



The 1890 Universities Career Exemplar Award Recipients

Alabama A&M University Honoree: Mr. Billy Bridgeforth

Billy (Bill) Bruce Bridgeforth currently serves as Managing Agent for the family farm, Darden Bridgeforth & Sons. Mr. Bridgeforth graduated from Alabama A&M University in 1980 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Soil Science. After graduation, he returned to the family farm. As a fourth generation farmer, Mr. Bridgeforth embraces the opportunity to help prepare the fifth generation on Bridgeforth Farm. Mr. Bridgeforth serves as CARET Delegate for Alabama A&M University, Chairman of the National Black Growers Council and is a local church officer. When not farming, he enjoys golf and hunting. Mr. Bridgeforth has produced food and fiber to feed and clothe the American public for 36 years. He has been featured in several Trade Publications. Mr. Bridgeforth is most proud of his recognition as “Champion of Change for Agriculture”. This award was presented to him at the White House in 2013.

Alcorn State University, Mississippi Honoree: Dr. Jesse Harness

Jesse Harness currently serves as a real estate broker for Miss-Lou Realty and as an Administrative Consultant for the Mississippi Association of Cooperatives. After earning a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture Education with minors in Biology and Music from Alcorn State University, Mr. Harness earned a Master of Arts degree in Vegetable Crops and Extension Education from the University of Florida and a Ph.D. in Horticulture and Extension Education from Louisiana State University. Since earning his Ph.D., Mr. Harness has had a successful career that spans over 30 years contributing to Cooperative Extension and serving as a Coordinator of Civil Rights and EEO at Alcorn State University. He served as a member and chairman of the USDA Secretary of Agriculture’s National Commission on Small Farms and Advisory Committee on Small Farms and as a member of several Congressional Committees related to Agriculture. Mr. Harness’ accomplishments include drafting the proposal for establishing and coordinating the construction of the University’s Extension and Research Complex at Alcorn State University, drafting the proposal and coordinating the establishment of off-campus centers located in Mound Bayou, Preston and Marks, Mississippi, and drafting proposals for and establishing a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Conservation Research Project at Alcorn State University. The results of these proposals are being used nationally and internationally. Mr. Harness has an extensive list of Cooperative Extension and Research Publications. His honors include being inducted into the George Washington Carver Hall of Fame in December 2005.

Central State University, Ohio

Honoree: Mr. Morakinyo A. O. Kuti

Morakinyo Kuti is currently the Director of Sponsored Programs and Research at Central State University (CSU). He professional career has been dedicated to increasing CSU's capacity to train, transform, and graduate individuals to make positive change in their personal lives and also improve society by increasing its knowledge base. Mr. Kuti has a demonstrated record of success in research administration. As the Director of OSPR at CSU, he has been responsible for all pre and post award grant and contract management activities at the university since 2005. He has served in various a leadership roles that led to successful outcomes, including leading a multidisciplinary proposal development team of faculty and staff that received CSU's first NIH grant in over 15 years. He has a strong background in facilitating successful outcomes for underrepresented students, particularly in STEM. Mr. Kuti was instrumental in the development of the \$4.7 million Center of Excellence in STEM and STEM Education proposal funded by Department of Defense in 2010. Mr. Kuti is a member of the Pi Alpha Alpha National Honor Society for Public Affairs and Administration. He is an active member of the Society for Research Administrators (SRA), the National Council for University Research Administrators (NCURA), and the National Sponsored Program Administrators Alliance (NSPAA). Mr. Kuti is the institutional representative to the Council for Undergraduate Research and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities' Grants Resources Center. Mr. Kuti is originally from the city of Abeokuta, in Nigeria and belongs to the Nigeria United of Dayton and Miami Valley and the Egbe Omo Yoruba of Dayton, Ohio.

