2020
Celebration of Leadership Awards

-Honoring & Saluting Extraordinary Trailblazers

“A Unique Virtual Experience”
Message from the President

Dear Trailblazer Friends, Supporters, and Family:

I am delighted to welcome you to the Atlanta Metropolitan State College -- 2020 Celebration of Leadership Awards! During this virtual celebration we will salute and honor outstanding Trailblazers from our community. In addition to hearing from exceptional professionals who are making positive differences in Atlanta and abroad, you will meet some of our outstanding students who embody the AMSC motto, “Bring Your Brilliance”. These students will bring our mission to life and demonstrate the transformation students experience at AMSC.

The purpose of the Celebration of Leadership Awards is to raise scholarship funds for deserving students who would otherwise have to delay their dreams and/or drop-out due to financial hardship. Your support enables these students to continue onward toward the completion of their educational goals. This evening we gather to celebrate dreams coming true through your investment in Atlanta Metropolitan State College. More than anything, we deeply appreciate your contribution to our noble endeavor “To Activate the transformation of our students, their families, and our community for generations”.

The funds raised tonight will have an immediate and lasting impact. In fact, and due to the Pandemic, you will have the opportunity to contribute at a time that may be the most critical time in the lives of our AMSC students. In the past, the Celebration of Leadership has generated funds to support approximately 400 students. I would like to extend sincere thanks and appreciation to the AMC Foundation Board of Directors and Chairman, Mr. Skip Vaughan, for their dedication, unwavering support of students, and the transformative work they do every day to advance Atlanta Metropolitan State College.

In closing, we ask that you please consider a donation in support of our students, our future leaders, as they continue to blaze trails in pursuit of their dreams! Your gifts, of any size, will be put right to work and will make a real difference.

Onward AMSC,

Dr. Georj L. Lewis
President
Vision Statement
To build an educational community focusing on excellence, where outstanding faculty members and committed staff teach and facilitate the successful academic matriculation and holistic development of all students.

Mission Statement
Atlanta Metropolitan State College, an access institution of the University System of Georgia, educates students from diverse backgrounds by providing affordable, career-focused bachelor’s and associate degree programs. The College offers student-centered instruction, civic/community engagement, and quality services that lead to the success of its inter-generational 21st century graduates.

History
In June 1965, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia authorized a junior college for the west metropolitan area of Atlanta at an undesignated location. After a great deal of discussion, the Atlanta School Board and the Board of Regents made the decision to build the college on land under the jurisdiction of the Atlanta Board of Education.

The Atlanta School Board authorized its Superintendent in February 1971 to develop a financial plan to build the new college. On October 9, 1972, the Board of Regents reconfirmed, in principle, the construction of the college. In February 1973, the Board of Regents authorized the plans and specifications for Phase I of the construction at a projected cost of $2 million. Construction began on the first building in 1973 and was completed in August 1974.

The college became the thirty-first institution of the University System of Georgia and began classes in September 1974 with an initial enrollment of 504 students. The college, Atlanta Junior College, was accredited in 1976 by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC). During the 1976-77 academic year, construction of the Central Energy Plant was completed. In 1978-79, two multi-level academic buildings were added to the resources of the college: an Academic Classroom Building and the College Library.

The 1987-1988 academic year brought the decision to change the institution’s name from Atlanta Junior College to Atlanta Metropolitan College (AMC), with the permanent transition becoming effective July 1, 1988. A new Health and Physical Education Complex was completed and occupied during the 1991-92 academic year, and a new Student Center was completed during the fall 2000 semester. Gary A. McGaha, Ph.D., became the third president of the college in January 2007. Upon his retirement in 2019, he was the second-longest serving president in the University System of Georgia. In May 2019, Dr. Georj L. Lewis was named interim president, and began his tenure as president of AMSC later that year.

On May 10, 2011, the Board of Regents approved a substantive and mission change for Atlanta Metropolitan College to offer the bachelor’s degree. In December 2011, the SACS-COC approved AMC for a status change from a Level I to Level II institution to offer the bachelor’s degree. The name of the institution was changed to Atlanta Metropolitan State College (AMSC) on May 8, 2012, and the new Elridge W. McMillan Academic Sciences Building opened in August of 2012. On May 20, 2013, an official ceremony was held to rename the newly expanded and renovated AMSC Student Center to the Edwin A. Thompson, Sr. Student Center in honor of Dr. Edwin A. Thompson, Sr., the founding president of the college. In 2018, the Student Success Center building opened its doors as a one-stop shop for students.

