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Morehouse College Announces the Passing of Interim President William J. “Bill” Taggart

-- Morehouse Community reflects on the life and legacy of a devoted and respected Morehouse leader

ATLANTA – June 8, 2017 – The Morehouse College Board of Trustees is mourning the loss of Interim President William J. "Bill" Taggart. Interim President Taggart passed away unexpectedly Thursday at his home in Atlanta.

“We are deeply saddened by the sudden passing of Bill Taggart, a beloved colleague, father and friend whom I’ve known for many years,” said Willie Woods, '85, Chairman of the Morehouse College Board of Trustees. “For the past two years, Bill devoted himself wholeheartedly to Morehouse College and we were pleased when he assumed the role of Interim President. We are eternally grateful for his loyal support, counsel and the leadership he provided to students, faculty and alumni.”

Woods continued, “Bill was a good friend and a beloved member of the Morehouse community. He was a strong leader who had a positive impact on Morehouse College, the greater Atlanta business community, and all those who knew him. Bill leaves behind a long legacy of commitment to others and unwavering integrity. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, and the entire Morehouse Community, we extend our sincerest condolences to his family, friends and loved ones he leaves behind during this difficult time.”

An Atlanta native, Interim President Taggart was appointed to lead Morehouse College on April 7, 2017. He brought more than 30 years of professional experience to the role. Prior to that, Interim President Taggart served as the College's Chief Operating Officer, beginning in 2015.

Interim President Taggart worked closely with the Board of Trustees, students, faculty, staff, and alumni to lead and transform the institutional development, technology, campus operations, and human resources functions of the College. During this time, he also served as the external relations liaison to the Atlanta business and civic community, as well as with corporate America and various global philanthropic organizations.

Outside of Morehouse College, Interim President Taggart was actively involved in various business and civic organizations. He served as CEO of Atlanta Life Financial Group and was a key member of 100 Black Men of America, as well as the Rotary Club of Atlanta. He also served as chairman of the Atlanta Business League, and was a board member of The Carter Center, Woodruff Arts Center, Westside Future Fund, Carver Bank, and Children Healthcare of Atlanta. He was recently named to the 2018 Class of Leadership Atlanta. Interim President Taggart's contributions within and outside of Morehouse College are a reflection of his immense dedication and commitment to his community.

The Board of Trustees will be working internally to determine its next steps and the future direction of the College. Provost Michael Hodge will serve as Acting President until a new Interim President is named by the Board of Trustees.

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Ranked America's fifth "Most Entrepreneurial College" by Forbes Magazine in 2015, Morehouse College is the nation's largest liberal arts college for men. Founded in 1867, the College enrolls approximately 2,100 students and historically has conferred more bachelor's degrees on black men than any other institution in the world. Morehouse College is one of the two top producers of Rhodes Scholars among HBCUs. Prominent alumni include Martin Luther King Jr., Nobel Peace Prize laureate; Dr. David Satcher, former U.S. Surgeon General; Shelton "Spike" Lee, American filmmaker; Maynard H. Jackson, the first African American mayor of Atlanta, Ga.; and Jeh Johnson, former Secretary of Homeland Security.