Delaware State University

Honoree: Mr. David Turner

Mr. David Turner joined IBM at the end of 2010 as the Global Analytics leader for Banking and Financial Markets. Mr. Turner is a "military brat" with both parents serving in the US Army. Moving and traveling have become second nature him given his military family upbringing. Mr. Turner graduated from Delaware State University where he majored in computer science/mathematics. Mr. Turner now serves as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of his alma mater. He earned his master of sciences in MIS from Farleigh Dickinson University. Mr. Turner is also an alumnus of the Dartmouth Tuck School of Business Executive MBA Program. An internship became a 14-year career with AT&T in NJ where Mr. Turner began his career as a computer programmer in an accelerated management development program. Over the years sales and marketing became his real passion. His dream job as CMO led him and his family to San Diego, CA with Gateway Computer where he was recognized by Fortune magazine as one of the "50 Most Powerful Black Executives in America" in 2002. Banking became his interest after leading the financing arm of the company. Since joining IBM in the global role for more than two years capped off with a large deal in Latin America for \$66M, Mr. Turner then returned domestically to lead the North American Financial Services Analytics Practice with more than 200 analytics practitioners. Mr. Turner has been writing for the IBM Institute for Business Value, presenting at Industry conferences, and conducting Industry Analyst conferences during his tenure at IBM and now is a member of the prestigious IBM Industry Academy. Now focusing on helping banks around the world transform their enterprises through the use of data and analytics, Mr. Turner spends much of his time in Brazil.

Florida A&M University
Honoree: Mrs. Doris Hicks

Mrs. Doris Hicks earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and a Master of Science in Education from Florida A&M University (FAMU). Mrs. Hicks taught for 36 years in the public school system as an elementary teacher and has held the position of adjunct professor at Florida A&M University. As President of the Polk County Alumni Chapter of the Florida A&M University National Alumni Association, Mrs. Hicks has raised thousands of dollars in scholarships and during her tenure, established an endowment to ensure that FAMU students from Polk County receive yearly funding until graduation. Mrs. Hicks was one of the founding members of the Florida Classic Consortium, which established the annual Florida Classic football game between Florida A&M University and Bethune-Cookman University. The Florida Classic is now one of the most recognized football classics in the nation that draws attendees from all over the country. In addition to her many contributions to the university, Mrs. Hicks is a lifelong volunteer for the local guardian ad litem program in Polk County, Florida. Mrs. Hicks was recognized as one of the top six of the 100 Most Influential African-Americans in Polk County and was recognized by the city of Lakeland, FL, which declared, May 20th “Doris Hicks Day”. She is a recipient of the Living Legends Award and the Distinguished Alumni Award. The FAMU National Alumni Association has recognized Mrs. Hicks for Outstanding Service and Recruitment of Life Members.

Fort Valley State University, Georgia
Honoree: The Honorable Calvin Smyre

State Representative Calvin Smyre, business executive, state legislator, community and national leader, earned his Bachelor of Science degree from Fort Valley State University (FVSU) in 1970, majoring in Business Administration with a minor in Accounting. Presently, he is Chairman of the FVSU Foundation. He also holds an Honorary Doctorate Degree from Morehouse School of Medicine. His career path has taken him from being a community organizer and director of “War on Poverty” program in Columbus to the position of Executive Vice President, Corporate External Affairs, Synovus Financial Corp. (Retired - December 2014) Elected at the age of 27; he is now the “Dean” of the Georgia General Assembly. As a 41-year legislative veteran, he serves on the most important panels of the House: Appropriations, Rules and Higher Education. Representative Smyre has a distinguished legislative record that includes authoring the legislation making Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr’s birthday a state holiday and legislation creating the Georgia Dome, home of the Atlanta Falcons. He was also instrumental and co-sponsor of the historic legislation creating a new Georgia State Flag and the HOPE Scholarship Program. Nationally, he is President Emeritus of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) and a Past President of the NBCSL Foundation.

Kentucky State University
Honoree: Mr. Donald C. Hylton, Sr.

