The University and Politics in Atlanta:

A Case Study of the Atlanta University Center

By Robert A. Holmes*

One of the most frequent criticisms of black colleges and universities is that they have been unwilling to become involved in the social, economic, and political struggles of the communities in which they are located. Many intellectuals who work in an "ivory tower" university setting perceive of themselves as providing leadership to the black community through scholarly research and publications and exhortations to action. While there is clearly a need for these theoreticians in the black struggle for equality, perhaps there is an even greater need for more practitioners to deal with the plethora of political problems confronting the black community. The purpose of this article is to examine the involvement of the administrators, faculty, and students in the Atlanta University Center (AUC)[1] in the political life of Atlanta's black community. Since space does not permit an exhaustive presentation of this subject, we shall focus on the post-World War II era.

Alton Hornsby, chairman of the Morehouse College History Department, offered the following characterization of black politics in Atlanta and the AUC's contribution to the black struggle:

> Atlanta has offered an atypical picture of the role of blacks in Southern politics. Even in time of massive disfranchisement and rigid segregation and discrimination, a black elite, nurtured by the six schools of higher education constituting the Atlanta University Center, led a campaign for fuller political participation.[2]

Professor Harry Holloway commented in a major text on black politics in the South that the AUC was a group of private black colleges

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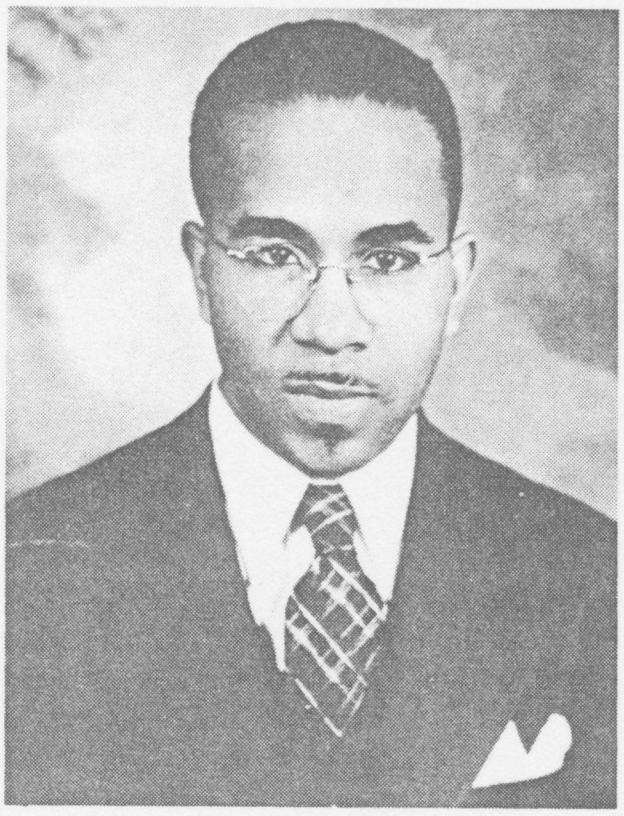
Dr. John Hope (left) pictured with Governor Marland of Oklahoma. (Courtesy of Atlanta University Archives)

unmatched anywhere else in the country, and that it contributed much to the leadership that led the struggle for equality in Atlanta.[3]

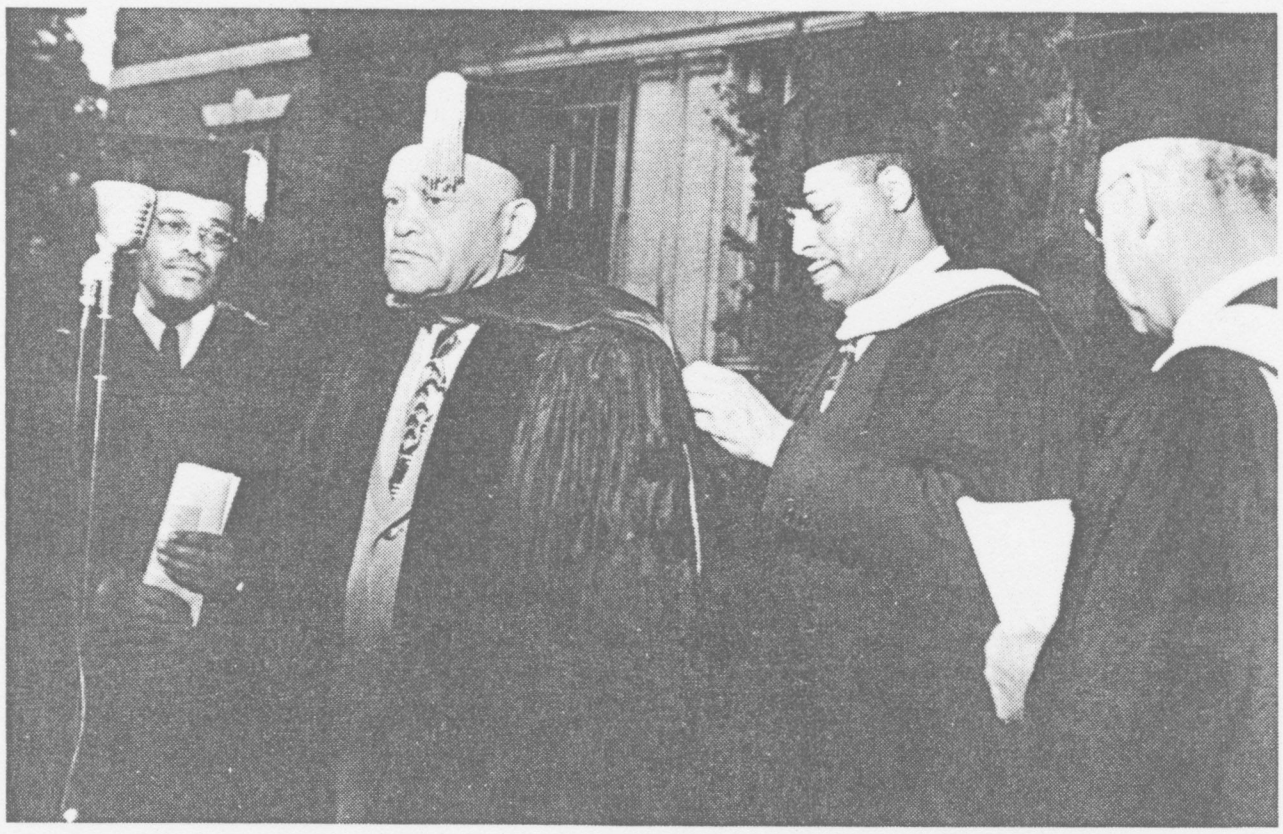
Since Reconstruction the Democratic primary actually determined which candidate would be elected, and blacks were permitted to vote only in general and special elections. During the 1930s the black leadership of Atlanta became increasingly concerned about the growing political apathy of the black electorate and they decided that a special effort should be made to keep black political interest alive. Atlanta University was to play a catalytic role in the proposed project. President John Hope (1929-36) stressed the university had a responsibility "to serve the needs of the community and so encouraged his faculty to partici-



