

The Investiture of
ROBERT O. SCOTT, PH.D
ELEVENTH PRESIDENT OF
ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY



Friday April 10, 2026

TWO O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON
BILLY C. BLACK AUDITORIUM
EAST CAMPUS

DR. JOSEPH WINTHROP HOLLEY — (1903–1943) "You can't build a chimney from the top."

ROBERT O. SCOTT, Ph.D.

ELEVENTH PRESIDENT OF ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY



ROBERT O. SCOTT, PH.D.

Dr. Robert Scott became the 11th president of Albany State University on May 1, 2025, bringing with him a distinguished career spanning higher education, scientific research, and global industry leadership. A first-generation college graduate, Dr. Scott earned his bachelor's degree from Norfolk State University, a historically Black university, as a DNIMAS Scholar, and later became the first DNIMAS Scholar to earn a Ph.D., completing his doctoral studies in biology at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Dr. Scott's career reflects a deep commitment to student success, innovation, and partnership. He has served as a biology professor and academic leader at institutions including Norfolk State University, Boston College, and Spelman College, and held senior research and development leadership roles at Procter & Gamble, The Coca-Cola Company, Abbott Nutrition, and The Kraft Heinz Company. Across each role, he has championed industry-academic collaboration as a strategic catalyst for expanding opportunity, strengthening workforce readiness, and driving economic impact.

As president, Dr. Scott has articulated a clear vision for Albany State University centered on student excellence, accountability, and sustainable growth. From the outset of his presidency, he has focused on laying a strong foundation for future success by fostering a culture grounded in trust, shared responsibility, and high expectations. In his first eight months, the university has experienced steady enrollment with a notable increase in graduate enrollment, achieved historic athletic success, expanded research and innovation initiatives, strengthened community, alumni, and industry partnerships, and opened new campus facilities that support student life and learning. Together, these efforts reflect a deliberate culture shift designed to position Albany State University for long-term impact.

Dr. Scott leads Albany State University with deep respect for its history, an unwavering belief in the RAMily, and a bold commitment to fulfilling its future by Reigniting the Flame.



TM

TM

ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1903, Albany State University stands as one of Georgia's most enduring institutions of higher education and a cornerstone of opportunity in the state and region. For more than a century, ASU has advanced academic excellence, social mobility, and economic impact, preparing generations of students to lead, serve, and transform their communities.

The University was established by Dr. Joseph Winthrop Holley as the Albany Bible and Manual Training Institute, created to provide religious instruction, basic education, and teacher preparation for the local Black community. At a time when educational opportunities for African Americans were severely limited, Dr. Holley's vision offered access, dignity, and advancement through disciplined learning and self-sufficiency.

In 1917, the State of Georgia began providing financial support, granting the school two-year status and renaming it the Georgia Normal and Agricultural College. The expanded curriculum included agricultural training, strengthening the institution's mission to equip students with practical skills alongside academic preparation.

By 1943, the institution had joined the University System of Georgia and was granted four-year status as Albany State College, solidifying its role as a leading center for higher education in the region with programs spanning teacher education, the humanities, social sciences, and health sciences.

During the early 1960s, Albany State students stood at the center of the national civil rights movement, joining Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in the historic Albany Movement. That legacy of courage, conviction, and community remains central to ASU's identity to this day.

In 1981, following significant growth in doctoral faculty, the institution began offering graduate programs. Continued academic expansion led the Board of Regents to rename the institution Albany State University in 1996, reflecting its broadened scope and maturity.

Parallel to ASU's growth, Albany Junior College was founded in 1963 to expand access to higher education in Southwest Georgia. The institution evolved into Darton College in 1987 and later Darton State College in 2012, following approval of its first four-year nursing program, becoming a vital educational resource for the region.

On November 10, 2015, the Board of Regents voted unanimously to consolidate Albany State University and Darton State College, uniting their rich traditions, complementary strengths, and shared commitment to student success into one stronger, more comprehensive institution.

THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

When Dr. Joseph Winthrop Holley founded Albany State University in the early 20th century, the Old President's House became more than a residence, it became the heartbeat of an institution in the making. Through its walls passed the decisions, the sacrifices, and the vision that would shape generations.