Donald Hylton completed his undergraduate studies at Kentucky State University and graduate studies at the University of Louisville. Mr. Hylton is a veteran of over 40 years of the plastic industry. His career in plastics started at the E. I. DuPont Neoprene Plant. Mr. Hylton then joined General Electric and later joined ExxonMobil. Mr. Hylton has a number of notable accomplishments during his tenure with these organizations including the early development of a new instrument that is still in use. At ExxonMobil he was active in their diversity efforts that led to the hiring and promotions of minorities and women within the organization. In 1995 he joined Clark Atlanta University Thomas W. Cole Science Research Center. At Clark Atlanta Mr. Hylton gets to pursue his first love, which is mentoring and advising students. In 1995 Don started his own thermoforming-consulting firm. Five years later he joined McConnell Company, the premier thermoforming consulting firm in the world. He makes regular appearances as an invited lecturer to thermoforming symposiums, technical conferences, and training sessions. Donald has been a member of the Society of Plastic Engineers since 1987. He is a fellow of the Society. He received the Society's outstanding achievement award for thermoforming. In 2014 he received the Thermoforming Division's Lifetime Achievement Award for contributing and advancing the science of thermoforming. He served on the Thermoforming Division Board of Directors for over 20 years. He currently holds member emeritus status. He chaired the Board's student affairs committee and started the division's Scholarship program. Other organizations, of which Mr. Hylton is a member, include Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, NAACP, and Kentucky State University Athletic Hall of Fame. He is a Kentucky Colonel.

Langston University, Oklahoma

Honoree: Mr. Sherman L. Lewis

Sherman Lewis earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agricultural Economics and a minor in Mathematics from Langston University and a Master of Public Administration from Harvard University. Upon graduation from college, he entered the military where he served for two years. Following his military service, Mr. Lewis started his professional career with the U.S. Department of Agriculture - Soil Conservation Service (SCS), now the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). During his career with the SCS, he and his family had the opportunity to work and live in many different states, including Oklahoma, Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Massachusetts, Nebraska, and Washington, D.C. At the SCS, Mr. Lewis was selected to participate in the Executive Development Program and attend the Harvard University Graduate School where he received his MPA from the John F. Kennedy School of Government. He retired in 1997 as Deputy Administrator for Management and Strategic Planning, the Number Three (3) position in the national agency. Upon retirement, Mr. Lewis returned to Langston University to become Director of the Center for Outreach Programs. As Director of the Center for Outreach Programs, he recruits students for the School of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, develops partnerships with federal and state agencies to provide scholarships, summer internships and career opportunities upon graduation. He also provides technical assistance to small farmers and rural residents, small minority owned businesses, and nutrition education to individuals receiving food stamps. In December of 2002, he was appointed as Associate Administrator for Extension and Outreach. Mr. Lewis dedicated eight years of service to Langston University as the Center of Outreach Programs Director. He currently serves on the Langston University Board of Trustees.

Lincoln University, Missouri

Honoree: Mr. Charles E. Seeney

Charles Seeney earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Chemistry from Lincoln University (MO). He holds a Master of Science degree in Polymer Science from the University of Akron (OH) Institute of Polymer Science. His thesis research is included as a chapter contribution to *Ionic Polymerizations: Unsolved Problems*, Edited by Furukawa and Vogl, Marcel Dekker, 1976. Mr. Seeney, Founder and Managing Director of NewTech @ The NanoPoint (N-Tech), is a scientist and entrepreneur with a central focus on the management of Intellectual Property (IP). Mr. Seeney established N-Tech as a vehicle for advising and counseling owners of IP on how to best advance their technologies. N-Tech also serves as a bridge as Mr. Seeney transitions from direct venture involvements to his new role of writing technical papers and as a mentor to developing techno-business ventures. His research activities have been acknowledged through publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals and the award of 24 US Patents (with foreign equivalents). This record of translational achievement is one that places him at the forefront of horizon and emerging nanotechnologies, which are having a major impact on advancements in the science industry. Prior to his semi-retirement and founding of N-Tech, Seeney was the Founder and Director of ViCorp Tech LLC, a technology deployment firm that established and managed techno-business ventures based on internally developed IP, carrying the companies to logical business end points. The ventures involved collaborations with major academic institutions and/or industrial organizations, which merge multi-disciplinary fields in the design and production of nano devices and other products. Prior to his entrepreneurial path, Seeney was an industrial scientist, holding leadership roles in the technology sectors of major corporations including ZymeTx Inc., and IMC Corp. (a Fortune 100 Company) that marketed a range of bioengineered growth factors.