Dr. R. O. Johnson
(Atlanta University Archives)

Dr. Rayford W. Logan
(Atlanta University Archives)

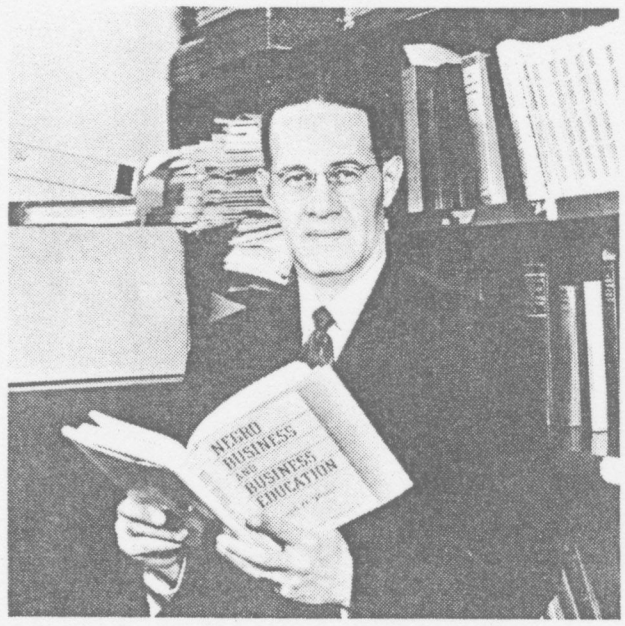
pate in community activities."[4] And it was Mrs. John Hope's idea to create "citizenship schools" which would inform black Atlantans about the duties of citizenship, teach them about the operations of government, and, most important, maintain and stimulate black interest and involvement in the political process. Attorney A. T. Walden, a 1907 Atlanta University graduate and president of the Atlanta Chapter of the NAACP, encouraged other black organizations to assist in the organization and support of the citizenship schools. Atlanta University professors played a prominent role in this unique political experiment. Professor Clarence A. Bacote served as the first director of the schools in 1932; when he took leave in 1933-34 to pursue further graduate study, his position was taken by his colleague in the AU history department, Professor Rayford Logan. The first classes met at the Butler Street YMCA and at churches throughout the city, which made it convenient for persons to attend. Each course was six weeks long. The curriculum, focusing on the need to be prepared for political responsibility when the opportunity presented itself, included instruction in the fundamentals of local, state, and national government and the procedure involved in registering to vote. Blacks were persuaded to register so they could vote in special and general elections and be able to vote in the Democratic primary when the Supreme Court declared the "white primary" unconstitutional. At the conclusion of the six-week course, a graduation exercise was held to award certificates to persons attending at least four of the sessions. The citizenship schools were the basis for Alpha Phi



Dr. Clarence Bacote adjusts the hood of attorney A. T. Walden at 1950 commencement exercises at Atlanta University. Observing Mr. Walden's receipt of an honorary degree is Dr. Rufus Clement (left). (Atlanta University Archives)

Alpha's voter registration program and the coining of the slogan, "A Voteless People is a Hopeless People."

