



History of the Annual Business Luncheon

In the late 1980s, Tougaloo College's business and corporate donor base remained largely outside of the state of Mississippi. During the fall of 1987, the late Reverend Charlie Baldwin, Chaplain Emeritus, Brown University, a consultant to the college, urged the senior administrators and board of trustees to take steps to strengthen the college's position in the local business community. While the vision was wholeheartedly endorsed, there was uncertainty about how to move forward and mitigate the historical and obvious challenges. After several months of discussions among the administration and trustees, in particular Vice Chair Reuben V. Anderson, it was decided that the best vehicle would be a noon day luncheon where 25-50 key business leaders would be invited.

The inaugural luncheon, held in the Penthouse of the Jackson Hilton Hotel, was attended by 50-75 individuals. Encouraged by the success, the college's leadership decided to make the luncheon an annual event in February. Coordinated over the years by the Office of Institutional Advancement, the Luncheon has become a signature event in the business community. The luncheon serves as a platform for the college to recognize and express appreciation to companies, organizations and individuals who have supported Tougaloo's mission and vision.

More than thirty years forward, the Business Luncheon will bring together more than 300 business and community leaders, policy makers and educators who exchange ideas on the economic opportunities and challenges from a state, national and global perspective. Increasingly, the global economy requires leaders and workers who are more productive and resilient and who are learners for life. Tougaloo understands that real work experience differentiates all students and the global experience tells future employers that students are risk-takers, explorers, go-getters and they have what it takes to work in unfamiliar environments. It is imperative that our institutions of higher learning and businesses rise to the challenge of better preparing our students for post baccalaureate success in ways that improve their lives, their communities, and influence the global economy.

The list of Annual Business Luncheon notable keynote speakers include:

- The Allstate Corporation and Allstate Insurance Company Chairman and CEO Edward “Ed” Liddy
- AOL General Manager and Senior Vice President of Key Audiences Kenneth L. Turner
- American Express CEO Ken Chenault
- American Spirit Media Founder, President, and CEO Thomas B. Henson
- Bellsouth Chairman of the Board and CEO F. Duane Ackerman
- Bloomberg L.P. Global Head of Diversity and Inclusion Erika Irish Brown
- Cassidy & Associates Lobbyist Peter Madigan
- Caesars Entertainment President and CEO Wallace R. Barr
- Coca-Cola Foundation Chairman and Coca-Cola Company Senior Vice President for Global Community Connections Ingrid Saunders Jones
- Delta Airlines CEO Leo Mullins
- Economist and Political Strategist Ira Magaziner
- Entergy Mississippi Inc. President and CEO Haley Fisackerly
- FedEx Corporation Senior Vice President of Government Affairs Gina Adams
- FORBES Publisher and Owner Timothy C. Forbes
- GE Foundation CEO Clifford Smith
- General Mills President of Snacks Division Anton V. Vincent
- Graystone Consulting Executive Director, Institutional Consulting Director/Financial Advisor Garry Bridgeman
- Johnson Controls Foundation President and Johnson Controls Inc. Vice President of Diversity and Public Affairs Charles A. Harvey
- Lockheed Martin Vice President for Health and Civil IT Programs (DC operations) Douglas Ash
- Maxwell House Coffee Company President Ann Fudge
- Nissan North America Chief Financial Officer James C. Morton
- SBS Associates Author and Consultant Steven B. Schlosstein
- The Kroger Company CEO Joseph Pichler, Ph.D.
- The World Bank Senior Economist Hippolyte Fofack, Ph.D.
- U.S. News & World Report Publisher Peter Bernstein
- United Negro College Fund President and CEO Michael Lomax
- Wall Street Broker Marianne Spraggins
- Walt Disney World Executive Director of Minority Business Relations Thomas Flewellyn
- Watkins Partners President and CEO David Watkins
- Les Bond, Chief Executive Officer, Attucks Assessment Management
- Huntington Ingalls Industries President and CEO Mike Petters