North Carolina A&T State University

Honoree: Mr. Willie A. Deese

Willie A. Deese earned a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration at North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University (NC A&T) and a Master of Business Administration at Western New England College. Mr. Deese is currently Executive Vice President and President of the Merck Manufacturing Division, with responsibility for Merck's worldwide manufacturing operations. He oversees a network of more than 55 manufacturing and distribution sites with approximately 16,500 employees in over 22 countries around the world, with an operating budget of \$8.0 B. He is also responsible for Merck's global procurement organization. Mr. Deese serves as a member of Merck's Executive Committee. He joined Merck as Senior Vice President, Global Procurement, in January 2004, after having established a track record of outstanding success as an executive and manager for several pharmaceutical, health care and high technology companies, including GlaxoSmithKline Pharmaceuticals, PLC; SmithKline Beecham Pharmaceuticals, PLC; Kaiser Permanente; and Digital Equipment Corporation. Since joining Merck, Mr. Deese has made significant contributions to enhancing the Company's operating efficiency. He is leading the transformation of Merck's global manufacturing network following the company's merger with Schering-Plough, with the ambitious target of making the company's medicines and vaccines affordable and accessible to a significantly larger percentage of the world's population. Mr. Deese is currently a member of the DENTSPLY International, Inc. board, CDK Global, Inc. board and PhD Project board. He is also a member of the ILFEC-ISPE (International Leadership Forum Executive Committee – ISPE), Pharma Manufacturing Forum and the Executive Leadership Council. He has served

on the NC A&T Board of Trustees and former Chair as well as on the boards of HINJ (Healthcare Institute of NJ) and NCIMED (NC Institute of Minority Economic Development).

Prairie View A&M University, Texas

Honoree: Mr. Ernie Collins

Ernie attended Prairie View A&M University where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration and has additional studies toward an MBA at Texas Southern University. At Prairie View, he enrolled in the advanced ROTC program and upon graduation was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Army. While at Prairie View, Ernie met the lady of his dreams, Floretta Brown. Prior to reporting for officer's basic training in artillery at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, Ernie and Flo were married in her hometown of Bay City, Texas. Ernie served two years in the Army as a training officer at Fort Ord, California. He was discharged as a 1st Lieutenant in 1969. Also in 1969, he joined Humble Oil and Refinery Company, now ExxonMobil in Denver, Colorado. Ernie worked in various marketing staff and management positions and in 2003, he retired after 34 years of service. Ernie serves as a trustee for the Prairie A & M Foundation and as a representative for Council for Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching (CARET) advocating on behalf of 1890 land-grant universities. Ernie is actively involved in the various community roles. Ernie and Flo are strong supporters of youth and education and have established scholarship funds at Prairie View A&M University and Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. In retirement, Ernie's top priorities are spending time at the ranch with family and working with his grandchildren.