The Georgia General Assembly passed Governor Ellis Arnold's legislation to repeal the poll tax in 1945, and in 1946 the U.S. Supreme Court declared Georgia's "white primary" law unconstitutional in the *Chapman v. King* case. These two developments plus Eugene Talmadge's racist campaign for governor stimulated black voter registration and organizational efforts to make more effective use of the black vote. Several major groups decided to coordinate their voter registration efforts, including the NAACP, Urban League, Atlanta Civic and Political League, Negro Democrats of Georgia, United Service Organization, Westside Voters League, and others. These organizations formed the All Citizens Voter Registration Committee and elected Professor Bacote its first chairman. Other Atlanta University Center faculty members who played important roles in this effort were Dr. William Boyd, chairman of the Political Science Department and president of the Atlanta Chapter of the NAACP; R. O. Johnson of the School of Education; Dr. Joe Pierce, head of the Mathematics Department; and Morehouse English professor, G. Lewis Chandler.[5] A network of black workers was organized, mass meetings were held, speeches made, and literature distributed to increase black interest in voter registration. Atlanta Mayor William Hartsfield contributed to the success of the registration drive when he told a delegation of black leaders that he would be willing to



Dr. J. A. Pierce
(Atlanta University Archives)

Dr. William M. Boyd
(Atlanta University Archives)

talk with them about their list of requests for improved governmental services in the black community if and when there were 10,000 registered black voters in Atlanta! At the opening of the fifty-one-day drive, only 6,786 blacks were registered, but at the end of the campaign there were 24,137. The citizenship schools were reactivated in the city's twenty-one predominantly black precincts with AUC faculty once again playing a prominent role.

In order to unite the disparate elements of the black community in local elections, the Atlanta Negro Voters League was organized in 1949 with co-chairmen, John Wesley Dobbs (head of black Republicans) and attorney A. T. Walden (black Democratic party leader). The organization immediately became a major political force in Atlanta politics. Mayor Hartsfield was now willing to talk because the successful voter registration drive made black registration almost 40 percent of the city's voter population. Among the AUC faculty who served on the "screening committee" which made decisions about which white candidates to support during the 1950s were Professors Bacote, Boyd, Pierce, and Ira Reid (Sociology) of Atlanta University, and Dr. Robert Brisbane, chairman of the Morehouse College Political Science Department. Candidates endorsed by the Voters League could expect to receive 95 percent or more of the black vote.

The alliance between the black community and the white power structure was somewhat unequal, and the black leadership was not as effective as it should have been due to the conservative approach of the League's hierarchy and the attitude of the white political leaders. In responding to the Voter League's program for better schools, housing, employment, and welfare, one white leader said, "It's not what they want, it is what they are going to get that counts."[6] As former Mayor

Atlanta University commencement procession. In the background are Dr. Rufus Clement and Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune; in the foreground, Dr. Benjamin Mays and Dr. Florence M. Read. (Atlanta University Archives)

Ivan Allen wrote in his memoirs, "For nearly two decades the black community had been a silent partner in the election of city officials in Atlanta, generally going along with whatever moderate candidate white civic fathers endorsed."[7]

In 1953 the Voters League got the support of the white power structure for a black candidate for the Atlanta Board of Education. Dr. Rufus Clement, president of Atlanta University, and Morehouse College President Dr. Benjamin Mays both sought the endorsement of the Negro Voters League. Clement was selected and won the school board post. According to one prominent white leader, "We elected the doctor with the votes of the good colored people of Atlanta and white persons of good will."[8] In 1957 Professors Bacote and Boyd were the first two black persons elected to membership on the Fulton County Democratic Executive Committee.

During the post-*Brown v. Board of Education* era, students and faculty at the AUC became increasingly concerned about the lack of progress in the desegregation of downtown businesses. The growing impatience of the younger generation manifested itself on college campuses throughout the South as students challenged the older black leadership's apparent willingness to settle for the tokens and to continue to pursue a moderate approach to solving desegregation issues.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. developed a strategy of direct action

and nonviolent tactics in the Montgomery boycott movement which was to provide a model for students. Students from North Carolina A&T University began sitting-in at lunch counters in Greensboro in February 1960, and this action received nationwide publicity. The demonstrations quickly spread to several other college communities such as Nashville, where Fisk University and Tennessee State University students took the lead, and Tallahassee, the home of Florida A&M University. Atlanta was also affected by the sit-in movement; AUC students began protest demonstrations on March 15, 1960. In February the students had formed the Committee on the Appeal for Human Rights (COAHR), with two representatives from each of the AUC schools, and issued the *Appeal for Human Rights.*

