



FEBRUARY 2019



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TOP EDUCATION OFFICIALS MEET FOR HISTORICAL EVENT AT KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY

Kentucky State University hosted a historic panel discussion with four of the most prominent figures in education and workforce development in the Commonwealth of Kentucky – all African-American males – on the topic of accelerating academic performance and success.

Dr. Aaron Thompson, president of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE); Derrick K. Ramsey, Kentucky Secretary of Education and Workforce Development; Dr. Wayne D. Lewis Jr., Kentucky Commissioner of Education; and Kentucky State University President Dr. M. Christopher Brown II served as panelists.

“When you look at this stage, this is history in the making,” Renee Shaw, managing producer with Kentucky Educational Television (KET) and event moderator, said. “This is the first time in Kentucky history that we’ve had top educational leaders of color.”

The conversation focused on access to education, equitable opportunities and producing graduates who can fill the workforce present and future needs. Lewis said he would continue to advocate for strategic funding increases in the P-12 education system. “There is no doubt in anyone’s mind that funding matters,” Lewis said. “What gets lost in the conversation is that increased funding alone will not come close to addressing inequities and deficiencies in the system. Reexamining how we conduct education is as important as strategic funding.” Thompson agreed. “Teachers matter in and out of the classroom,” Thompson said. “We need to create an education system that will allow teachers to enter the classroom

early, their freshman year, to know if they’re suited for the field. We need teachers to understand cultural competency and focus on equity.”

President Brown agreed, adding an idea he’d like to see the Commonwealth invest in. “I would really like to see the Commonwealth invest in a high-achieving teacher recruitment program,” President Brown said. “Recruit them into the teaching profession using a revenue neutral system, a forgivable loan. Create a state-level version of Teach for America.” Ramsey discussed Kentucky’s recent record economic development growth and the need to have a prepared workforce. Ramsey cited the current and projected number of open jobs in the Commonwealth.

The need to provide training beyond the high school level is apparent, Ramsey said. “Not everybody believes they can go to college or postsecondary,” Thompson said. “Not everyone should go, but everyone should have the chance to make that decision. We have 100,000 plus jobs we need to get filled and we need to prepare for jobs that don’t exist yet.” Lewis said he, Thompson, Ramsey and President Brown are all connected through statute and legislation, but they are also each closely connected.

“We actually all really like each other,” Lewis said. “Those relationships we have given us the opportunity to move forward on this agenda on closing gaps, increasing achievement and gainful employment. Even in this intense political time, we find ways to seize opportunity at hand to move forward for the sake of children and the Commonwealth.”

KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENT ORGANIZED BLANKET DRIVE FOR THE HOMELESS



A Kentucky State University student organized a blanket drive for the homeless and is still seeking donations. Michael N. Weaver, the Student Government Association (SGA) president at Kentucky State, said inspiration came as he was leaving an event in Lexington on a cold night recently and spotted three homeless people balled up and freezing. “I wanted to try to at least help keep them warm,” Weaver said. Thus, he created the Sheets4TheStreets blanket drive.

This is the first year he’s organized the drive and he hopes someone else will continue the initiative after he graduates. Weaver said the drop-off location for blankets is the Student Government Association suite in the Carl M. Hill Student Center on Kentucky State’s campus. The deadline to donate is Thursday, Dec. 13.

So far, Weaver said the response has been positive. “The day after I announced my plan, a student donated three blankets, and even other HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) have been contacting me to help out,” Weaver said. Once he has collected the blankets, Weaver plans to distribute them himself. “I will be hand delivering them between Frankfort, Lexington and Louisville,” Weaver said. “The plan is to also do the drive back home and distribute them throughout St. Louis and Kansas City.” A Kentucky State University student is among the nation’s best and brightest, earning a spot as a 2018 HBCU Competitiveness Scholar. The honor is part of the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY HIRES FORMER ATLANTA FALCONS ASSISTANT COACH



Kentucky State University recently announced its new head football coach. Charlie Jackson, an assistant coach for the Atlanta Falcons in their 2017 and 2018 campaigns, has been named the University’s new coach. Jackson says his goal for Kentucky State University football is simple: to compete against perfection. “Every member of our football operation will demonstrate an all-consuming mindset to maximize his or her God-given potential, and we will do the same as a team,” Jackson said.

Jackson, a veteran Air Force officer, has a long history with the National Football League (NFL) and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Prior to coaching with the Falcons, Jackson served on the NCAA national office staff as a member of the college football rules enforcement group. He led and was directly responsible for the football rules development efforts in the Southeastern Conference (SEC). His background includes multiple defensive coaching roles with the Green Bay Packers and Denver Broncos, as well as coaching fellowships with the Atlanta Falcons and St. Louis Rams. He also served as a college scout for the Seattle Seahawks organization. He has collegiate experience at Colorado, UCLA, Utah State, Buffalo, and the United States Air Force Academy. Jackson accepted an appointment to the United States Air Force Academy, where he participated in football and indoor track and field.

President M. Christopher Brown II affirms that it is a new day for football on the hill. “This is a new era for Kentucky State

University football,” President Brown said. “Coach Jackson’s impressive mentorship of students on and off the field aligns with our belief of developing the whole person. He recognizes that we are not just interested in winning football games, but we are fully committed to building a championship program and addressing the campus-wide ambition to reclassify with the NCAA in the near future.” Jackson earned a bachelor’s degree in management from the United States Air Force Academy. He has a master’s degree in management and sports studies from California State University, Long Beach.

Jackson is a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA). His professional associations include the American Football Coaches Association (AFCA), NFL Coaches Association (NFLCA), National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA), National Association of Athletics Compliance (NAAC), Minority Coaches Association of Georgia (MCAofGA), and the National Association of Collegiate Women Athletics Administrators (NACWAA).

Athletic Director Thomas is elated to welcome Coach Jackson as the next leader of the Thorobred football program. “We are delighted that Coach Jackson and his family chose to be a part of the Kentucky State University family,” Thomas said. “I made a promise to our student-athletes—to find the right leader for our program. I know that Kentucky State honored that commitment with the hiring of Charlie Jackson. Coach Jackson is a total package of experiences and expertise, including time spent in the military, the NCAA national office and the NFL.”