The first Commencement for graduates of Atlanta Metropolitan State College was held on May 3, 2013, and the first bachelor degrees were awarded May 9, 2014. AMSC continues to address the needs of the community. In addition to Associate Degree Programs, Baccalaureate Degree Programs can now be completed in Biological Science, Criminal Justice, Digital Media and Entertainment Design, Applied Mathematics, and Business Administration. The college also offers a Baccalaureate Degree in Teacher Education in collaboration with Kennesaw State University.

Past Presidents
Dr. Edwin A. Thompson, Sr. (1974-1994)
Dr. Harold E. Wade (1994-2006)
Dr. Gary A. McGaha (2007-2019)
AMSC delivers transformational experiences that have a multi-generational impact. When an individual earns a degree, there is an alchemy that enriches the entire family and community. AMSC will continue to be the catalyst that brings about upward social mobility for thousands of Metro Atlantans, but we will not do it alone. Partnerships and collaborations will be critical.

- President Dr. Georj L. Lewis

**AMSC FACTS & POINTS of PRIDE**

Founded in 1974 as Atlanta Junior College

AMSC is the ONLY 4-year public access college in the City of Atlanta.

Baccalaureate-degree granting liberal arts college

**MOST AFFORDABLE**

-best value of any University System of Georgia institution in Metro Atlanta

Feeder college for Georgia Tech engineering programs
Program

Thursday, December 3, 2020

Greetings
Mr. Daniel Espeut
CEO and VP of Video Production, Espeute Productions

Mistress of Ceremonies
Ms. Carol Blackmon
Veteran Radio Professional
Host, Georgia Lottery

Invocation
Rev. Dr. Leland L. Jones
Sr. Pastor, Greater New Light Missionary Baptist Church

Welcome & Recognition of AMC Foundation Board Members
Mr. Skip Vaughan
Sr. Director of Sales Strategy-South Division, Pepsi Beverages Company
Chairman, AMC Foundation, Inc. Board of Directors

Greetings
Dr. Georj L. Lewis
President, Atlanta Metropolitan State College

Musical Selection
Friends of Atlanta Metro Band
Featuring AMSC’s own Dr. Brian Crawford & Duane McClain

AMSC Student Testimonials

Presentation of Honorees
Ms. Carol Blackmon

Musical Selection
Friends of Atlanta Metro Band
Featuring AMSC’s own Dr. Brian Crawford & Duane McClain

Remarks
President Georj L. Lewis

Closing Comments
Mr. Michael D. Montgomery
Interim Director, Development & External Affairs, AMSC
Executive Director, AMC Foundation, Inc.
Carol Blackmon is a veteran radio professional that has been part of the Atlanta market for more than twenty years. A Buffalo, New York native, she started in radio in her hometown. Shortly after, she moved to Atlanta and continued on her radio path.

Carol is also a voice over talent and has been a voiceover and media coach. She has been a Georgia Lottery and National Lottery host or the past three decades.

She is very excited to be a part of the Morning Show on 105.5FM/1430AM with Chubb Rock and SiMan Baby.
Celebration of Leadership
2020 Honorees

Ann W. Cramer
Sr. Consultant
Coxe Curry & Associates

Steven R. Ewing
President & CEO
Wade Ford Franchise

Patrice Harris, MD
Immediate Past President
American Medical Association

Will Packer
Founder & CEO
Will Packer Productions
Ann Cramer

Ann Wilson Cramer is a senior consultant with Coxe Curry & Associates. In this role, she provides strategic consultation to nonprofit clients to strengthen their capacity in the critical areas of board development, volunteer engagement, corporate relations, and fundraising. She will also be available to the business community to provide guidance on the issues of corporate citizenship and social responsibility. In 2020, Ann received the Atlanta Business Chronicle's first Corporate Social Responsibility Lifetime Achievement Award.

Prior to joining Coxe Curry, Ann served as director for IBM Corporate Citizenship and Corporate Affairs for the Americas. In that position, she was a member of the senior management staff overseeing the company's approach to corporate citizenship, strategic philanthropy, and overall social responsibility.