South Carolina State University

Honoree: The Honorable James Clyburn

The Honorable James Enos "Jim" Clyburn earned his undergraduate degree from South Carolina State University. He is the U.S. Representative for South Carolina's 6th congressional district, serving since 1993, and the Assistant Democratic Leader since 2011. He was previously House Majority Whip, serving in that post from 2007 to 2011. As Assistant Democratic Leader in the 114th Congress, the number three Democrat in the House, James E. Clyburn is the leadership liaison to the Appropriations Committee, one of the Democratic Caucus' primary liaisons to the White House and Chair of the recently formed House Democrats' Democratic Outreach & Engagement Task Force. President Barack Obama has said he is, "One of a handful of people who, when they speak, the entire Congress listens." His humble beginnings in Sumter South Carolina, as the eldest son of an activist fundamentalist minister and an independent civic-minded beautician, grounded him securely in family, faith and public service. He was elected president of his NAACP youth chapter when he was 12 years old, helped organize many civil rights marches and demonstrations as a student leader at South Carolina State College, and even met his wife Emily in jail during one of his incarcerations. When Clyburn came to Congress in 1993, he was elected co-President of his freshman class and quickly rose through leadership ranks. In 2005 Clyburn was unanimously elected Chair of the Democratic Caucus. As a national leader he has worked to respond to the needs of America's diverse communities. He has supported higher education by leading the charge for increased Pell grants, investing millions in science and math programs and historic preservation at HBCUs.

Southern University and A & M College

Honoree: Dr. Leodrey Williams

Leodrey Williams earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Vocational Agriculture Education from Southern University and earned his Master of Science and Doctor of Education degrees at Louisiana State University (LSU). After three years of military service, Dr. Williams began his distinguished career with Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge Cooperative Extension Service. In 1972, the Southern University Cooperative Extension Program employed him. After five years Dr. Williams returned to Louisiana State University. In 1980, the Cooperative Extension Program at Southern University employed Dr. Williams. Later, he was asked to co-chair a national task force that took an in-depth look at America's Cooperative Extension System and was appointed Special Assistant to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Extension Administrator. Five (5) months later, Secretary of Agriculture appointed him the National Director of Extension. In 1994, after the merger of the Cooperative Extension Service and the Cooperative State Research Service, Williams was appointed to the position of Associate Administrator of the newly formed agency. He held this position until he returned to Southern University in July 1995. Today, Williams is the first Chancellor for the newly developed Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center (SUAREC), the fifth campus of the Southern University System and has been in this position for the last 14 years. Dr. Williams has served on many boards and councils dealing with higher education and the educational delivery system of land-grant colleges and universities. Williams was also a consultant to the governments of Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, and Republic of South Africa in the areas of extension administration and adult and continuing education.

Tennessee State University

Honoree: Ms. Olga G. Hudson

Ms. Ola Hudson earned a Bachelor of Science in 1951 and a Master of Science in 1953, in Home Economics Education from Tennessee State University (TSU). During her 40-year tenure with the Metropolitan Nashville Public School System (MNPS), Ms. Hudson taught and served as coordinator of Home Economics and Interim Director of Vocational, Adult, and Community Education. She always set high educational and ethical standards for herself, students, and peers. Ms. Hudson consistently worked to improve the plight of underrepresented populations and led many initiatives that resulted in significant enhancements to programs and schools throughout the Metro school system. While serving as an employee of the MNPS she created a communications program to encourage all levels of the school system to look at diversity in a more positive light during the desegregation process. In the early 1990s she sought to increase the graduation rates of pregnant teenagers attending Metro Schools. Ms. Hudson created a model program for the teens that resulted in a 100-percent graduation rate in the first five years of the program. Ms. Hudson was inducted into the Tennessee Teachers Hall of Fame in May 1997. She has been a member of Alpha Kappa Sorority, Incorporated for over 50 years, and was recently named the Golden Soror of AKA. In 2004, Ms. Hudson was tapped to participate in the National Visionary Leadership Project, whose mission is to "...share the stories of African American visionaries who transcended barriers, shaped American history, and influenced the world." Her contributions to society are also featured in the book [A Wealth of Wisdom: Legendary African Americans Speak](#). In 2013, Ms. Hudson was the recipient of the prestigious TSU Women of Legend and Merit Award that salutes

dynamic women leaders who have made outstanding contribution in their respective fields and the community.