The AUC student movement was led by some of the most talented individuals ever to be assembled at any university in the nation. Among the major figures in COAHR were Lonnie King (Morehouse College, president of The Onyx Corporation, former president of the Atlanta chapter of the NAACP, and a candidate for U.S. Congress), Ben Brown (Clark College, former chairman of the Legislative Black Caucus of the Georgia General Assembly and now deputy director of the National Democratic Committee), Carolyn Long (Clark, Rich's first black retail buyer and currently a member of the Atlanta City Council), Marian Wright (Spelman, a prominent lawyer and executive director of the Children's Defense Fund), and Morehouse students Julian Bond (Georgia state senator and a national civil rights leader) and Morris Dillard (former professor and presently assistant general manager of the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit System).[9] The AUC faculty provided valuable support for the student effort through the formation of the Atlanta Committee on Cooperative Action (ACCA), which published *A Second Look,* a statement on segregation and its consequences in Atlanta. The leadership of ACCA came primarily from faculty in the Atlanta University School of Social Work and included Whitney Young (then dean of the School of Social Work and later president of the National Urban League), Vernon Jordan (current president of the Urban League), Clarence Coleman (deputy national director of Urban League and presently dean of the School of Social Work), M. Carl Holman (Clark, now president of the National Urban Coalition), Sam Westerfield (dean of the Atlanta University School of Business and later U.S. Ambassador to Liberia), and Mozell Hill (editor of *Phylon* and chairman of the Sociology Department, Atlanta University). They were instrumental in creating the Atlanta Summit Leadership Conference, an umbrella organization which sought to encourage other civil rights organizations to aid student demonstrations as well as to negotiate a settlement for the desegregation of downtown businesses.[10] Local sit-ins and boycott tactics were begun on March 15, 1960, when 1400 students marched on downtown Atlanta. These activities continued until mid-

Dr. Ira Reid and Dr. W. E. B. DuBois taking part in radio broadcast. (Atlanta University Archives)

May when the second semester ended.

The student actions reflected the division between the "young turk" faculty and student leaders and the old guard leaders over timing and the proper methods to use in ending segregation. The old-line leaders said the student tactics heightened racial tension, offered the potential of violence, were a threat to the city's fragile biracial political coalition, and could lead to the election of racists to city posts. Nevertheless, the students resumed their militant tactics upon returning to the campuses in the fall. Meanwhile, the traditional leadership sought to negotiate a quick settlement in order to keep the political coalition intact for the 1961 city election. On March 9, 1961, an agreement was reached between the old black leadership and the downtown white power structure to desegregate lunch counters in the fall of 1961—after the mayoral election. Many of the student leaders deplored the accord, but most acquiesced. Then in the 1961 mayoral race, the Voter's League endorsed white businessman Ivan Allen, who had defended the "southern way of life," i.e. segregation, during his brief race in the Democratic gubernatorial primary in 1960 against "Mugsy" Smith, a state legislator who had openly attacked the Ku Klux Klan. AUC students demonstrated at League rallies for Allen and accused him of "buying" the en-

dorsement. Some of the student leaders such as Ben Brown and Lonnie King openly supported Smith. However, the students apparently underestimated the attachment of the masses of black voters to the League as Allen swamped Smith in the black community. The run-off was between Allen and segregationist Lester Maddox, and the students reluctantly wound up backing Allen's candidacy.[11]

In 1962 AUC students once again led an attack on racism and segregation in their campaign to desegregate Grady Hospital, the second busiest public hospital in the nation. On Valentine's Day students staged a sit-in to desegregate Grady's facilities. Twenty-three were arrested. The old guard remained aloof from these struggles, and the students accused them of losing touch with the masses. It is interesting to note that in January 1961 a group of students led by Julian Bond occupied the "white section" of the gallery in the Georgia House of Representatives and four years later Bond and Ben Brown were among the eight blacks who were elected to the House after the Supreme Court mandated reapportionment and the holding of a special election.[12]

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the fervor and activity of AUC students subsided while faculty members moved into the mainstream of Democratic party and city politics. Dr. Bacote was appointed to the Fulton County Grand Jury Commission in 1965 and served as its chairman from 1969-71. In 1971, he was elected to the State Democratic Executive Committee and was appointed to the Atlanta Charter Commission which revised the 100-year-old city charter. Dr. Robert Brisbane of Morehouse College was also a member of the Commission, chairing its Education Committee. In 1971 Brisbane became the first black to be appointed to the Fulton County Civil Service Commission; he was elected chairman in 1973. Morehouse political science professor Tobe Johnson was appointed to the board of directors of the newly created Atlanta Regional Commission in 1972.

In actual political campaigns during this period, President Emeritus Benjamin Mays of Morehouse and Morris Brown College President John Middleton both won seats on the Atlanta Board of Education in the 1969 election. In 1972 a group of AUC students led by Wade Harris, president of the Morehouse College student government, decided to challenge a slate of old guard politicans, led by the state senator Leroy Johnson, seeking election as delegates to the 1972 Democratic National Convention in Miami, Florida. The students did an excellent job of organizing and transporting their supporters to the polls on election day, and as a result their slate was elected. In the same year, the Reverend Andrew Young once again sought to become the first black congressman from Georgia since Reconstruction. Professor Bob Holmes of the AU Political Science Department and Dr. Tobe Johnson of Morehouse served as political strategists, speech writers, and researchers in Young's successful campaign in 1972. Dozens of students from the AUC

Jan Douglass, now executive director of the Atlanta Community Relations Commission. (Photo courtesy of the author)

also served as volunteers in the Young campaign.

