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BRYANT BRINGS GLOBAL BRAND OF HOPE TO CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY FOUNDERS WEEK
Entrepreneur, Author to Deliver March 18 Convocation Address

ATLANTA (March 10, 2011) — Clark Atlanta University President Carlton E. Brown today announced that entrepreneur, author and philanthropist John Hope Bryant, founder, chairman and CEO of Operation HOPE, will deliver the University’s 2011 Founders Week Convocation address on Friday, March 18, at 1 p.m. in the University’s L.S. Epps Gymnasium.

Born into humble beginnings, including a period of homelessness in South Central Los Angeles, Bryant began his first business enterprise, neighborhood candy sales, at the age of 10. Today, he oversees real estate, consulting, fine art, media and charitable-giving interests under his Atlanta-based Bryant Group Companies Inc. His book “Love Leadership: The New Way to Lead in a Fear-Based World” (Jossey-Bass, 2009) was number one on the Amazon.com “Hottest New Books” list and debuted on the CEO Reads Top 10 Best-Seller list.

In 1992, Bryant founded Operation HOPE, America’s first non-profit social investment banking organization, following the Rodney King riots in Los Angeles. Today, Operation HOPE operates in 69 communities and South Africa, having served more than one million individuals with funds exceeding $500 million raised from the private sector, in addition to the restructuring of $300 million in sub-prime mortgages, to empower the poor. In June 2009, he convened the first HOPE Global Financial Literacy Summit near Washington, D.C., gathering more than 850 delegates from 40 countries and six continents. Speakers included U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, FDIC Chairwoman Sheila Blair, White House Advisor Valerie Jarrett and Ambassador Andrew Young.

Bryant in 2004 was named by the World Economic Forum as one of 237 Global Leaders to work to model a better world, and continues to serve as an advisor for global financial literacy and empowerment.

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In 2008, he was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve as vice chairman of the bipartisan U.S. President’s Advisory Council on Financial Literacy, also serving as chair of the Council’s Committee on the Underserved. In fact, Bryant’s “silver rights” advocacy and the work of Operation HOPE inspired the President to issue an executive order making financial literacy federal government policy for the first time in U.S. history. In 2010, he was appointed to U.S. President Barack Obama’s Council on Financial Capability.

A widely sought-after speaker and global philanthropist, Bryant is the recipient of more than 400 honors and awards for his work to empower low-wealth communities, including Oprah Winfrey’s Use Your Life Award, People magazine’s 2002 Community Hero Award, and selection by TIME magazine as one of “America’s 50 Most Promising Leaders of the Future” in December 1994.

In 2008, Bryant, along with Crown Prince Haakon of Norway and philosopher and professor Pekka Himanenin, co-founded Global Dignity to create a new understanding by which, regardless of financial status, religion and nationality, people can assemble to celebrate a common “oneness” in being human. In 2010, Global Dignity Day was celebrated by record numbers of youth in more than 50 countries.

About Founders Week at Clark Atlanta University

Founders Week commemorates Clark Atlanta University’s historic legacy — borne from the consolidation of two prestigious, storied institutions — Atlanta University, the nation’s first African-American graduate school, founded in 1865, and Clark College, the nation’s first private, liberal arts college for African Americans, founded in 1869. The two consolidated in 1988 to become Clark Atlanta University. In addition to Bryant’s convocation address, the week’s activities include faculty and staff recognition awards, the Clark Atlanta Alumni Association’s Spirit of Greatness Gala, in addition to departmental programs and activities. For more information, go to www.cau.edu.

About Operation HOPE, Inc.

Founded in 1992, social empowerment nonprofit Operation HOPE’s mission is to expand economic opportunity in under-resourced communities through financial literacy education. HOPE promotes "silver rights" — making free enterprise and capitalism relevant and effective for the underserved. Raising more than $500 million and directing and restructuring nearly $500 million more in mortgages and economic support from the private sector, for a total of approximately $1 billion dollars in economic activity, HOPE seeks dignity and empowerment for all. Follow Operation HOPE at www.operationhope.org <http://www.operationhope.org>, www.twitter.com/operationhope <http://www.twitter.com/operationhope>, and www.facebook.com/operationhope <http://www.facebook.com/operationhope>.

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