It stood witness when Albany State students and faculty placed themselves at the forefront of the civil rights movement, not as bystanders, but as architects of change. It endured through consolidation, national recognition, and transformation, quietly anchoring every chapter of growth.

Today, more than 120 years later, it remains. A testament not to brick and mortar, but to something far more enduring: the unwavering belief that education has the power to change lives, and that Georgia's largest public HBCU was built, from the very beginning, to prove it.



ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY
PRESIDENTS

“A Past to Cherish . . . A Future to Fulfill”

1903 - 1943

Joseph Winthrop Holley, D.D., LL.D.

1943 - 1953

Aaron Brown, Ph.D., LL.D., Ed.D.

1953 - 1965

William H. Dennis, LL.D.

1965 - 1969

Thomas Miller Jenkins, J.D., LL.D.

1969 - 1980

Charles L. Hayes, Ed.D.

1980 - 1996

Billy C. Black, Ph.D.

1996 - 2005

Portia Holmes Shields, Ph.D.

2005 - 2013

Everette J. Freeman, Ed.D.

2013 - 2018

Arthur N. Dunning, Ph.D.

2018 - 2024

Marion Ross Fedrick, Ed.D.

2025 - Present

Robert O. Scott, Ph.D.



THE INVESTITURE OF ROBERT O. SCOTT, PH.D.
ELEVENTH PRESIDENT OF ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY
ORDER OF PROGRAM

Presiding
Annice Yarber-Allen, Ph.D.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Musical Prelude	Albany State University Chamber Ensemble <i>Professor Maurice Le Flore and Dr. Remus Webb, Directors</i>
Official Processional	Albany State University Chamber Ensemble “Pomp and Circumstance” <i>Professor Maurice Le Flore and Dr. Remus Webb, Directors</i>
Presentation of Colors	Albany State University ROTC
National Anthem	“The Star-Spangled Banner” by Francis Scott Key <i>Performed by Kayla “Desirae” Calahan Senior, Visual and Performing Arts Theatre Major</i>
Welcome	Ms. Kiersten Jones <i>83rd Miss Albany State University</i> Mr. Brison Williams <i>13th Mister Albany State University</i>
Invocation and Reflections	Rev. Carl White <i>Pastor, Friendship Missionary Baptist Church</i>
Occasion	Clifford Porter, J.D. <i>Class of 1994, Albany State College</i>
Remarks from the Board of Regents, University System of Georgia	Mr. Chris Cannon <i>Regent, Second District</i>
Legislative Leadership Greetings	The Honorable Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. <i>United States House of Representatives, District 2-GA</i> The Honorable Freddie Powell-Sims <i>Georgia State Senate, District 12</i>

THE INVESTITURE OF ROBERT O. SCOTT, PH.D.

ELEVENTH PRESIDENT OF ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY

ORDER OF PROGRAM

Presiding

Annice Yarber-Allen, Ph.D.

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Legislative Leadership Greetings

The Honorable Gerald Greene

Georgia State House of Representatives, District 154

The Honorable Tremaine “Teddy” Reese

Georgia State House of Representatives, District 140

Mrs. Bárbara Rivera-Holmes

Georgia Commissioner of Labor

USG President Greetings

Christopher Blake, Ph.D.

President, Middle Georgia State University

Paul Jones, Ph.D.

President, Fort Valley State University

Community Leadership Greetings

Mr. Matt Reed

President and CEO, Albany Chamber of Commerce

Pastor Kenneth Bevel

Sherwood Baptist Church

Musical Selection

Albany State University Chamber Singers

Dr. Erikka Edwards, Conductor

Campus Leadership Greetings

Dr. Uzoma Okafor

President, ASU Faculty Senate

Mrs. Rachel Lawrence

Chair, ASU Staff Council

Mr. Jonathan Bing

President, ASU Student Government Association

Mrs. Sharmagne Goff

Class of 1983, Albany State College

President, ASU National Alumni Association

THE INVESTITURE OF ROBERT O. SCOTT, PH.D.
ELEVENTH PRESIDENT OF ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY

ORDER OF PROGRAM

Presiding
Annice Yarber-Allen, Ph.D.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Friends and Family Greetings