The 1973 mayoral election saw AUC participation in Atlanta politics reach a new level of involvement. This election marked the first comprehensive effort to organize the entire university complex behind a single candidate. As mentioned above, the first mass-scale political effort of the AUC involved voter registration in the 1940s, and the second was concerned with the sit-in movement in the 1960s. However, in 1973 there was an effort to mobilize the faculty, staff, and students for the mayoral election and to end traditional divisions and rivalries among the AUC schools. The leaders of the movement were Jan Douglass, a young assistant professor in the School of Social Work, now executive director of the Atlanta Community Relations Commission; Annette Hutchins, president of the Spelman College student body; Wade Harris, former president of Morehouse student government and then a graduate student at Atlanta University; Malcolm Suber, a political science major at Morehouse; Doris Wright, student body president at Clark; and Michael Fisher, a graduate student in political science at Atlanta University.[13] Like the 1960 desegregation effort, this movement was led primarily by students in the AUC supported by some of the younger faculty members. The student demonstrations of the 1960s were transformed into electoral politics of the 1970s. The students saw the need to widen their involvement in the political life of the city and to ensure that black people would "seize this moment" in history and elect the

Two generations of black leadership represented by John Wesley Dobbs and his grandson, Mayor Maynard Jackson. (Atlanta University Collections)

first black mayor of Atlanta. In the spring of 1973, Ms. Douglass called a meeting of AUC student leaders to discuss the forthcoming mayoral election. There was some concern in the black community that several black candidates would enter the race and so split the vote that the opportunity to elect a black mayor would be lost. Sen. Leroy Johnson, the first black elected to the Georgia General Assembly since Reconstruction, announced his candidacy for mayor on the last day of the 1973 legislative session. Vice-Mayor Maynard Jackson announced shortly thereafter and at least three other potential candidates were being discussed—Dr. Horace Tate, a former member of the Atlanta Board of Education who ran unsuccessfully for mayor in 1969, City Alderman Ira Jackson, and the Reverend W. J. Stafford, pastor of the 10,000-member Free For All Baptist Church. The students believed a way had to be found to unite the black electorate. The AUC group decided that a mock election should be held to determine if there was a consensus in the AUC for a candidate to be supported in the general election.[14] The students formed the University Movement for Black Unity (UMBU) and issued a statement which said in part:

> Across the World student populations have played a progressive role in the movement of oppressed people . . . At this stage of our movement, ELECTORAL POLITICS is a key battlefront . . . Atlanta, like many cities, has a black majority and yet we do not have equal political representation, much less power. The question is "What Time Is It For Atlanta?" and we can only answer that it is time for a Black Mayor and increased Black representation.

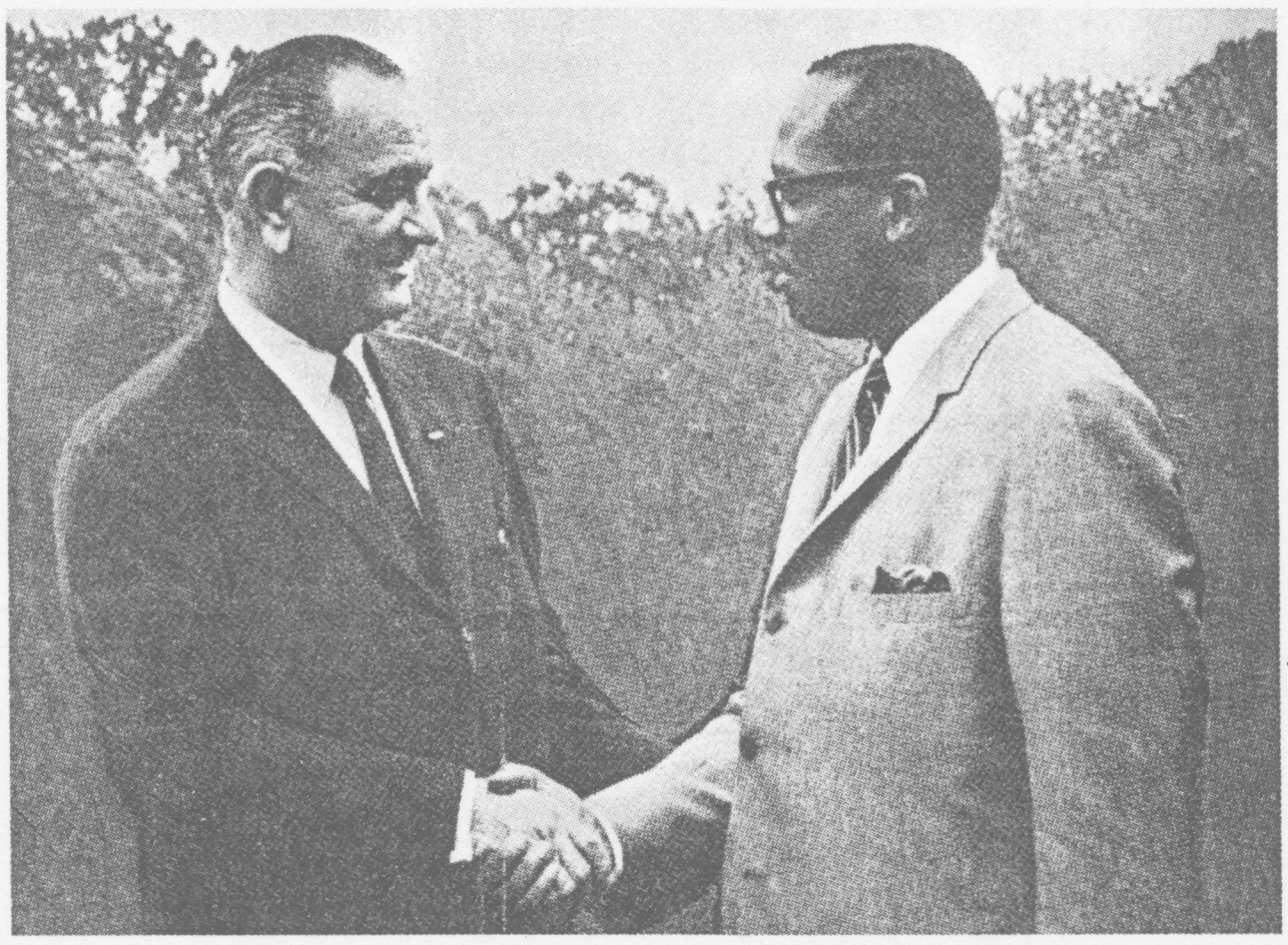
> IT IS TIME FOR A BLACK MAYOR . . . an alternative that will be far more progressive than the current political bankruptcy. In Atlanta we are threatened by a split of the Black vote. Many blacks want to be Mayor. So much is at stake . . . can we make the error of "divide and conquer" when our community must be united. We expect tactical attempts from whites . . . but we cannot be so politically naive as to simply *allow* internal divisions. We must ask black candidates to put community before opportunism. Let us go forward with *one* candidate that we can all support. Black people cannot miss our moment in Atlanta politics to step forward.[15]