Ann serves on numerous local nonprofit boards, including the Alliance Theatre Company, Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta, Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, WorkSource Atlanta, Woodruff Arts Center, Council on Foundations, Public Broadcasting Atlanta, and currently chairs the Georgia Foundation for Public Education, and served as chair of the Search Committee for the Atlanta Public Schools Superintendent and the Atlanta Regional Commission's Educated Workforce Committee. Nationally, Ann has chaired the Council on Foundations Public Policy and Corporate Committees, the Conference Board’s Business Education Council, the Executive Committee of both the U.S. Chamber's Business Civic Leadership Center and the Institute for a Competitive Workforce and the United Way of America’s National Corporate Leaders Council. In 2012, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce presented her with its first Business Civic Leadership Achievement Award.

The Women's College Coalition honored Ann and Marian Wright Edelman with the first WCC Women Creating Change Award, and Ann was one of five Georgia women to receive the first STEM Gems recognition. Recently, Ann was recognized with Ann Curry and Ann Stallard as the YWCA Women of Achievement, and with the first Lifetime Achievement Award by the Atlanta Business Chronicle's Women Who Mean Business and listed among Georgia Trend's 30 Years of Influence, received an Honorary Doctorate in Public Service at Clayton State University and was honored with the inaugural ARC Harry West Visionary Leadership Award, the Metro Atlanta Chamber's Leadership Award and Voices for Georgia's Children Big Voice. She has received the prestigious Dan Sweat Award from Central Atlanta Progress, Public Broadcasting Atlanta’s Sullivan Award and was honored with The United Way of Greater Atlanta Women’s Leadership Award. She has participated in Leadership Atlanta, Leadership Georgia, Regional Leadership Institute, is a member of Outstanding Atlanta, and is past president of the Junior League of Atlanta. Recently, she received the Woodruff Arts Center “Arts in Education” honor and the Communities In Schools Georgia “Lifetime Friend to Education” award.

Ann is a graduate of Salem College with a degree in mathematics. In 1991, she received Salem College's Alumnae Leadership Award. Ann and her husband, Jeff, are long-time residents of Inman Park and are active members of St. Luke’s Episcopal Church. They are the proud parents of two adult children.
Steve R. Ewing has dedicated his career to the automotive industry and his community. In 1983 he began his career at Apple Chevrolet in Fairlawn, New Jersey and learned and grew within the company until 1989. Ewing began as salesman and went through the ranks of sales manager to general manager. In 1989, Ewing purchased his first dealership, Crossroads Ford in East Orange, New Jersey. He owned and operated Crossroads Ford until 1992 when Ford Motor Company purchased the franchise from him. Subsequently, Ewing took a position with Ford Motor Company as an Interim Operator where he was responsible for managing franchises owned by Ford. In 1993, Ewing’s entrepreneurial spirit called again as he left Ford Motor Company to open Champion Ford. Ewing successfully grew Champion Ford with the support of Ford Motor Company’s Dealer Development Program. With great success and growth at Champion Ford, Ewing was able to pay off the Ford Motor stock in the company within four years. In 1998, Ewing opened a second dealership, Champion Nissan in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Just one year later, in 1999 Steven R. Ewing opened a third dealership, Champion Lincoln Mercury in Hazelton, Pennsylvania. Ewing successfully ran three dealerships until 2002. In 2002, Ewing sold the New Jersey and Pennsylvania dealerships and moved to Atlanta, Georgia, where he purchased Wade Ford.

Wade Ford, one of America’s largest African-American owned Ford dealership, is Atlanta’s big box Ford store. Ewing purchased Wade Ford in 2002, yet the franchise has been a staple in the metro Atlanta market since 1933. The franchise consists of three properties on South Cobb drive: a Ford retail store, a fleet vehicle facility and a Motor Trend Delivered By Wade Ford facility. In October 2010, Ewing expanded Wade Ford by opening the Wade Ford’s Motor Trend Certified Advantage program in its own facility across the street from Wade Ford. May 2014, twelve years after becoming President & CEO of Wade Ford, Ewing proudly celebrated a grand reopening ceremony at the completion of its all new sales and service facility.

Ewing earned a Bachelor of Arts from Delaware State University; he is a board member of the Southeast Ford Dealer Advertising Association; a member as well as Past President and Chairman of FMMDA; and a member of Ford Motor Company’s Marketing Dealer Advisory Board.

Ewing is a proud husband and father who enjoy traveling with his wife Terri, daughter Halle, and son Steven.
Patrice Harris, MD

Patrice A. Harris, MD, MA, a board certified psychiatrist from Atlanta, has diverse experience as a private practicing physician, county public health officer, patient advocate and medical society lobbyist. Dr. Harris was the 174th President of the American Medical Association and the first African American woman elected to that position. Dr. Harris serves as the Medical Editor in Chief for EverydayHealth.com, and is also a visiting professor of psychiatry at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Having served on the AMA Board of Trustees since 2011, and as chair from 2016 to 2017, she has long been a mentor, a role model and an advocate. Prior to serving on the board, Dr. Harris honed her broad knowledge and deep understanding of health care issues through various leadership roles. At the AMA these included having served for many years on the AMA Council on Legislation, including a term as chair, and on multiple AMA task forces on topics such as health information technology, payment and delivery reform, and private contracting.

