



April 1, 2016

Dear Alumni, Friends and Supporters:

Today, we celebrate and express our gratitude for Dr. Joseph Winthrop Holley for his vision, determination, negotiations, compassioned pleas and courageous action in establishing in 1903 an institution of higher education in Southwest Georgia. The Albany Bible and Manual Training Institute's establishment joined seventy-six institutions whose primary purpose was to educate the black community.

Since 1903, there have been many changes that Dr. Holley could be proud of. Growth that resulted in a two-year institution in 1917, the Georgia Normal and Agricultural College; and a four-year institution in 1943 designated as Albany State College. Subsequently, in 1996 it was designated a university. It withstood the devastation of the flood of 1994 and reached the world stage this year with the Marching Rams participation in the Rose Bowl parade. Thus, the initial vision continues.

Today, the recognition the University is receiving shows success as well as it's current classification as a comprehensive university with advanced degree programs. We should take pride in the significant developments since 1903. The consolidation process with Darton State College has tremendous challenges but elevates ASU to becoming one of the largest HBCUs in this nation. A consolidated university will capitalize the existing relations between the two. We must continue the progress that expands our 113-year history. Yes, there will be challenges, there will be bumps in the road and the rumor mill is in a tailspin. Be guided by the words of Winston Churchill, **"The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."**

The future of Albany State University is bright and promising. Commitment to our alma mater, patience and diligence are essential as well as active partnership. Active partners who will recruit qualified students while diversifying; assist in the graduation of a higher percentage of students through mentoring and student support opportunities; and increased and sustained financial support through this Association as well as the Foundation. As alumni and supporters we can choose to remain in the past or enthusiastically accept we are changing; not losing who we are but ascending to the greatness within our reach.

Sincerely,

Joycia C. Ricks

Joycia C. Ricks, President