

# FAMU president turns in his resignation

Loss of Humphries comes soon after Provost Ammons takes NCCU job

BY YALENA GORDON  
CAPITAL OUTLOOK

The Florida A&M University family just seemed to be recovering from the news that its provost, James H. Ammons, was leaving the university to serve as chancellor of N.C. Central University.

But the university was dealt another shocking blow Monday when President Frederick S. Humphries announced his resignation, effective June 30, after 16 years of service.

"It is with a deep sense of indebtedness and gratitude and also a tinge of sadness ... that I relinquish my duties as president of FAMU," Humphries told a crowd of more than 500 who gathered at an afternoon news conference in front of Lee Hall, which houses his office.

Humphries will take a year-long sabbatical starting July 1.

"As I reflect on the past 16 years, I am immensely proud that we worked diligently to build a

foundation of greatness," Humphries said. "Now it is time for someone else to lead it to more greatness and build on the strong foundation we have been able to create."

Humphries, 65, said he has some regrets, such as not constructing a 10,000-square-foot convocation center to replace Gaither Gymnasium, which he called inadequate, but added, "It's a good time to leave. FAMU is in good shape."

Although Humphries was occasionally at odds with the board of regents, including pushing for the reestablishment of the FAMU law school, which the board of regents opposed, Humphries emphatically denied he was forced to resign.

"It has been a great journey," he said. "But it is unfair for people to think I will be president forever."

The news was hard for Reggie Mitchell, Humphries' executive assistant.

"It's hard to fight back tears," said Mitchell, who was Student Government Association president when Humphries became university president. "He's inspired me to one day become a university president. I want what's best for FAMU. I want what's best for President

Humphries." Derric Heck, current SGA president, said, "I am in awe of his career and I admire the things he's accomplished - not only for the university, but for African Americans and the country."

During his sabbatical, Humphries said he will travel to Cambridge, England, where he will study the interface between universities and technology. He will also spend time in Silicon Valley, Calif., developing technology.

He will return to FAMU, working out of an office in Orlando, near the newly reestablished law school, where he will be director of a Science Research and Policy Center for the university.

Before leaving, Humphries plans to have the dean of the law school selected and appoint a search committee to replace Ammons.

Ammons, who served as provost for five years but worked for the university 18 years, leaves June 1 to become chancellor of NCCU, the first established public, liberal arts institution for black students.

"I understand," Ammons said of Humphries' decision. "I just went through this myself in deciding to leave."

Ammons says his relationship

with Humphries and the university will remain.

"I'm a graduate of FAMU. My wife is a graduate and I'm leaving a son here," he said.

"There will always be a special place in my heart for FAMU. I will always be proud to say I am a Rattler."

Keith Goldschmidt, spokesman for the board of regents, said Humphries approached former SUS Chancellor Adam Herbert last fall about resigning.

"They had periodic conversations about the timing of it," he said.

In a written statement, Herbert said, "The jewel Fred has nurtured within the SUS today sparkles throughout the nation. We all owe Fred Humphries a great deal of gratitude for his 16 years of service to the university, to the state of Florida and to higher education generally."

Gov. Jeb Bush, also in a written statement, said, "As president of FAMU, (Humphries) has been one of the best friends education has ever had in Florida. As a citizen, I know he will continue to contribute his wisdom and talents to Florida."

While on sabbatical, Humphries will receive a 10 percent pay cut. Currently, he earns



Ingrid Saunders Jones, senior vice president of corporate external affairs for The Coca-Cola Co., presents Florida A&M University President Frederick S. Humphries with the "Special Tribute Award" during the recent Trumpet Awards in Atlanta.

\$178,600.

"With the uncertainty of the existence of the board of regents (which could be phased out by July 1) and establishment of a board of trustees, it will probably be after legislative session before

a decision is made on the selection process for a new president," Goldschmidt said.

However, the board's first move is to find an interim replacement.

# Bush 'snub' angers black Virginia congressman

BY HAZEL EDNEY TRICE  
NNPA STAFF WRITER

WASHINGTON - Rep. Robert C. (Bobby) Scott (D-Va.) is outraged. The normally mild-mannered congressman from Virginia said he is insulted by what he categorized as a snub from President Bush.

Scott, a member of the Congressional Black Caucus who has been critical of Bush's "charitable choice" plan to fund social programs through religious institutions, said he is the only member of Congress from the Hampton Roads section of his state who was not invited to join Bush for a trip with the president that included a briefing at the U.S. Joint Forces Command in Norfolk. All of the representatives who attended are white.

"This lets people know what we're dealing with in the Bush White House," Scott told the NNPA in a telephone interview. "I didn't even get to the back of the bus."

The White House claimed that Scott, who served as state chair-



Scott

man of Al Gore's presidential campaign, was indeed invited.

"He was invited, but unfortunately they couldn't get him on Air Force One," said White House spokeswoman Mercy Viana. "We certainly regret we weren't able to do so."