Beyond the AMA she has held positions of leadership with the American Psychiatric Association, the Georgia Psychiatric Physicians Association, the Medical Association of Georgia, and The Big Cities Health Coalition, where she chaired this forum composed of leaders from America’s largest metropolitan health departments. She is a member of the Steering Committee of the Atlanta Regional Collaborative for Health Improvement (ARCHI) and the Board of the Georgia Aids Coalition. She has also served on the Boards of Georgia NAMI and the Mental Health Association of Georgia.

Dr. Harris currently spearheads the AMA’s efforts to end the opioid epidemic and has been chair of the AMA Opioid Task Force since its inception in 2014. Dr. Harris continues to lead the task force as it works across every state to eliminate barriers to treatment, provide patients with access to affordable, non-opioid pain care, and fight the stigma faced by those with substance use-disorders.

Dr. Harris spent her formative years at West Virginia University, earning a BA in psychology, an MA in counseling psychology and, ultimately, a medical degree in 1992. It was during this time that her passion for helping children emerged, and she completed her psychiatry residency and fellowships in child and adolescent psychiatry and forensic psychiatry at the Emory University School of Medicine. She also served as the senior policy fellow at the Barton Child Law and Policy Center at the Emory University School of Law.

A recognized expert in children’s mental health and childhood trauma, Dr. Harris has led efforts on both local and national levels to integrate public health, behavioral health and primary care services with supports for employment, housing and education.

Dr. Harris has been a speaker at national and international conferences and has given invited lectures and presentations on COVID-19, children’s mental health, childhood trauma, integration of mental health into overall health services, health equity, health policy and the intersection of athletics and health. She has been a guest expert on multiple national radio and television shows. Dr. Harris has received numerous awards in recognition of her service and leadership.

A fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, Dr. Harris continues in private practice and currently consults with both public and private organizations on health service delivery and emerging trends in practice and health policy. She is an adjunct assistant professor in the Emory Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, and an adjunct clinical assistant professor in psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Morehouse School of Medicine.
Will Packer

Will Packer, one of Hollywood's record-breaking filmmakers, has produced or executive produced a wide range of movies that have grossed more than $1 billion worldwide at the box office, including 10 films that have opened at number one. According to Blackfilm.com, Packer ranks #1 in terms of worldwide box office and studio profit based on the 14 films he has produced over the past decade.

Packer’s most recent film, “The Photograph,” debuted in February 2020. His films “Girls Trip” and “Night School” were the highest grossing comedies for 2017 and 2018, respectively. Among the other films Packer has produced include “Little,” “What Men Want,” “Ride Along 2,” “No Good Deed,” “Think Like a Man Too,” “Ride Along,” “Think Like a Man,” “Takers,” “Obsessed,” “Breaking In” and “Stomp the Yard.” Packer also served as an executive producer on the megahit “Straight Outta Compton,” a biopic of the rap group N.W.A that opened number one at the box office and has grossed over $200 million to date. Packer has an overall movie development deal with Universal Studios.

Packer’s television, digital and branded content company, Will Packer Media, produces episodic scripted and unscripted series across television and digital platforms, as well as compelling content for brand clients and short-form digital content for millennial audiences. Current productions include “Central Ave,” an entertainment and pop culture news show on Fox that starts airing in September 2020, as well as the docuseries “Blackballed,” which debuted on the mobile streaming platform Quibi in May 2020.

Most recently Will Packer Media produced “The Atlanta Child Murders,” a docuseries that appeared on Investigation Discovery; “The Disappearance of the Millbrook Twins,” which debuted on Oxygen; and “Shark Trip: Eat. Prey. Chum.,” which appeared during Discovery’s annual Shark Week programming. In addition, the original comedy series “Bigger” premiered on BET Networks’ streaming service, BET+.

Packer served as the executive producer of “Roots,” a remake of one of the most celebrated TV programs of all time, for which he received an Emmy Award nomination. He has also executive produced such prime time programming as the unique dating series “Ready to Love” (OWN), “Ambitions” (OWN), “Truth be Told” (NBC), “Uncle Buck” (ABC) and “Being Mary Jane” (BET).

