



For Immediate Release

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Cheryl Brown Henderson, whose father filed *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, to keynote MLK Convocation and receive *For My People* Award with Rod Paige, Michael A. Middleton, and John Perkins.

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Jackson, MS—The Margaret Walker Center for the Study of the African American Experience at Jackson State University is pleased to announce that Cheryl Brown Henderson will be the keynote speaker for the 49th annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Birthday Convocation at 10 a.m. on Friday, January 13, in the Rose E. McCoy Auditorium on the JSU campus.

Cheryl Brown Henderson is one of three daughters of the late Rev. Oliver L. Brown who, along with 12 other parents in the fall of 1950, led by attorneys for the NAACP, filed suit on behalf of their children against the local Board of Education. Their case joined

with cases from Delaware, South Carolina, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. on appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court and, on May 17, 1954, became known as the landmark decision *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka*. Today, Henderson is the Founding President of the Brown Foundation for Educational Equity, Excellence and Research, and owner of Brown & Associates, an educational consulting firm. She has an extensive background in education, business and civic leadership, political advocacy, public policy implementation, and federal legislative development.

Margaret Walker began MLK Convocation at Jackson State to honor Dr. King just nine months after his assassination in 1968, making it one of the oldest celebrations of his life in the nation. “More than 1,000 people attend each year,” said Robert Luckett, Director of the Margaret Walker Center.

Immediately following MLK Convocation, the Margaret Walker Center will honor Henderson as well as Rod Paige, Michael A. Middleton, and John Perkins with *For My People* Awards for their contributions to African American history and culture. The luncheon will begin at 11:45 a.m. in the JSU Student Center Ballroom. This annual award is named after Margaret Walker’s classic poem, *For My People*, and past recipients have included James Meredith, Unita Blackwell, Robert Clark, Lerone Bennett, Andrew Young, Jesse Mosley, Reena Evers-Everette, Charlayne Hunter-Gault, Juan Williams, and others.

As the Interim President of Jackson State University, Dr. Rod Paige has returned to alma mater, where he was once football coach, after a career capped by serving as Secretary of Education under President George W. Bush. Similarly, Mr. Michael A. Middleton, raised in Mississippi, serves as the Interim President at the University of Missouri, where he came to the helm after student protests on campus led to



changes in the administration. Finally, Rev. John Perkins, founder of the John and Vera Mae Perkins Foundation, is honored for his lifetime commitment to activism in Mississippi and throughout the nation.

While MLK Convocation is free and open to the public, tickets for this year's *For My People* Awards luncheon can be purchased through the Margaret Walker Center for \$20.

For more information, contact the Center's staff at 601-979-3935 or mwa@jsums.edu.



Dr. Rod Paige



Mr. Michael A. Middleton



Rev. John Perkins