Letter from Dr. Gary A. McGaha, President, Atlanta Metropolitan College

**THE ELRIDGE W. McMILLAN ACADEMIC SCIENCES BUILDING**

I am delighted to announce that the University System of Georgia Board of Regents unanimously approved a request at the April meeting that I submitted earlier this year to name the new Academic Sciences Building in honor of Regent Emeritus, Elridge W. McMillan. The ribbon cutting for the new building will be held Friday May 4, 2012 at 8:45 a.m. prior to commencement. I am asking all members of the college family to join us for this historic occasion.

It should be noted that the process currently used for naming buildings after individuals has major financial requirements. Institutions must demonstrate that the individuals for whom buildings are recommended to be named must have contributed financially to the college or university. Regent McMillan has given and influenced more dollars to be given to scholarships to Atlanta Metropolitan College (AMC) than anyone in the history of the institution. The amount of scholarship dollars given and influenced to date exceeds $200,000.00. When the request to name the Academic Sciences Building in honor of Regent Emeritus McMillan was approved by the Board of Regents, they suggested that a scholarship fund be established in his name because of his excellent reputation and impeccable record of service. Several Regents agreed to contribute to the fund at that time. The college is establishing the Elridge W. McMillan Scholarship Fund which will be the largest scholarship fund at AMC.

Elridge W. McMillan is nationally recognized in the fields of higher education policy, research, governance, curriculum development, access and equity. McMillan’s leadership has impacted significantly on major educational policy change, particularly in the areas of access and equity, in the southern region of the United States. McMillan uses his more than forty years of experience to challenge fellow educators and activists to persist in the struggle to improve educational opportunity for America’s ever-changing diverse citizenry.

As the first African-American president of the Atlanta-based Southern Education Foundation, President Emeritus McMillan led the foundation to take an active role in promoting equity and quality in education in the South, primarily for blacks and disadvantaged citizens. McMillan co-chaired SEF’s Panel on Educational Opportunity and Post-Secondary Desegregation, which was comprised of college presidents, civil rights activists, members of the business community, state policymakers and the heads of major education associations. In 1995, the panel issued a major report: *Redeeming the American Promise*, which garnered extensive national attention.

The first African American chair (1986-1987) of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, McMillan was the longest-serving member of the board having served for more than 34 years since his initial appointment in February 1975. He continues his efforts to make educational equity a priority.

Before joining the Southern Education Foundation, McMillan was chief of the Education Branch of the Office for Civil Rights for Region IV of the U.S. Department of Health, Education
and Welfare. He was previously program operations supervisor for the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity, Southeastern Region, and held various administrative and teaching positions with Atlanta public schools.

McMillan’s professional affiliations and community involvement are numerous. A former trustee of Clark Atlanta University (his alma mater), was vice chair of the Board of Trustees, member of the Executive Committee and chair of the Academic Affairs Committee. Most recently, McMillan was appointed to the Center for Civil and Human Rights Global Advisory Board, and a member of the University System of Georgia Foundation Board.

He is a former board member of the Council on Foundations, the Association of Black Foundation Executives, the Atlanta Urban League, the Literacy Commission of the Southern Growth Policies Board, and the Southeastern Council of Foundations. He is a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity.

McMillan is a recipient of the “Black Georgian of the Year” award from the State Committee on the Life and History of Black Georgians. The Atlanta NAACP awarded its W.E.B. DuBois award in Education to McMillan on an unprecedented three occasions. He also was awarded the Atlanta Urban League’s Distinguished Community Service Award, the Association of Governing Boards’ Distinguished Award for Trusteeship, and the University of Georgia’s Blue Key Honor Society Award. He also is the recipient of the University System of Georgia Foundation’s first Lifetime Achievement Award, which now has been officially named “The Elridge McMillan Lifetime Achievement Award.” In January 2010, he was named Regent Emeritus of the University System of Georgia being the first Regent to have that designation. Atlanta Metropolitan College established “The Elridge W. McMillan Legacy Leadership Award”, 2009. Georgia Gwinnett College created “Regents’ Elridge W. McMillan Scholarship Fund”, 2009. In April, 2012 the Board of Regents approved Atlanta Metropolitan College’s request to name a new building in his honor: The Elridge W. McMillan Academic Sciences Building.

McMillan received his bachelors degree in English from Clark College (now Clark Atlanta University), and his master’s degree in guidance and student personnel administration from Columbia University, in New York, where he also did post-graduate work. He holds honorary degrees from Clark College, Claflin College, Tuskegee University and Xavier University.