

Bennett College announces it has raised \$8.2 Million in its nationwide #StandWithBennett Campaign – Money to help bolster appeal to remain accredited by SACSCOC

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Stand with Bennett supporters celebrate upon hearing that the College has raised \$8.2 million

GREENSBORO, N.C. – Bennett College President Dr. Phyllis Worthy Dawkins announced on Monday that the College has raised \$8.2 million in its #StandWithBennett Campaign.

“So, we’ve come to the moment that you’ve been waiting for,” Dawkins said inside a packed Annie Merner Pfeiffer Chapel. “As of today, and let me just say we’re still counting. We are still counting money. But as of today, Bennett College has raised \$8.2 million.”

Dawkins’ announcement was met with jubilation, as Bennett students, alumnae and others began jumping up and down in their pews. Many cried, others hugged and some looked shocked.

After the total was announced, Brooke Ashley Kane, Miss Bennett College, spoke briefly.

"I would like to thank everyone for coming here today (and) for the many gifts we received," said Kane, a political science major from Upper Marlboro, Maryland. "It is a blessing. But I want my Bennett sisters to remember that the bell is our icon and it represents our school. Bells are strong, and they will never stop historically ringing. As Bennett Belles we too are strong, and we must hold ourselves to a higher standard and ensure that our ringing voices are heard, not only for the sisterhood within these gates but in the world in which we expect to make a difference."

The Bennett College Choir, under the leadership of alumna Dorthea L. Taylor '99, closed the event by leading the audience in "The Preference Song." Afterward, Dawkins kept her promise to ring Bennett's bell if the College reached its goal of raising a minimum of \$5 million. A reception ensued in the Wilbur Steele Hall Art Gallery.

The press conference began with an invocation from the Reverend Jamal Bryant, pastor of New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Atlanta. New Birth donated \$16,000 to the College and was one of the first faith-based institutions to contribute to the campaign.

Dr. Gladys Ashe Robinson '71, chair of the Bennett College Board of Trustees, Gwendolyn Mackel Rice '61, president of the Bennett College Alumnae Association, and Shani McMichael, valedictorian of the class of 2018, also spoke. McMichael entered Bennett with a 2.3 GPA but graduated with a near-perfect 3.9 GPA and is now in graduate school at Columbia University. A postcard bearing a photo of her speaking at Commencement was used throughout the campaign to help raise money.

Also speaking at the press conference were LaDaniel Gatling, II, vice president for institutional advancement, Kwanza Jones, who with her husband José E. Feliciano announced a \$1 million gift to the College during the press conference, and High Point University President Dr. Nido Qubein.

On Feb. 1, Bennett's deadline for raising the \$5 million, Qubein announced during a press conference inside HPU's Charles E. Hayworth Memorial Chapel that HPU was pledging up to \$1 million to Bennett as a challenge grant.

At Monday's press conference, Qubein came bearing more gifts, including: a \$650 check from money HPU students collected in their chapel; a check from an individual HPU student for \$1,000; a check from an HPU parent for \$10,000; a check from the Wyndham Championship for \$25,000, a check from Old Dominion Freight Line for \$100,000 and a check from BB&T Bank for \$200,000. In all, Qubein dropped off a total of \$357,500 in checks.

Qubein made several jokes throughout his speech, but the seriousness of his message rang loud and clear.

"When I look around this room, Phyllis, and see the support that you have, and you've had it nationally...when I see Congressman Ted Budd here standing with you and by you, when I see presidents of universities like Harold Martin (N.C. A&T State University) and Frank Gilliam (UNC Greensboro) and Randy Parker (GTCC) show up as busy as all of them are to be here in your midst, when I see your mayor cancel a meeting where she was speaking today just to be with you here today, all of this speaks loudly about the support for Bennett," Qubein said.

"When you see Secretary Aldona Wos, a very distinguished lady, a U.S. ambassador show up to be with you today, this is not a small thing," Qubein continued. "This isn't about the money... This is about the future of tens of thousands of young women who will enter the hallowed hallways of this College to learn and who will

exit the hallowed hallways to serve the world and make it a better place, (and) plant seeds of greatness in the lives that they will cross along their pathway. That's what this is really all about. The holy spirit is in this place."

Qubein praised Dawkins on Monday, saying her faith that Bennett would reach its goal never wavered. Dawkins stated many times publicly in TV, newspaper and radio interviews that she was confident Bennett would reach its goal. After the press conference, Dawkins said the stalwart support she received from her Board of Trustees, the College's Leadership Team, the Office of Institutional Advancement, Bennett students and Bennett Alumnae helped sustain her confidence that the \$5 million would be raised. "It was truly a campus wide, community and nationwide effort."

On Dec. 11, 2018, Bennett College was removed from membership in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. Bennett immediately appealed the decision and remains accredited during the appeal process. Bennett was removed strictly for financial reasons and was not sanctioned for its academics, faculty, leadership or students.

Founded in 1873 as a coeducational institution, Bennett became women's only in 1926. Spelman College in Atlanta is the country's only other all-women's HBCU.

Bennett has a rich history of producing outstanding women leaders, including: the first African-American woman licensed surgeon in the south; the first woman or African-American to head the U.S. Peace Corps; the first African-American mayor of the city of Greensboro; the first African-American female mayor in the state of Washington; the writer of the screenplay "The Loving Story," which in 2016 was turned into an Academy Award-nominated motion picture; the first woman to hold the position of Director of Drug Program and Policies and youngest Director within the National Football League Players Association (NFLPA); and the first African-American woman to serve as Assistant Attorney General in the state of Massachusetts – just to name a few.

Current Bennett students or recent grads are also impressive, including senior administration major Tyler Binion, who was selected among 63 students to serve as a Competitiveness Scholar through the White House Initiative on HBCUs, and Delrishia White '13, who enrolled in Bennett from the foster care system in San Francisco and became SGA President. White graduated with honors and is now earning her master's degree at Harvard.

Ways to give to Bennett College:

- **Online:** bennett.edu/donate
- **Text2Give:** Text the word BELLES to the number 444999
- **Cash App:** \$StandwithBennett
- **S. Mail:** Send a check to Bennett College, Office of Institutional Advancement, 900 E. Washington St., Greensboro, N.C. 27401