Dr. Steve Meller
Mentor

Mr. Clevester Jones
Friend

Ms. Nadia M. Scott
Daughter

Mr. Robert L. Scott
Son

Ms. Lydia R. Scott
Daughter

Musical Selection

Albany State University Chamber Singers
Dr. Erikka Edwards, Conductor

Investiture of the President Charge and Presentation of Medallion

Sonny Perdue, DVM
Chancellor, University System of Georgia

Investiture Address

Robert O. Scott, Ph.D.
President, Albany State University

Special Presentation

Ms. Katherine M. Kikivarakis and Ms. Samala Carrington
Co-Chairs, Investiture Committee

Alma Mater

Albany State University Chamber Singers
Arranged by Marcia Hood; Dr. Erikka Edwards, Conductor

Retiring of Colors

Albany State University ROTC

Benediction

Rev. Carl White
Pastor, Friendship Missionary Baptist Church

Recessional

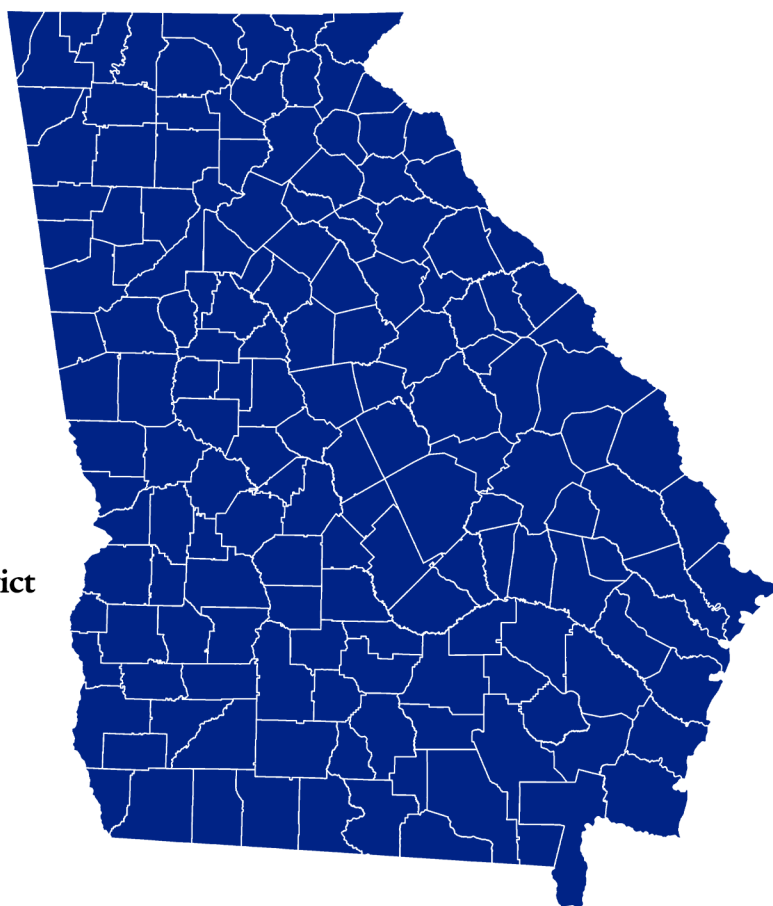
Albany State University Chamber Ensemble
Professor Maurice Le Flore and Dr. Remus Webb, Directors

UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA BOARD OF REGENTS

The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia was created in 1931 as a part of a reorganization of Georgia's state government. With this act, public higher education in Georgia was unified for the first time under a single governing and management authority. The governor appoints members of the Board to a seven-year term and regents may be reappointed to subsequent terms by a sitting governor. Regents donate their time and expertise to serve the state through their governance of the University System of Georgia; the position is a voluntary one without financial remuneration.

