senator (35th District)
- Wole Ralph, member of Clayton County, GA Board of Commissioners
- Derrick Boazman, Former Atlanta City Council
- Arthur Langford, Former Georgia State Senator

Areas of Criminal Justice

- Eldrin Bell, Former City of Atlanta Police Chief
- Beverly Harvard, Former City of Atlanta Police Chief
- Beverly Harvard, Assistant Security Director, Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport.

Judges

- Judge Calvin Mapp
- Judge Edward Batey
- Judge Lenwood Jackson

Areas of Religion

- James L. Davis, Bishop, AME Church
- Roy A. Holmes
- Rev. Dr. Walter L. Kimbrough, Pastor Emeritus, Cascade United Methodist Church
- Richard Norris Bishop, AME Church
- Rev. Dr. Perry Simmons
- Preston Williams, Bishop, AME Church
- McKinley Young, Bishop, AME Church

Attorney

- Sharon Bridges, Partner at Brunin, Grantham, Grower & Hewes, Jackson, MS

Athletics

- James T. Collins, III, Head Athletic Trainer, NFL's San Diego Chargers
- Donte' Curry, Player, NFL's Carolina Panthers

This is but a mere sketch of the picture painted by Morris Brown College. Like the intricate works of the great artist M. C. Escher this institution is best viewed from a myriad of angles. Each view presents a new and awe-inspiring scene that contributes to the total image. When separated from the whole, it fragments and distorts the original scene. Morris Brown College is a multifaceted institution founded with the express intent of educating minds that yearn to grow – minds deeply rooted in the history and tradition of an institution that dates back 129 years. There is more at stake at Morris Brown than tradition. The absence of this institution would represent the loss of fertile ground. Without it, seeds would fall aimlessly where there is risk of stunted growth or no growth at all. Morris Brown is produce proven.

“The soil is rich. Your roots grow deep. I can tell by your produce that things grow well here.”

-Unknown

References

- Brown, M. Christopher, II, (2004). Gathering at the River: What Black Colleges Should Do Now. Retrieved March 25, 2008, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=EJ705898&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=EJ705898
- Howard, Kim, (2008). In Support of Segregation: How Historically Black Colleges and Universities Inform Student Affairs Practice. The University of Vermont. Retrieved March 25, 2008 from <http://www.uvm.edu/~vtconn/?Page=v21/howard.html>
- Humphreys, Jeffery. (2005). The Economic Impact of University of Georgia Institutions on Their Regional Economics in FY 2004, pg 2. Retrieved March 25, 2008, from http://www.icapp.org/pubs/impact/economic_impact_fy04.pdf
- Our Member Colleges. (2007). United Negro College fund Retrieved March 25, 2008 from <http://www.uncf.org/members/aboutHBCU.asp>
- Tutterow, Roger. (2001). 2001 Study of the Impact of Private Colleges on the Georgia Economy by the Econometric Center of Kennesaw State University on behalf of the Georgia Foundation for Independent Colleges
- Wenglinsky, H. (1996). The educational justification of historically black colleges and universities: A policy response to the U.S. Supreme Court. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 18, 91-103.