Tuskegee University, Alabama

Honoree: Dr. Mortimer H. Neufville

Mortimer H. Neufville received a Bachelor of Science Degree from Tuskegee University and Master of Science and Ph.D. degrees in Animal Science from the University of Florida. In February 2001, Tuskegee University awarded Dr. Neufville the Honorary Doctor of Science degree and in December 2001, the University of Florida awarded him the Distinguished Alumnus Award. He was inducted into the International Continuing Education Hall of Fame in 2008. Dr. Neufville assumed the position of Director, Federal Relations - Food, Environment and International Affairs at NASULGC on January 2, 1997. His responsibility was to coordinate the activities in food, agriculture, natural resources, environmental affairs, human sciences, forestry and international affairs for the Land Grant and affiliate member institutions. On January 3, 2000, he was appointed Executive Vice President to coordinate internal management operations. On January 3, 2006, he assumed the role of Executive Vice President full time working closely with the President on all NASUGLC (now APLU) activities. He retired on June 30th 2008 and began consulting with APLU, IFPRI and other International Organizations. On August 16, 2011 he was asked to return to the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) to serve as its Interim President. He held this position until July 1, 2012 when a new president was selected. Prior to joining NASULGC, Dr. Neufville held a number of positions at the UMES, (1983-96). Before joining UMES, Dr. Neufville was Associate Dean, College of Applied Science and Technology and the Cooperative Research and Extension Programs at Lincoln University, Missouri (1978-83). He also served as a faculty member and head of the Animal Science Program at Prairie View A & M University (1974-78). Dr. Neufville recently served as President of Coppin State University (January 2013 – July 2015).

University of Arkansas Pine Bluff

Honoree: Mr. Pearlie S. Reed

Pearlie Reed currently serves as a Consultant specializing in Agriculture, Conservation, Economic Development and Management. From 2009 through 2012 Mr. Reed served as the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), a position that he was nominated for by President Barack Obama and confirmed by the United States Senate. He was responsible for all administrative management functions where he worked with members of Congress, the White House, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Land Grant and other Universities, and other Federal, state and local governments and the public on various agricultural projects/issues. Mr. Reed began his career with the USDA working as a student trainee for the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), which is now the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). He worked in a Field Office in Arkansas learning the work of the agency and doing all work common to the operation of a field office. From 1963-2003 Mr. Reed worked his way up in the agency serving in increasingly responsible positions of administrative management. By 1985 Mr. Reed held the position of State Conservationist for the Mary State Office, the highest position in a State Office where he provided leadership for a comprehensive natural resources conservation program. Mr. Reed continued his career at USDA holding various leadership positions including Chief of NRCS where he served as chief executive officer for USDA's private lands conservation agency. NRCS is recognized as the national leader of the conservation partnership

infrastructure serving private lands and communities in all 50 states, the Pacific Basin, and Puerto Rico. The conservation partnership infrastructure consisted of over 12,000 Federal employees and 15,000 conservation district officials, and included responsibility for a Federal budget of \$1.3 billion. Mr. Reed received numerous awards for his leadership in agriculture and conservation.

