ALUMNUS, SAVANNAH MAYOR OTIS JOHNSON TO DELIVER
CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY’S
2010 FOUNDERS DAY ADDRESS

ATLANTA (MARCH 4)—Savannah Mayor Otis S. Johnson will return to his alma mater, Clark Atlanta University (CAU), to deliver the 2010 Founders Day Convocation address Thursday, March 18, at 11 a.m. in the Vivian Henderson Center’s L.S. Epps Gymnasium.

Founders Day commemorates the University’s historic legacy—borne from the consolidation of two storied institutions—Atlanta University, which granted graduate degrees, founded in 1965, and Clark College, an undergraduate institution founded in 1869. The two consolidated in 1988 to become Clark Atlanta University.

Dr. Carlton E. Brown, CAU’s third president, said that “Otis Johnson embodies the spirit of Clark Atlanta University, characterized by the University’s motto: ‘Learn. Lead. Change.’ The Mayor’s service as an educator, his breadth of service and tenacity in community advocacy and service, and his track record of progressive socioeconomic change in the City of Savannah and beyond, make him a sterling example of the Clark Atlanta University tradition and pedigree. He continues to be a source of great pride for us all.”

Johnson, the 64th mayor of Savannah, now in his second term, earned the master’s degree in social work from Atlanta University, now Clark Atlanta University, in 1969. About returning to the institution, he said: “Much of my foundational thinking about how to effectively initiate, orchestrate and manage change is the result of my own life experience and was undoubtedly informed and affirmed during my time at Atlanta University. To return to Clark Atlanta University—an institution with its own legendary track record of change agency—at this high point in the school’s academic calendar is both a great honor and a call to continued service.”

Mayor Johnson earned undergraduate degrees in Liberal Arts from Armstrong Atlantic University and History from the University of Georgia. After earning his degree from Clark Atlanta University, he earned the Ph.D. degree in Social Welfare from the Heller School of Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University.

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Mayor Johnson was a founding member of the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change in 1992 and the National Community Building Network in 1993. He was a member of the founding board of directors of the Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (G-CAPP) in 1995 and served as an At-Large member of the Georgia Municipal Association’s Board of Directors (2004-2007). He served as an elected official on the Savannah City Council (1983-1988) and the Savannah Chatham County Board of Public Education (1998-2002). He was Executive Director of the Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Program, funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, for ten years (1988-1998). He was on the faculty of Savannah State University for 26 years and retired from the position of Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences at Savannah State University in 2002.

Mayor Johnson was sworn in, as the second African-American mayor, on January 3, 2004, and again on January 2, 2008. He is nationally known in the field community building and youth development.

He serves on the board of directors of the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, MDC, and the Coastal Regional Commission of Georgia. He is a member of the National League of Cities Council on Youth, Education, and Families. He was given the Public Elected Official of the Year Award by the National Association of Social Workers at the organization’s 2005 National Awards Reception in Washington, DC.

Formed in 1988 by the consolidation of two historic institutions, Atlanta University (1865) and Clark College (1869), Clark Atlanta University is the largest of the United Negro College Fund institutions with an enrollment of nearly 4,000 students. Clark Atlanta University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097: Telephone 404-679-4501) to award the Bachelor’s, Master’s, Specialist and Doctor’s degrees. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching lists CAU as a Research University – High Research Activity. CAU is listed as one of the best southeastern colleges by The Princeton Review and has been selected to the Washington Monthly’s 2008 list of best colleges and universities. National business and consumer publications rank Clark Atlanta high among the best buys in American higher education.

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Editor’s Note: The use of the name “Founders” should not include an apostrophe.