The UMBU was organized into committees and officers were elected. To ensure that the committees would reflect AUC-wide views, all committees were to have at least one representative from each member institution.[16] Morehouse student Malcolm Suber was elected coordinator and two AU students, Michael Fisher and Wade Harris, were asked to serve as co-chairmen of the elections committee. Ms. Douglass became the faculty advisor. The Committee for Center Organization, Committee for Political Development, and Committee for Community Development became responsible for organizing and coordinating rallies, involving faculty and staff in UMBU activities, and communicating with the larger black community.

UMBU conducted a voter registration drive, and all AUC students were urged to register to vote. Faculty, staff, and students were asked to participate in a mock election. The plan was to organize on behalf of the candidate selected and "to mobilize the black community in Atlanta to come out and vote in their own interest."[17]

Preparations were begun in March to hold the election on April 12. The Election Committee established clear guidelines concerning the election, including the following: 1) Election committees would be formed on each campus. 2) Polling places would open from 8:00 A.M.-7:00 P.M. and would be located at the regular polling places of each school's student government elections. 3) Only registered Georgia voters would be eligible to vote and persons would be required to show their school identification card. 4) Deputy registrars would be available at the polling places to register new voters. 5) To stimulate interest in the mock election, a debate would be held between leading contenders for the mayor's race.[18]

The black mayoral candidates were apparently very impressed by the UMBU activities. They not only participated in the debate on the evening before the election but actively campaigned on the campuses and had their supporters pass out literature. Five names appeared on the ballots: three announced candidates—Maynard Jackson, Leroy Johnson, and W. J. Stafford—and two other possible aspirants, Ira Jackson and Horace Tate. There were 2530 ballots cast, representing 40



Lyndon Johnson and Leroy Johnson from Leroy Johnson campaign flyer. (Atlanta University Collections)

percent of the student body in the AUC. Of these, Maynard Jackson received 2,113 (83.6%), Leroy Johnson 288 (11.3%), Ira Jackson 61 (2.4%), and Horace Tate 41 (1.6%). Reverend Stafford trailed with 13 (.05%), and write-in candidates split the remaining 13 votes.[19] Students favored Jackson 7½ to 1, while faculty and staff supported Jackson over Johnson, 6 to 1. Both Maynard Jackson and Leroy Johnson sent representatives to observe the counting of the ballots and sign the tally sheets. However, in a press release the day after the election, Johnson charged the election had been "rigged." UMBU coordinator Malcolm Suber wrote a letter to Senator Johnson and issued a press release saying his charges were "unfounded, false and unfortunate" and an insult to the integrity of UMBU, the faculty, students, and staff of the AUC. The statement noted that some of Senator Johnson's supporters helped organize the election, that the senator's campus campaign manager witnessed the ballot count and even signed the tally sheet which indicated "all procedures were in order." Suber demanded a public apology from Johnson.[20] UMBU also issued another press statement in which it pledged to "sponsor a massive voter registration drive in the AUC and across the city of Atlanta." The release also said "the results of the mock election will deliver up thousands of students to work on behalf of a victory for Jackson."[21] In contrast to Senator Johnson's reaction, Rev-

Rev. W. J. Stafford from Horace Tate For Mayor flyer. (Atlanta University Collections)

erend Stafford announced that the mock election had been conducted fairly and that, based on the outcome, he was withdrawing from the mayoral race to endorse Maynard Jackson. He urged the black community to unite behind the vice-mayor.