University of Maryland Eastern Shore

Honoree: Dr. Emmanuel T. Acquah

Emmanuel T. Acquah received a diploma in Tropical Agriculture from Kwadaso Agricultural College in Ghana prior to earning a Bachelor of Science Degree in General Agriculture (Major in Farm Management) from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) graduating magna cum laude and a Master of Science and Ph.D. degrees in Agricultural Economics from Ohio State University. Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana awarded Dr. Acquah an Honorary Doctorate of Science degree in 2013. Dr. Acquah currently serves as Director of International Programs, and Professor of Agricultural Economics at the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore. He is an Agricultural Economist with research experience in Production Economics, Rural Development, Institutional Development, Economics of Education, Agribusiness and Farm Management. He has served as a Principal Investigator of research and development projects and taught courses at the graduate and undergraduate levels. In addition to working in the United States, Dr. Acquah has worked in Cameroon, Liberia, Kenya, Sudan, Ghana, St. Lucia, Jamaica, Egypt, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Senegal, Namibia, Burkina Faso, Mali, South Africa, Cote d' Ivoire and Guinea. He has received a number of international honors including being appointed to the Advisory Committee of U.S. Response to Cutting Hunger in Half in Africa, 2000 and to USAID's Strategic Partnership for Agricultural Research and Education (**SPARE**) Committee by the Administrator of USAID, 2000. The Government of the Republic of Cameroon, in recognition of Dr. Acquah's exceptional ability to work with high level government officials, including Ministers and Directors, as well as technical staff, and his outstanding leadership in implementing the ROTREP Project in Cameroon for 6-1/2 years, awarded him "*Knight of Cameroon Order of Merit*". The Government of Cameroon conferred the Knighthood on September 21, 1995 with a medal, certificate and a decree.

West Virginia State University

Honoree: Mr. Walter F. Johnson III

Retired Brig. Gen. Walter F. Johnson, III earned an undergraduate degree from West Virginia State University and a master's degree from the University of Missouri. Mr. Johnson was the Chairman of Eagle Group International, Inc., a full-service consulting firm. He led Eagle Group from a start-up family operation to a successful enterprise with over \$150 million in annual revenues. In the early 1990's, he was the first President and CEO of Diversity in Health Management, a foundation-like organization he organized for the American Hospital Association, the American College of Health Services Executives and the National Association of Health Services Executives. The primary mission of the foundation is to help increase the number of minority managers in health services. Prior to serving as President of Diversity in Health Management, Johnson was a senior vice president with the American Hospital Association, (AHA). Mr. Johnson served in the military for 27 years, where he attained the rank of Brigadier General in the U.S. Army Medical Service Corps, the highest grade that could be achieved in the Medical Service Corps at that time. He was the first African-American and the youngest individual ever selected to serve as Chief of the Medical Service Corps. When he retired, Mr. Johnson was serving as Director of Army Worldwide Health Care Operations and simultaneously as Chief of the Medical Service Corps, which included 31 different medical specialties. Upon retirement, Mr. Johnson received the Army's highest award for achievement, the Distinguished Service Medal. In addition to his military

career and accomplishments in business, Mr. Johnson has served on a number of county, state, university, and community/civic boards/organizations. He is the author of “I Can Do That,” published in 2010.

Virginia State University

Honoree: Dr. Antonio A. McLaren

Antonio McLaren earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Business/Economics and a Master of Arts degree in Economics and Finance from Virginia State University. In May 2015, he graduated with a Doctorate of Education in Leadership from Virginia Commonwealth University. In September 2015, Dr. McLaren joined the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) as a National Program Leader. In this role, he is responsible for managing and providing leadership for the 1890 Capacity Building Grants Program and the Higher Education Challenge Grants Program. Prior to this appointment, Dr. McLaren worked for USDA’s Office of Advocacy and Outreach as the USDA/1890 Program Liaison at Virginia State University (VSU). As Program Liaison, he worked to increase programmatic capacity for research, education, and extension programs by providing outreach to the VSU community, linking university faculty and staff to competitive grant opportunities, and recruiting students to study agriculture and related fields at VSU. In total, Dr. McLaren has 17 years of Federal service – all with USDA. He began working with NIFA as an intern in 1997 and then as a program specialist from 2003 to 2011. As a program specialist, he worked to provide leadership and program support for several programs with a primary focus on the Agriculture Markets and Trade Program, Agriculture Risk Management Education Program, and the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program. Dr. McLaren has contributed to USDA and the 1890 Land-Grant University Partnership through collaboration and participation in efforts designed to provide outreach and research assistance to students (K-12, undergraduate, and graduate), university representatives, farmers, ranchers, and underserved communities.