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GEORGE T. FRENCH, JR., PH.D.
P R E S I D E N T

April 17, 2022

The Clark Atlanta University (CAU) community, globally, is saddened by the news of the transition of its founding President, Thomas W. Cole, Jr. Ph.D. President Cole was a giant among the landscape of American Higher Education leaders and a celebrated colleague, particularly among the Historically Black College and University community and the many federal agencies that supported the sciences.

Appointed in 1987 as the president of both Atlanta University and Clark College, to simultaneously manage both institutions and create a consolidation plan, President Cole was appointed the Founding President of Clark Atlanta University in 1988. During his tenure as president of Clark Atlanta University, President Cole launched phase one of the institution's first Capital Campaign (***The University for A New Day Campaign***). The effort exceeded its \$9 million goal, raising \$11.5 million. Dr. Cole also served as the Chairman of the United Negro College Fund member presidents.

His scholarship, leadership, vision, and strategic positioning propelled CAU into the elite ranks among U.S. Comprehensive, Doctoral Universities, which was noted in a Chronicle of Higher Education front-page article titled, ***The Remarkable Rise of Clark Atlanta University.***

President Cole profoundly loved Clark Atlanta University. His deep appreciation for the entire CAU family was felt by all, including faculty, staff, and most importantly, the students. He was a students' president. He knew students by name, and every decision he made was led with the best interest of the students and the university in mind.

Dr. Cole began his professional career in 1966 as an assistant professor at Atlanta University, where he taught chemistry. From 1970 through 1979, Cole served as the chemistry department chair. From 1969 through 1979, he served as the Fuller E. Callaway Professor of Chemistry, and in 1979 he was named Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs until 1982.

Cole also worked as a research scientist for Proctor & Gamble and the Celanese Fiber Company. From 1982 to 1986, he was president of West Virginia State College and subsequently appointed Chancellor of the West Virginia Board of Regents, one of four African Americans to lead a state system of public higher education at the time.

President Cole was a giant of a man, who will be cherished and forever distinguished. Today, Dr. Bacon French and I embrace Judge Brenda Hill Cole and family during this difficult time. President Cole was friend and confidant to our family for which we will forever be grateful.

Additional details will be publicized within the next few days. The family has requested in lieu of flowers gifts be made to the Thomas W. Cole Jr., Scholarship Fund at Clark Atlanta University.

Yours in Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George T. French, Jr." in a cursive script.

George T. French, Jr., Ph.D.
President