CONGRESSMAN JAMES E. CLYBURN TO DELIVER
CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY’S
2012 COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS MAY 21

ATLANTA (April 17, 2012) – U.S. President Barack Obama said he is "one of a handful of people who, when they speak, the entire Congress listens." Now more than 750 graduates and 10,000 guests will listen when The Honorable James E. Clyburn (D-S.C.) delivers the 2012 commencement address at Clark Atlanta University (CAU) on Monday, May 21, at 8 a.m. on campus in Panther Stadium, 735 Beckwith St., S.W.

As assistant Democratic leader in the 112th Congress, the No. 3 Democrat in the U.S. House of Representatives, Clyburn is the leadership liaison to the Appropriations Committee and one of the Democratic Caucus’ primary liaisons to the White House. Working with the internal caucuses, he plays a prominent role in messaging and outreach.

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“In Congressman Clyburn, I am confident our students will find the embodiment of character, scholarship, global consciousness, and genuine servant leadership,” CAU President Carlton E. Brown said. “He is a true Renaissance man who has chosen to use his considerable intellect and influence to the benefit others.”

With humble beginnings in Sumter, S.C., Clyburn is the eldest son of an activist minister and a civic-minded beautician who 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 acts of civil disobedience.

When Clyburn came to Congress in 1993, he was elected co-president of his freshman class and quickly rose through the leadership ranks. He was elected chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus in 1999, and his reputation as a leader and consensus-builder helped him win a difficult three-way race for House Democratic Caucus vice-chair in 2002. Three years later, he was unanimously elected chair of the Democratic Caucus. When Democrats regained the House majority in 2006, Congressman Clyburn was elevated by his colleagues to House Majority Whip.

As a national leader, he has worked to respond to the needs of America’s diverse communities. Clyburn has championed rural communities, supporting the development of regional water projects, community health centers and broadband connections. He has supported higher education by leading the charge for increased Pell grants, investing millions in science and math programs, and investing in the historic preservation of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). He has encouraged economic development by securing funding for Empowerment Zones and investing in green technology development, such as nuclear, wind, hydrogen and biofuels.

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Clyburn was instrumental in advancing into law measures to resolve historic discrimination issues, significantly reducing the statutory disparity in cocaine sentencing, and compensating black and native-American farmers who suffered racial discrimination under the USDA loan program.

On Sunday, May 20, the university will hold its baccalaureate service at 10 a.m. in the L. Epps Gymnasium in the Vivian W. Henderson Health and Physical Education Center, located at the corner of Atlanta Student Movement Boulevard (formerly Fair Street) and Vine Street. The speaker is the Rev. Yvette D. Massey, senior pastor at Red Oak United Methodist Church.

This weekend, the Clark Atlanta Alumni Association will celebrate its annual May Weekend activities for alumni at the Hilton Airport. Visit www.cauaa.org for details.

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