The UMBU sponsored a successful voter registration drive during the first week of May at Atlanta University, and the Reverend Jesse Jackson, head of Operation PUSH, came to the campus to assist in the effort.[22] A fund-raising drive was launched with a goal of $2,000, but only $723.46 was collected for the Jackson campaign.[23] Following the example of Newark, UMBU sought to encourage major black organizations in the city to organize a citywide "Black People's Convention" on the mayor's race in August or September. In a straw poll, black voters would select a candidate and the "others would be asked to withdraw from the race."[24]

The UMBU was unable to convince the major established organizations to hold a city-wide convention/election, but the campus mock election apparently made an impression on Atlanta's black community. The results of the election received extensive coverage in the local media and were widely discussed throughout the city. The UMBU established its headquarters at a former restaurant (The Black Pearl) across from Atlanta University, and hundreds of volunteers were recruited for the Jackson campaign to pass out leaflets, canvass neighborhoods, make telephone calls, and perform other campaign related activities on a scale greater than that of all of the other candidates combined. Several AUC persons played key staff roles in the campaign, including Dr.

James Hefner, professor of economics at Atlanta University, and Morehouse director of urban studies, Professor Tobe Johnson, both of whom served as members of the Issues Committee which drafted mayoral position papers. UMBU leaders Jan Douglass and Michael Fisher became staff aides to the campaign manager. Ms. Douglass estimated that 800 persons from the AUC served as volunteers in the Jackson mayoral campaign. Largely because of UMBU's efforts on his behalf, Jackson finished first in a field of ten candidates in the October 2 general election with 47 percent of the vote. Mayor Sam Massell took the other run-off spot with barely 20 percent of the ballots, while the other major black candidate, Sen. Leroy Johnson, received only 3.8 percent of the vote. In the run-off election on October 16, Jackson defeated Massell by a margin of 59 to 41 percent.[25]

The 1973 city election was particularly noteworthy in terms of this new level of involvement by the younger AUC faculty members in the political process. Since 1973, AUC faculty have shifted from the traditional role of providing "technical" assistance to black candidates seeking political office to offering as candidates for elective office themselves. In 1973, three faculty members (Professor Bob Waymer, Atlanta University School of Social Work; Mildred Glover, professor in the School of Business; and Spelman College sociology professor George Napper) ran unsuccessfully for seats on the Atlanta City Council. However, Morris Brown President John Middleton ran unopposed for a second term on the school board, and Morehouse President Emeritus Benjamin Mays easily defeated three challengers to retain his post as president of the Atlanta Board of Education.

In the 1974 election, three AUC faculty members, Paul Bolster (Clark College), Bob Holmes, and Dr. Glover, won election to the Georgia House of Representatives. Wade Harris, an instructor at Morris Brown, lost his bid for office in the race against Professor Glover. In that same year, President Middleton resigned his seat on the school board, and two of the five candidates who ran in the special election to fill the vacancy were from Atlanta University: Professor of Education Robert Hatch and the director of institutional research at Morris Brown, D. F. Glover. Glover made the run-off, but lost in a hotly contested race by five votes. Dr. Carson Lee of Clark College won a seat on the Atlanta Board of Education in the 1977 city election. In 1978 Dr. Robert Brisbane, chairman of Morehouse's Department of Political Science, was an unsuccessful candidate for the Fulton County Commission.

Finally, in 1979, a local option sales tax referendum was held in Atlanta-Fulton County. Mayor Maynard Jackson and his protegé, Fulton Commissioner Michael Lomax, joined with the downtown power structure to push for a 1 percent sales tax increase that was to be used to roll back property taxes. Three members of the Atlanta University

Political Science Department—Professors Bob Holmes, Mack Jones, and Larry Moss—played prominent roles in the formation of two groups, the Coalition Against the Local Option Sales Tax (L.O.S.T.) and the Sales Tax Opposition Panel (S.T.O.P.), which were instrumental in the defeat of the proposed new sales tax levy.

There are some persons in Atlanta's black community who believe the AUC has not been as involved as it should have been in Atlanta politics and who maintain that its level of community activity has much to be desired. The "ivory tower" image of professors is still prevalent, particularly among residents in low-income communities adjacent to the AUC.[26] However, the historical record indicates that the AUC has played a leadership role in the political life of the black community from the 1930s to the present. It was the AUC administration, faculty, and students who initiated the citizenship schools, helped to organize voter registration drives to mobilize the black vote, promoted desegregation of downtown Atlanta, played a prominent role in the election of the city's first black mayor, and who currently serve in important elected political offices at state and municipal levels of government. The organization of the UMBU was a culmination of efforts to shape the entire university community into a potent political force. Its three major objectives were to: 1) bring about constructive changes within the Center itself; 2) critically aid and support the furtherance of black political activity in Atlanta; and 3) serve as a support group for community groups and organizations which are attempting to bring about meaningful changes for black people in the Atlanta area.[27]

This statement reflects the understanding among AUC faculty and students that it is the responsibility of university-based intellectuals not only to point out options, strategies, priorities, and programs available to the black community and black candidates, but to participate actively in the mobilization and organization of the electorate as well as to run for political offices. The typical separation between "town and gown" does not exist in the case of Atlanta and the AUC. As noted, prior to 1973 the faculty served primarily in support roles, but since then younger faculty have successfully sought elective office. In contrast to the pre-1960 period, the younger members of the faculty have clearly played a more active role in city politics than their senior colleagues. The tradition of AUC involvement in Atlanta politics illustrates the need for all black institutions of higher education to play an active role in the political arena. In any case, in Atlanta the administration, faculty, and students of the Atlanta University Center are apparently committed to achieving this goal and will continue to serve as a source of "brainpower and manpower" on which the black community can rely.