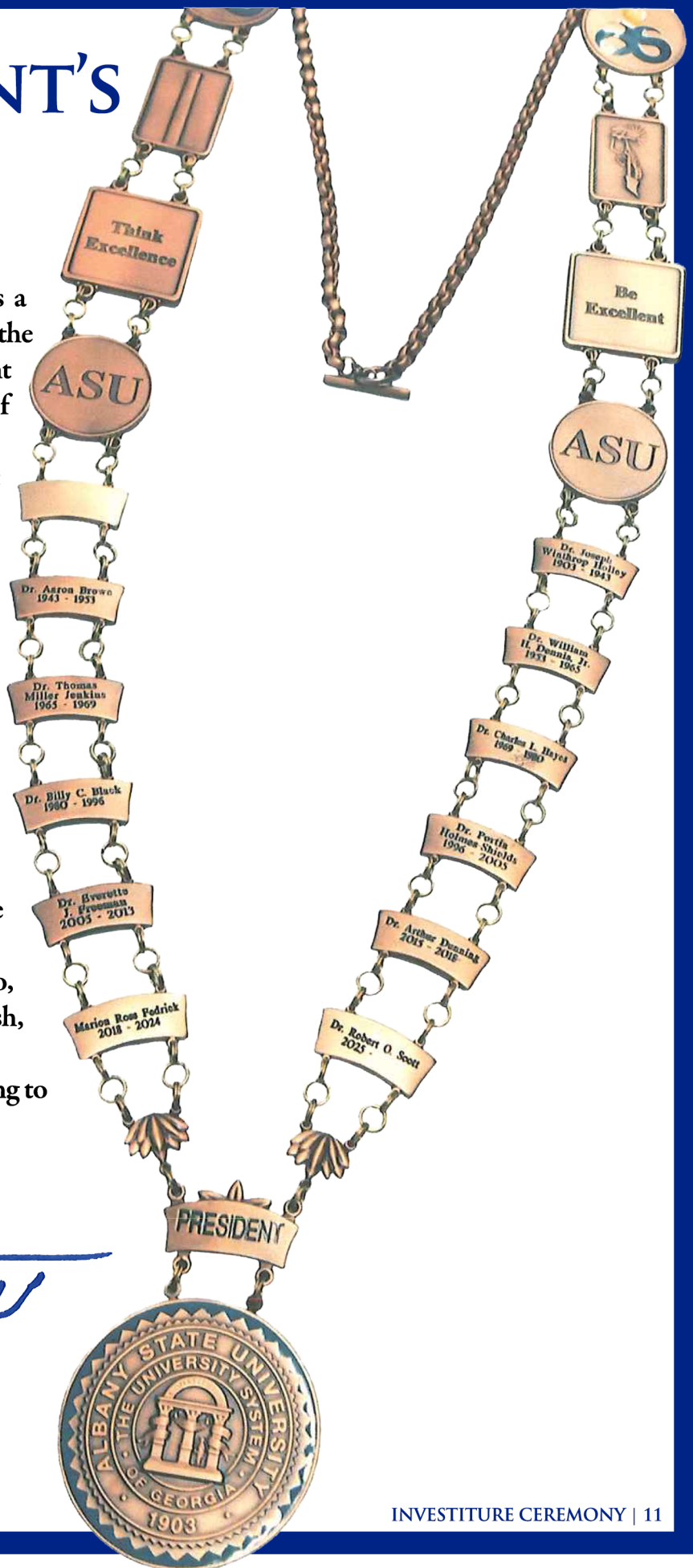
Today the Board of Regents is composed of 19 members, five of whom are appointed from the state-at-large, and one from each of the state's 14 congressional districts. The Board elects a chancellor who serves as its chief executive officer and the chief administrative officer of the University System. The Board oversees the public colleges and universities that comprise the University System of Georgia and has oversight of the Georgia Archives and the Georgia Public Library System.

