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The Race For Durham District Attorney



Johnson O. Akinleye, Ph.D.

NCCU Installs Johnson O. Akinleye as 12th Chancellor

City and state officials, and former colleagues pay tribute to newly-minted leader

For 107 years, North Carolina Central University (NCCU) has stood at the forefront of higher education as a leader among historically black colleges and universities (HBCU). Continuing with that tradition of leadership, Johnson O. Akinleye, Ph.D., was formally installed as the 12th chancellor of NCCU during a ceremony at McDougald-McLendon Arena.

Nearly 1,500 students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends of the university, gathered to celebrate a new chapter in NCCU's history with the installation of the new chancellor on Thursday, April 19, 2018.

Akinleye, who was appointed by the University of North Carolina Board of Governors on June 26, 2017, began serving as interim chancellor in January 2017. He was named acting chancellor in August 2016 and served in that capacity until his appointment as interim. Previously, he was provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs for the university, where his responsibilities included faculty development, academic planning and assessment, enrollment management, and academic oversight of NCCU's seven schools and colleges.

"In my formative years as a child, I learned from my parents, especially my father, that the only ticket to a better life and brighter future for us was through education," he added.

His wife, Juanita, and their two children, Nikki and Peter, were on hand for the celebration, as were family members and friends from as far away as far away as Ghana and Nigeria.

"North Carolina Central University is a gem among gems; we will continue to provide North Carolinians with the distinct opportunity and access they need to unearth their potential for future success and realize their professional dreams and aspirations," the chancellor said in his inaugural speech. "NCCU will continue to play a critical role in contributing to the healthy economic and scholarly fabric of the Research Triangle, the City of Durham, and the State of North Carolina."

Presiding over the installation ceremonies was Margaret Spellings, president of the University of North Carolina System, which includes NCCU and 16 other campuses.

"Dr. Akinleye is a great leader in higher education and a truly passionate individual who has demonstrated a commitment to North Carolina Central University's pillars of 'Truth and Service,'" Spellings said. "He is carrying on the legacy of an institution that has a rich history in Durham and produced some of North Carolina's and this nation's finest educators, business leaders and politicians."

His extensive career in higher education spans more than three decades. Before arriving at NCCU, he was associate vice chancellor for academic programs at University of North Carolina Wilmington. Prior to that, he held multiple leadership posts at Edward Waters College and Bethune-Cookman University. He began his academic career as a faculty member at Bowie State University in Maryland.

Higher education colleagues shared remarks celebrating him.

Paul Hosier, Ph.D., professor emeritus, adjunct professor and retired provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, said Akinleye demonstrated both "tenacity and vision" after joining the administration at UNCW.

"I predict that under Johnson's leadership, North Carolina Central University will advance higher education access to an even greater number of individuals," Hosier added.

Other speakers included Secretary of N.C. Department of Revenue Ronald G. Perry, Durham Mayor Steve Schewel, Durham County Commission Chairman Wendy Jacobs, UNC Board of Governors' Chairman Louis Bissette, NCCU Board of Trustees' Chairman George R. Hamilton, and the Rev. Michael Page, pastor of Antioch Baptist Church in Durham.

Andrew Hugine, Ph.D., president of Alabama A&M University, spoke about Akinleye's accomplishments as he prepared to bestow the President's Award on the chancellor, who is an alumnus of the university. Akinleye also earned his doctorate from Howard University.



Roger Echols



Satana DeBerry



Daniel Meir

Cash Michaels
Contributing writer
CashWorks Media

The upcoming May 8th primary will see Durham voters decide who the next district attorney should be – incumbent Roger Echols, challenger Satana DeBerry or challenger Daniel Meir.

Their remarks for this story were made April 24th during a candidate's forum at North Carolina Central University's School of Law.

Roger Echols, 45, is a Democrat (electrogerecholsda.com).

He took over the troubled Durham District Attorney's office in 2014, and by most accounts, has begun to turn it around.

Beyond being the D.A. for the past three-and-a-half years, he's been a prosecutor for twenty years, also serving during that time as a chief assistant district attorney, prosecuting just about every type of case that there is.

During his term as D.A., Echols maintains that his mission has been "pursuing truth, and preserving justice." He says his office focuses on "...being thoughtful, being fair, equitable, ...and balance," noting that every decision made "...won't please everyone."

"Our goal is to make decisions that keep our community safe," Echols continued. "But we want to balance that with making decisions that at times are creative [and] proactive, when it does not conflict with keeping our community safe."

Echols cited starting a mental health court, doing restorative justice pleas, a misdemeanor diversion program and an Amnesty Day with featured a restoration of licenses (to over 458 people without a cost or charge to them).

"In some ways we were the first in the country, and a leader in the state as other districts have followed as they've done some of the same things that we have."

Echols continued, "That's the kind of balance that we need, and that's what I want to continue, and why I want to be your district attorney."

Satana DeBerry, 48, is a Democrat (www.deberry4da.com).

Atty. DeBerry has served as executive director of the N.C. Housing Coalition since February 2013. She has practiced law for 24 years – some as a criminal defense attorney. The last ten years have been spent as a policy advocate, working on behalf of poor and "vulnerable" communities of color. (Continued On Page 3)

"At each step of your career, you have demonstrated strength," Hugine told Akinleye. "Only four Alabama A&M graduates have ascended to the leadership position of a college or university in this nation. I want to present you with our university's highest form of recognition, the Presidential Medal."

Since joining NCCU, Akinleye has worked to expand the university's academic partnerships, including new agreements with community colleges, as well as to introduce a robust online distance-education program, NCCU Online. In addition, he created K-12 initiatives and implemented a security strategy to increase safety for campus constituents.

(Continued Onn Page 3)



Bill Cosby Found Guilty on All Charges in Sex Assault Trial, Remains Free on \$1 Million Bail

By Stacy M. Brown (NNPA Newswire Contributor)

NORRISTOWN, Pa.—Convicted comedian Bill Cosby will remain on house arrest until he's sentenced this summer following his conviction on three counts of aggravated indecent sexual assault.

Judge Steven T. O'Neill ordered Cosby to get written permission from adult probation officials, if he wants to leave his Philadelphia area home to visit his doctor or to meet with lawyers.

Those are the only movements he's allowed, and they must be within a five-county radius of Montgomery County. Cosby has been fitted with a tracking device, so that court officials can monitor him.

"This was a man who had evaded this moment for far too long," Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin Steele said after the verdict. (Continued On Page 3)

A Norristown jury found comedian Bill Cosby on three counts of aggravated indecent sexual assault. Some legal experts said that Cosby might get another trial. (POOL PHOTO)

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