Notes

This is an edited version of a paper presented at the Georgia Studies Symposium, February 1980.

1. The AUC is a consortium of four colleges (Clark, Morehouse, Morris Brown and Spelman), the graduate school (Atlanta University), and a seminary (Interdenominational Theological Center). The arrangement was started in 1929 between Atlanta University, Morehouse, and Spelman, and the AUC was chartered in 1964. Each institution is organized independently under its own board of trustees and has its own administration.

2. Alton Hornsby, "The Negro in Atlanta Politics, 1961-1973," *The Atlanta Historical Bulletin* XXI, No. 1 (Spring 1978): 8.

3. *The Politics of the Southern Negro* (New York: Random House, 1968), chapter 8.

4. Clarence A. Bacote, *The Story of Atlanta University: A Century of Service, 1865-1965* (Atlanta: Atlanta University, 1969), p. 290.

5. Two excellent articles on black politics in Atlanta from the post-Reconstruction period to the 1950s are the classic studies by Atlanta University Professor Emeritus Clarence A. Bacote, "The Negro in Atlanta Politics," *Phylon* XVI (4th Quarter 1955):331-56, and "William Finch," *Journal of Negro History* (October 1955):341-64. Another good essay on the pre-1900 era is Eugene Watts, "Black Political Progress in Atlanta, 1868-1895," *Journal of Negro History* (July 1974):268-86. Information in this article on black political activity in the period prior to 1955 is from these three essays.

6. Interview with Professor Clarence A. Bacote, 20 October 1980.

7. Two outstanding studies of the nature of Atlanta politics and the relationship between the black and white leadership in Atlanta during the 1940s and 1950s are Floyd Hunter, *Community Power Structure* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), and M. Kent Jennings, *Community Influentials* (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964). See also, Ivan Allen, *Mayor: Notes on the Sixties* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971).

8. William Havard, *The Changing Politics of the South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), p. 296.

9. Interview with Carolyn Long Banks, 1 December 1980.

10. Among the key non-AUC persons in the ACCA who later formed the core of Atlanta's black political and economic elite were Jesse Hill (President, Atlanta Life Insurance Company and past President of Atlanta Chamber of Commerce), Herman Russell (Chairman of the Board, H. J. Russell Company, the fourth largest black-owned business in the U.S.), and Clinton Warner, M.D. (a prominent Atlanta physician). Interview with Clarence Coleman, 30 October 1980. Coleman served as chairman of the ACCA.

11. A most interesting analysis of these events appears in Holloway, *The Politics of the Southern Negro,* chapter 8, and Hornsby, "The Negro in Atlanta Politics," p. 9. For developments throughout the southern region, see Donald R. Matthews and James W. Prothro, *Negroes and the New Southern Politics* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966). Havard, *The Changing Politics of the South,* particularly chapter 8 on Georgia.

12. Hornsby, "The Negro in Atlanta Politics," pp. 10-12.

13. Interview with Ms. Jan Douglass, 14 October 1980. The author would like to express a special word of gratitude to Ms. Douglass for use of the files of the University Movement for Black Unity (UMBU).

14. According to Professor Bacote, there were two previous mock elections (straw votes) held in the AUC. In 1936 and 1960 faculty members were asked to express their preference for President of the United States.

15. *CALL FOR A MOCK ELECTION,* mimeo, undated, pp. 1-2.

16. *Proposed By-Laws,* UMBU, mimeo, undated.

17. *CALL FOR A MOCK ELECTION,* pp. 1-2.

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Atlanta University Complex Results-Mayor's Mock Election,* mimeo, undated.

20. UMBU, Press Release, 16 April 1973, and letter from Malcolm Suber, Coordinator, and Michael Fisher, Co-chairman of the Elections Committee, to attorney Leroy Johnson, 16 April 1973.

21. UMBU Press Release, "Maynard Jackson Sweeps to Victory in Atlanta University Center Mock Election," mimeo, undated.

22. Memorandum from Malcolm Suber to Staff and Faculty in the A.U. Center, 1 May 1973.

23. Letter from William A. Clement, Jr. (Treasurer, Maynard Jackson for Mayor Campaign Committee) to Janet Douglass, 8 May 1973. A flyer, "Dollars for Maynard's Campaign," was distributed in the AUC for the purpose of raising money.

24. Letter from Malcolm Suber to members of UMBU, 24 April 1973.

25. See Mack H. Jones, "Black Political Empowerment in Atlanta," *The Annals* 439 (September 1978): 90-117.

26. Interview with Eddie Laws (Professor of Biology at Morris Brown), 4 November 1980. Laws is in a unique position to know about the community's feeling because of his position in a community contiguous to the AUC. He has served as president of the Vine City Civic Association and chairman of the Vine City-MARTA Station Area Advisory Committee and is in regular contact with people living in the area. This sentiment was also expressed by Professor Bacote in a conversation with the author on October 20, 1980.

27. *Statement of Objectives of the University Movement for Black Unity,* mimeo, undated.