Atlanta City Council Lauds Clark Atlanta University Efforts as Community Resource Zone in Eradicating Dating, Domestic Violence

Oct. 21 Named “The Call to True Beauty” Day, With Focus on Combating Dating, Domestic Crime

ATLANTA (Oct. 21)--Atlanta City Councilman C. T. Martin today re-designated Clark Atlanta University (CAU) as a community resource zone in the crusade to end dating and domestic violence and proclaimed the day as “The Call to True Beauty Day” in Atlanta. The declaration was made during the University’s second annual “The Call to True Beauty” press conference in observance of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Oct. 21, in the Clark Atlanta University Art Galleries, 223 James P. Brawley Dr., SW in Atlanta.

Clark Atlanta University’s annual “The Call to True Beauty” campaign seeks to lift the veil of shame and silence under which too many victims of dating and domestic violence live.

“Since Clark Atlanta last year began this program,” Mitchell said, “We have watched their persistent, unaltering work to empower a cadre of change agents in the crusade to end this crime. Their work is more important now than ever,” Mitchell added, noting the State of Georgia’s ranking as the sixth most violent state in the nation for single-perpetrator, single-victim crimes by men against women. “Against a dark litany of statistics, Clark Atlanta—which is not overrun by incidences of this crime, but clearly understands its impact on communities—provides hope and a strong, broad-reaching beacon of light.”

During today’s press conference, two presentations were made. Fonda Kay Smith received the “Survivor of the Year” Award. Smith is the voice of every morning and afternoon traffic advisory on The Jazz of the City – WCLK 91.9 FM. One year ago this month, she stood in a standing room only crowd of her peers, colleagues, business associates and live TV cameras and opened her soul -- for the first time in her personal and professional life, she shared her story of domestic abuse in one of the most public forums a media personality could imagine. Smith has worked in radio for more than 30 years and is presently the executive producer for “Men’s Health Line with Dr. Bennett,” a monthly program that focuses on men’s health issues. She is also the executive producer for “The International African Connection,” a new music program airing on WCLK. She was born and raised in Lima, Ohio, and attended Bowling Green State University, where she received her bachelor’s degree in journalism with a minor in radio, TV, film. Smith also received an associate of arts degree from Ohio State University and has begun work on her master’s degree in communications.

Harold Watkins received the “Advocate of the Year” Award. With a 29-year career with Avon Products Inc., the retired executive is as passionate about providing opportunities for youth as he is about providing resources for victims of domestic violence. He has made his mark in both fields of endeavor. Thanks, in part, to Watkins, the first class of Avon/Verizon Wireless scholars was funded in April 2010. He also was the driving force behind the development and establishment of the Avon Scholars and Ambassadors Program, CAU’s dating and domestic violence peer education and prevention program.

Through his outreach on behalf of Avon Products Inc., and having served as a board member of The Partnership Against Domestic Violence for three years, Watkins is responsible for channeling more than $250,000 in resources to aid victims and survivors of dating and domestic violence. Today, he continues that service as chair of the Friends of the Provost for Access and Excellence Advisory Board, through which he has established a mentoring track and continues to mentor CAU students, especially those engaged in the crusade to end dating and domestic violence.

The University in 2010 named 12 “Changing Seasons” scholars who, with funding from Avon Products Inc. and Verizon Wireless, committed to complete public service and community projects to advance the campaign against dating and domestic violence. The same year, the University announced the establishment of the Verizon Wireless Domestic Violence Prevention Leadership Academy in its Whitney M. Young Jr. School of Social Work. To date, five graduate fellowships have been funded, advancing the body of research in the field. The University this year launched a student peer educator training program, and also has built strong bridges with agencies, including: The Partnership Against Domestic Violence, the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Fulton County District Attorney’s Office.

(more)
According to Clark Atlanta University's Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Joseph H. Silver Sr., Ph.D., "That CAU is not overwhelmed by reported incidences of dating and domestic violence does not mean that we should be any less than diligent in our efforts to help eradicate this crime. Our goal is to create a spectrum of research, instruction, student education, awareness, advocacy and behavioral standards that can be modeled by University campuses across the nation, especially among the nation's HBCUs."

A 2000 Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report indicates that women ages 16 to 24 in dating relationships experience the highest per capita rates of dating, domestic and sexual abuse. Data report that one in five college females will experience some form of dating violence.

For more information on Clark Atlanta University or “The Call to True Beauty,” call 404-880-8337.

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