



Internationally Known Archivist to Head Up the Martin Luther King Jr. Collection at Morehouse College
Deputy Director of the Georgia Department of Archives and History to lead team for King's alma mater

ATLANTA-July 17, 2006-- Morehouse College has hired Brenda S. Banks as Chief Archivist to facilitate organizing more than 10,000 pieces of the Martin Luther King Jr. Collection at Morehouse College, King's undergraduate alma mater. Morehouse received the collection, which includes more than 7,000 pieces written in King's hand, after Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin and other civic and corporate leaders struck an eleventh-hour, multi-million dollar deal last month to keep the coveted collection from being auctioned to the highest bidder by Sotheby's auction house in New York City.

As Chief Archivist of the Martin Luther King Jr. Collection at Morehouse College, Banks will work closely with archivists at the Robert W. Woodruff Library and Morehouse College Archivist Herman "Skip" Mason to catalogue and archive every piece of the collection.

"I am extremely pleased to have the opportunity to work with Morehouse College and the excellent archives staff of the AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library on the King papers project," said Banks. "Access to this collection of one of the most influential leaders of the twentieth century will greatly enhance scholarly research, as well as inform the general public on the life of Martin Luther King Jr."

Currently, Banks is the Deputy Director of the Georgia Department of Archives and History. She recently served as project manager for the construction of a new 172,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art archives facility. Banks is a highly regarded leader in the field, having served as president of both the Society of American Archivists (SAA) and the Society of Georgia Archivists.

As a U.S. representative to the international archival community, Banks served four years on the International Council of Archives' Disaster Prevention Committee, where she participated in the development of international policies and strategies to safeguard historical and cultural properties in the event of armed conflict. She has been a member of the Board of Directors of the National Association for Government Archives and Records Administrators and also represented this organization on the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. She is a Fellow of the Society of American Archivists, the highest honor bestowed by the Society to a limited number of individuals for outstanding contributions to the archival profession. Most recently, Banks received the SAA Council Exemplary Service Award for outstanding contributions to the archival profession.

During the Clinton administration, Banks was chosen to work with the transition team to conduct a management audit of the National Archives and Records Administration. She also served as a White House adviser on issues related to the National Archives and the Library of Congress.

-more-

Banks is chair of the Board of Directors for the Georgia Archives Institute, and has served on the Board of Trustees of the Atlanta Fulton Library System and the Schlesinger Library Advisory Committee at Harvard University's Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. She teaches archival management at Georgia State University.

"We are pleased to have someone of Ms. Banks' caliber join the team of professionals from Morehouse and Woodruff who will work with us to oversee this national treasure," said Morehouse President Walter E. Massey. "Ms. Banks' expertise as an archivist will help ensure we achieve our number one goal: to provide appropriate access to scholars and researchers interested in Dr. King's works."

Morehouse will house and store the Martin Luther King Jr. Collection at the Robert W. Woodruff Library, which is jointly owned by Morehouse and the member institutions of the Atlanta University Center.

The Archives and Special Collections Department at the Woodruff Library has storage facilities that house more than 7,000 linear feet of archival material, as well as a quiet and secure reading room for research and study, and office and work space used by archivists and curators to process collections.

Six archival professionals—two archivists, two curators and two technical assistants, are employed at the Woodruff Library's Archives & Special Collections Department. They are charged with the cataloging and care of more than one million historical documents housed within the department.

###

Ranked three times as the number one college in the nation for educating African American students by Black Enterprise magazine, and recognized by The Wall Street Journal as one of the top feeder schools for the 15 most prominent graduate and professional schools in the country, Morehouse College is the nation's largest, private liberal arts college for men. Founded in 1867, the College enrolls approximately 2,800 students. The College offers 26 majors in three academic divisions: Humanities and Social Sciences, Science and Mathematics, and Business and Economics. Morehouse offers a number of programs and activities to enhance its challenging liberal arts curriculum through the Leadership Center at Morehouse College, Morehouse Research Institute and Andrew Young Center for International Affairs and the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel. Morehouse is one of only two Historically Black Colleges or Universities (HBCU) to produce three Rhodes Scholars.

Prominent alumni include Martin Luther King Jr., Nobel Peace Prize winner and civil and human rights non-violent leader; Dr. David Satcher, former U.S. Surgeon General and director of the National Center for Primary Care at the Morehouse School of Medicine; Shelton "Spike" Lee, filmmaker and president of 40 Acres & A Mule Productions; Samuel L. Jackson, Academy Award nominated actor; Maynard H. Jackson, founder of Jackson Securities and the first African-American mayor of Atlanta; and Nima A. Warfield, the first African-American Rhodes Scholar from a HBCU.