Packer is a member of the esteemed Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. He has appeared on the covers of multiple magazines and has been featured in several high-profile magazine lists including Variety’s "Billion Dollar Producers” and “10 Producers to Watch” and Ebony's prestigious “Power 100 List.” In 2018 Packer won the NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Motion Picture for “Girls Trip.” Packer also received a BET Award for Best Movie for “Think Like a Man” in 2013.

A longtime Atlanta resident, Packer is a magna cum laude graduate of Florida A&M University and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering. Packer received the Meritorious Achievement Award from Florida A&M, the highest honor the university bestows.
Celebration of Leadership Past Honorees

2019
Dr. Gary A. McGaha

2018
Reverend Kenneth L. Alexander
Mr. Vernon Keenan
Regent Emeritus Elridge McMillan
Chief Erika Shields
Mr. Willie A. Watkins

2017
Mr. Roosevelt Council, Jr.
Reverend Dr. James Allen Milner, Sr.
Mr. Reginald “Ray” G. Moore
Ms. Yvonne Johnson Thomas

2016
Mr. Michael K. Anderson
Ms. Hala Moddelmog
Pastor P. L. Redmond, Jr.
The Honorable Judge Penny Brown Reynolds
Mr. Wayne Gilbert “Gil” West

2015
Ms. Debbie Alford
Mr. Rodney D. Bullard
The Honorable Shirley Clarke-Franklin
Mr. Curley Dossman, Jr.

2014
Ms. Amy Glennon
Regent Donald M. Leebern, Jr.
Ms. Erica Qualls
The Honorable Michael L. Thurmond

2013
Bishop Dale C. Bronner
Ms. Cynthia N. Day
Chancellor Henry “Hank” Huckaby
Dr. Louis W. Sullivan
Ambassador Andrew Young

2012
Reverend Dr. Cameron Alexander
Ms. Xernona Clayton
Mr. Erroll B. Davis, Jr.
Ms. Monica Pearson
Mr. Ted Turner
FRIENDS OF ATLANTA METRO BAND

Billy Barlow
Keyboard

Brian Crawford, Ph.D.
(AMSC, Associate Professor of Molecular Biology)
Trumpet

Keiunte Evans
Trombone

Duane McClain
(AMSC, Upward Bound Educational Specialist)
Drums

Dwayne McMillan
Lead Guitar

Curtis Nash
Vocals

Quiana Russau
Vocals

McCrae Watson
Bass Guitar
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BELIEVE • BEGIN • BECOME
Amerigroup

RED AND BLACK
Assistance League of Atlanta

STUDENT EMERGENCY FUND SCHOLARSHIP
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Synovus
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BOOKS AND INCIDENTALS SCHOLARSHIP
Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership, Inc.
The Frank and Velyna Johnson Scholarship
Board of Directors

ATLANTA METROPOLITAN COLLEGE FOUNDATION, INC.

MISSION: To support Atlanta Metropolitan State College in acquiring additional levels of educational excellence by securing gifts from all sectors of the community.

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Sr. Director Sales Strategy-South Division/Georgia Market, Pepsi Beverages Company

Gita Gardner, Vice Chair
President, Hendessi & Associates, LLC

Pamela D. Cross ‘86, Treasurer
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Michael Montgomery, Executive Director
Interim Director, Development & External Affairs, Atlanta Metropolitan State College

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President, Atlanta Metropolitan State College

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Retired, Georgia Power Company

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Tita Stewart
Associate Vice President, Amerigroup Community Care

Henry “Hank” Thomas
Freedom Rider, Buffalo Soldier, & Philanthropist

Michael L. Thurmond
CEO, DeKalb County, Georgia

Willie A. Watkins
CEO, Willie A. Watkins Funeral Home, Inc.

Dianne Wisner
Community & Civic Leader
PEPSICO IS PROUD TO JOIN THE ATLANTA METROPOLITAN COLLEGE FOUNDATION IN CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY LEADERS WHO HAVE TIRELESSLY EXHIBITED EXCELLENCE, PERCEIVED, PURSUED & ACHIEVED.
From here. For here.

Here is where we’re from. Here made us who we are. We believe relationships are worth more than dollars can measure. It’s a value that grows over time, strengthens under pressure, and thrives when serving others. And, we’re glad to be here.

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ANY QUESTIONS?

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#1 Graduation Rate Top in All of Georgia’s State Colleges

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