Tom Bradbury – Sixth District
Chris Cannon – Second District
David B. Dove (Chair) – Eleventh District
Richard Evans – At-Large
Erin Hames – At-Large
Samuel D. Holmes – At-Large
James M. Hull – At-Large
Cade Joiner – Fourth District
Patrick C. Jones – First District
C. Everett Kennedy, III – Twelfth District
Lowery Houston May – Fourteenth District
Neil L. Pruitt, Jr. – At Large
Harold Reynolds – Tenth District
Dr. Deep J. Shah (Vice Chair) – Seventh District
T. Dallas Smith – Fifth District
Haynes M. Studstill – Eighth District
Mat Swift – Third District
James K. Syfan III – Ninth District



THE PRESIDENT'S CHAIN OF OFFICE

The Albany State University chain of office is a bronze enameled necklace that symbolizes the authority vested in the Office of the President by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents. Historical in its inception, the chain of office is worn by the president on ceremonial occasions. The head of the school's governing body carries the chain of office in the investiture procession and places it on the neck of the new president at the moment he or she is installed. Attached to the base is a large medallion, engraved with the official Albany State University seal, encircled in blue. The medallion is suspended from a chain, detailing the university's rich past and promising future. The links that are engraved with each university president lead from the base of the center of the chain. From there, historical university markers such as the university logo, the "Soil to Sun" sculpture, "A Past to Cherish, a Future to Fulfill," and the Caroline Hall Chimney are engraved on ornaments leading to the chain's crown.



Robert O. Scott

THE MACE

Dating back to medieval times when it was used as a weapon, the mace is now a recognized symbol of authority. Traditionally, colleges and universities use the mace to depict each institution's mission. The mace is carried in all formal academic processions that include the president of the university.

The Old University Mace



The mace for Albany State University is made of mahogany and was carved by African artists in Tanzania. This particular mace reveals a hand outstretched to God in reverence and supplication. The opening at its top symbolically articulates the concept that man, working through God, cannot only improve but also flourish.

The New University Mace



After many years of distinguished service, Albany State University will retire its ceremonial mace and introduce a newly designed mace that reflects both its proud legacy and its promising future. The new mace is thoughtfully crafted to accommodate our Founder, Dr. Joseph W. Holley, and the names of past presidents, as well as the current, Dr. Robert O. Scott. It also prominently features symbols that beautifully honor the institution's rich history.

Crafted by Medalcraft Mint, Inc., the mace features a 42-inch walnut staff with notches, finished in a rich cordovan stain. It has two antique brass banners encircling the staff, with the previous inaugurated presidents engraved to commemorate their names and terms.

The mace head is a four-sided walnut crown adorned with brass, bearing three of Albany State's most iconic symbols and, on one face, the University seal. At its pinnacle rests the traditional layered flame of knowledge, an enduring symbol of enlightenment and academic excellence. The base is accented with a tiered brass foot, providing a dignified and elegant foundation.

This new ceremonial mace stands as a meaningful tribute to the institution's heritage while symbolizing its continued growth, leadership, and commitment to excellence.

ACADEMIC REGALIA

Academic gowns and hoods worn for Commencement celebration and other formal academic ceremonies originated during the Middle Ages to keep monks and their students warm in drafty castles and halls. Over time, they became a symbol of academic pursuit, setting the academic community apart. The mortarboard evolved from skull caps worn by churchmen officiating at church ceremonies.

In 1984, the gown became standardized when the American Intercollegiate Commission determined that all academic robes would be black. The master's degree gown has long, closed sleeves while the doctoral degree gown has a facing of velvet extending from the hem to the neck and back with three velvet bands around each sleeve above the elbow. Hoods, which are the most distinctive feature of academic attire, are lined with silk in the colors of the institution granting the academic degree and trimmed in velvet in a color representing the field of study. The colors associated with the different subjects are as follows:

Agriculture.....	Maize
Architecture/Fine Arts.....	Brown
Arts and Letters.....	White
Business.....	Light Brown
Dentistry.....	Lilac
Economics.....	Copper
Education.....	Light Blue
Engineering.....	Orange
Forestry.....	Russet
Journalism.....	Crimson
Law.....	Purple
Library Sciences.....	Lemon
Medicine.....	Green
Music.....	Pink
Nursing.....	Apricot
Oratory.....	Silver Gray
Pharmacy.....	Olive Green
Philosophy.....	Dark Blue
Physical Education.....	Sage Green
Public Administration.....	Peacock Blue
Public Health.....	Salmon Pink
Science.....	Golden Yellow
Social Work.....	Citron
Theology.....	Scarlet
Veterinary Sciences.....	Gray

ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY CABINET & DEANS

Cabinet

Annice Yarber-Allen, Ph.D.

