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SUSAN L. TAYLOR TO DELIVER CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY’S 2011 COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS
Convocation Set for May 16

ATLANTA (March 25, 2011) – Clark Atlanta University President Carlton E. Brown today announced that Susan L. Taylor, editor-in-chief emeritus of Essence magazine and founder of National CARES Mentoring Movement, will deliver the University’s 2011 Commencement address on Monday, May 16, at 8 a.m. in the University’s Panther Stadium, 735 Beckwith St., in Atlanta.

A legend in the publishing world, Taylor is synonymous with Essence magazine, the brand she built, first as the publication’s fashion and beauty editor, then as editor-in-chief and ultimately as editorial director. For 27 years she authored one of the magazine’s most popular columns, “In the Spirit.”

She was the first and only African-American woman to be recognized by the Magazine Publishers of America with the Henry Johnson Fisher Award, the industry’s highest honor, and the first to be inducted into the American Society of Magazine Editors’ Hall of Fame. She is the recipient of the NAACP President’s Award for visionary leadership and has honorary degrees from more than a dozen colleges and universities.

A fourth-generation entrepreneur, Taylor grew up in Harlem working with her father in his women’s clothing store. She founded her own cosmetics company, a first for Black women, which led to the beauty editor’s position at Essence. She is the author of four books: In the Spirit: The Inspirational Writings of Susan L. Taylor; Lessons in Living; Confirmation: The Spiritual Wisdom That Has Shaped Our Lives, which she co-authored with her husband, Khephra Burns; and her most recent, All About Love, Favorite Selections from In the Spirit on Living Fearlessly. She is a highly sought-after speaker, inspiring hope and encouraging audiences to reclaim their lives and create sustainable communities.

She is an avid supporter of a host of organizations dedicated to moving the Black community forward, but her passion and focus today is the National CARES Mentoring Movement, a call to action she founded in 2006 as Essence Cares. The CARES Mentoring Movement is a massive campaign to recruit one million able adults to help secure children who are in peril and losing ground. The goals of the CARES movement are to increase high school graduation rates among African-American students, end the violence in Black communities and the over-incarceration of our young.

Taylor is a co-founder of Future PAC, the first national political action committee devoted to providing a network of support and sources of funding for progressive African-American women seeking federal and state-level political offices. She is co-chair with actor Danny Glover of Shared Interest, a capital campaign to raise money to build housing in the rural areas of South Africa, and serves on the boards of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies and the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center. She also has worked passionately to help restore the lives of people in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region who were devastated by hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

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