

Presidential Documents

Proclamation 7025 of September 19, 1997

National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

we are a few short years away from the dawn of the 21st century, yet much of the challenge and change we have been anticipating is already upon us. We are competing today in a truly global economy, an economy based on information and technology as well as agriculture and industry. We are living in the age of the information revolution, the era of the World Wide Web, of daily advances in communications technology where a universe of knowledge is only a keyboard and a modem away. We are crossing the frontier into a new world, and our only map and compass in that world will be education.

We must build an educational system that prepares our young people for the jobs of the future. We must empower them with the values, experiences, and self-confidence to succeed in our diverse society. We must provide them with the knowledge and motivation to reach their full human potential—and we must leave no one behind. In devising such an educational system, we need only look to America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) for a model of excellence.

This extraordinary network of institutions, more than a century old, has created a legacy of unquestioned accomplishment in fostering student success. Founded to educate African Americans in a segregated society, these colleges and universities have flourished and built an enviable record of achievement in educating America's black scientists, doctors, teachers, lawyers, artists, entrepreneurs, community and religious leaders, and other professionals. They have provided generations of students with access to highly supportive environments for learning. The experience and expertise of HBCUs make them an invaluable resource to our Nation during this period of significant change.

America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities daily demonstrate effective leadership in a multitude of ways: they develop and practice innovative academic approaches to ensure student success; they create campus programs that offer new solutions to critical social problems; they produce cutting-edge research with practical applications; and they forge strong global relationships from a myriad of international activities. Moreover, against formidable financial odds, they have persisted in keeping education affordable for the constituencies they serve, without sacrificing quality. They have never allowed scarce funding, poor educational preparation, or societal disadvantage to get in the way of their mission to educate and nurture the intellectual potential of the black community.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities have done more to make the American Dream a reality for African Americans than has any other set of institutions in our country. These institutions are poised to enter the 21st century, ready to build on this tradition of excellence, achievement, and reverence for education. We can count on them to continue to make vital contributions to our Nation's success and to ensure that America lives up to our fundamental values of equality and opportunity.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 21 through September 27, 1997, as National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week. I call upon the people of the United States, including government officials, educators, and administrators, to observe this week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities honoring America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities and their graduates.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this nineteenth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William J. Clinton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "W" and "C".

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