*Provost and Vice President
Academic Affairs*

Cornelius Wooten, Ph.D.

*Vice President and Chief Business Officer
Finance and Administration*

Jarrold D. Benjamin, Ph.D.

*Vice President
Student Affairs and Enrollment Management*

Troy Beetz

*Vice President and Chief University Growth Officer
Institutional Advancement*

Katherine Kikivarakis, C.I.A., M.B.A.

*Assistant Vice President and Chief Audit Officer
Office of Internal Audits*

Crystal M. James, J.D., M.P.H.

*Chief Legal Affairs Officer
Office of Legal Affairs*

Shayla Thomas, M.S.L.

*Vice President and Chief People Officer
Human Resources*

Kristene Kelly, Ed.D.

*Athletics Director
Department of Athletics*

Allen Vital, Ph.D.

*Vice President
Strategy and University Affairs
Office of the President*

Deans

Professor Charles Williams

*Interim Dean
College of Arts and Sciences*

Peter Ajongwa Ngwafu, Ph.D.

*Dean
College of Business, Education and Professional Studies*

Sarah G. Brinson, Ed.D., PTA

*Dean
Darton College of Health Professions*



DELEGATES FROM ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

Listed in Order of Founding

This list is complete as of March 23, 2026.

University of Georgia | 1785

Juanita W. Hicks, Ed.D.

Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer

Augusta University | 1828

Douglas Patten, MD

Associate Dean, Medical College of Georgia

Gordon State College | 1852

Joann Ardovini, Ph.D.

Provost

Morris Brown College | 1881

Kevin James, Ed.D.

President

Middle Georgia State University | 1884

Christopher Blake, Ph.D.

President

Savannah State University | 1890

Jermaine Whirl, Ed.D.

President

Fort Valley State University | 1895

Paul Jones, Ph.D.

President

Georgia Southern University | 1906

Kendria Lee, MBA

Associate Vice President for

External Affairs

University of West Georgia | 1906

Christopher K. Johnson, Ph.D.

Dean, Richards College of Business

Valdosta State University | 1906

David Slykhuis, Ph.D.

Dean, College of Education and Human Services

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College | 1908

Jason S. Goodner, Ph.D.

Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

College of Coastal Georgia | 1961

Johnny L. Evans, Jr. Ph.D.

President

Dalton State College | 1963

Kate Maine, Ed.D.

Vice President of Marketing, Communication and Workforce Development

Georgia Highlands College | 1970

Mr. Jamie Petty

Vice President, Finance and Administration

Atlanta Metro College | 1974

Tocarro Combs, Ed.D.

Director of Student Life & Engagement/Student Conduct Officer

STUDENT DELEGATES

Albany State University Student Government Association

Jonathan Bing
President

Ryann Ruffin
Vice President of Finance

Stacey Woods
Senate Chair

Dania Wadley
Chief of Staff

Adam Hatchett
Vice President

Wesley Miller
Chief Justice

Brandice Ingram
Executive Assistant

INVESTITURE COMMITTEE

Katherine Kikivarakis, Co-Chair

Assistant Vice President and Chief Audit Officer, Office of Internal Audits

Samala Carrington, Co-Chair

Associate Vice President, Institutional Advancement

Anita Allen
Chief
Albany State University Police Department

Antonio Leroy
Director
Housing and Residence Life

Dr. Sarah Brinson
Dean,
Darton College of Health Professions

Latoya Parker
Senior Executive Assistant
Office of the President

Michelle Campbell
Project Manager
Facilities Management

Marion Ryant
Assistant Vice President and Chief Budget Officer
Finance and Administration

Dr. Brandon Henry
Assistant Professor
Department of Biological Sciences

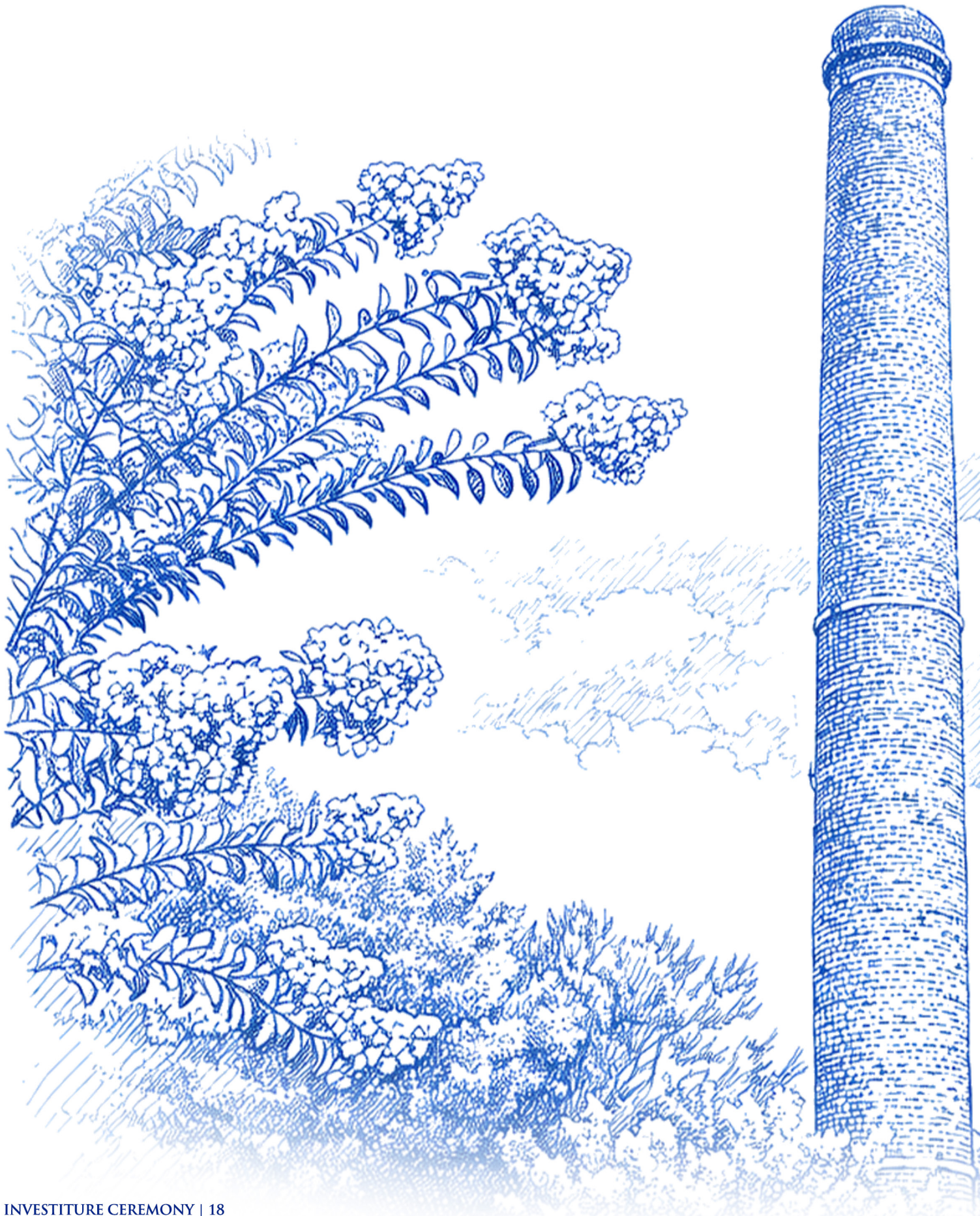
Dedra Williams
Dean, Student Development
Student Life and Activities

Kristene Jones
Director
Auxiliary Services

Brandon Willis
Coordinator of Presidential Operations
Office of the President

Rachel Lawrence
Social Media and Marketing Specialist
University Marketing and Communications





ALMA MATER

Albany State, we dearly love you,
Whose walls are inscribed with knowledge so true.
So solidly built on this foundation,
A union of work and inspiration.
Teacher for those who strive for success;
To thee we give praises above all the rest.

Thy jubilant colors of blue and gold
We'll ever honor, ever behold;
Thy name is an anchor upon life's sea,
And sailing, we put our trust in thee.
In thee, dear school, we see all the best;
To thee we give praises above all the rest.



ROSE

REIGNITING THE FLAME