Scott recalled that it was Monday, the afternoon before the Feb. 13 trip, when his staff called the

White House to ask if he would be invited. He said his office was told that the reason he was not invited was because he was "not a member of the House Armed Services Committee."

Then, he said, a second White House staffer called back and said he could come, but only by his own transportation. This was not only a "second-class invitation," but an explanation that was "flimsy, contradictory and insulting," he said. "One said I was not invited. Another one said I could come but I had to get there on my own."

"I've never been insulted this way before," Scott said, noting that routinely the Hampton Roads delegation attends events together. But this time, "everybody else that went got an official invitation" on that Friday before the trip, he said.

The others "were invited, escorted to the plane, traveled with the president and escorted" to the destination, he said, "all of the Hampton Roads representatives but me."

Other local congressional members who attended with the president were Jo Ann Davis (R), Ed



Bush

Schrock (R), Norm Sisisky (D), John Warner (R) and Sen. George

Allen (R). Scott said the snubbing incident was even more conspicuous because Allen, a freshman senator, is not on the Armed Services Committee either.

In addition, he pointed out that Rep. Cynthia McKinney (D-Ga.), another member of the Black Caucus, was also excluded when Bush visited Fort Stewart, one of Georgia's military bases on that same day. McKinney is a member of the Armed Services Committee.

The White House apologized for that incident, saying that she was left out through an oversight by the White House's legislative affairs office, according to a Washington Post story attributing the explanation to White House spokesman Ari Fleischer. He denied McKinney was deliberately

excluded.

McKinney wrote Bush a letter asking why she was not invited. "Though the U.S. Army has 41.3 percent minority composition, there was not a single minority congressional representative present at your visit," she said.

Her staff has declined comment since the apology, saying she is finished with the issue.

Scott has been strongly critical of Bush's charitable choice plan, which would allow churches, mosques and synagogues to receive federal funds for social programs without altering their religious focus. The black Virginia representative has said he likes the mission, but that it allows those institutions the right to discriminate based on religion.

## Dancer

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mentaries, cinema and television, but that night, Tomlinson did not speak on his many accomplishments. Instead, he informed the audience on how AIDS changes his life.

Once diagnosed with full-blown AIDS in July of 1995, he realized how precious life was. "Many tend to take for granted the simplicity of breathing in clean air, having strong legs to walk from 'A' to 'B' and the fact of just waking up each morning because tomorrow isn't promised."

The Chronicle (USPS 067-910) was established by Ernest H. Pitt and Ndubisi Egemeye in 1974 and is published every Thursday by Winston-Salem Chronicle Publishing Co., Inc., 617 N. Liberty St., Winston-Salem, NC 27101. Periodicals Postage paid at Winston-Salem, N.C. Annual subscription price is \$30.72.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:  
The Chronicle, PO Box 1636  
Winston-Salem, NC 27102-1636

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"When you are fighting for justice and democracy, color, race, and social class have little importance .... Man taken in his totality transcends questions of race."

- Jean-Bertrand Aristide

he said. AIDS is contracted sexually through the exchange of bodily fluids.

He recalls dropping from a healthy 160 pounds to a thin 125 pounds, unable to fit into his clothes. To control his complications due to meningitis and having kidney stones, he once had to take up to 65 pills a day. Currently, he is taking seven pills a day.

"When you become sick, you tend to realize who your real friends are and you find yourself lonely many days," Tomlinson recalled. He mentioned how many people

didn't want to talk about such things as AIDS and HIV, referring to it as a "whisper kind of thing."

"The number one killer of people today isn't cancer or high blood pressure. It is ignorance and negligence," he said. "Don't be afraid to ask questions. Try to learn as much information as possible. Making light of the situation, Tomlinson went back to the time when he was growing up. He recalled how he loved attention and how he always stood out from the rest. Being a multitalented person, he admits that he is blessed to be able to sing, dance, write music, draw and speak five languages. "Be who you are," he contended. "Being different is OK. Don't let people label you, for labels are made to be on cans."

He also told the audience that, though he has contracted the disease, he is still a part of this world and plans to contribute to the world by trying to make it a better place. He revealed two of his callings: to work with children and to become a minister. He plans to attend the divinity school.

Before concluding his lecture he advised parents to take their kids to visit prisons, hospitals and even on the streets to show how they could turn out to be if they make the wrong choices and hang with the wrong crowd. He also encouraged parents to monitor what their children listen to and watch on TV. "Become more involved with your child and realize that tough love is the best love," he said. He revealed how he is "ready and prepared," though he has already prepared for his funeral and plans to have friends and mentor Maya Angelou read one of his original poems at his funeral. The poem, titled "Autumn Leaves," talks about remembering where you come from and how tomorrow is a gift. He plans to release two books - one being an autobiography of his life later this year, for which movie rights have been requested, and the other called "My Life at the White House" - along with poetry. He also plans to continue teaching master classes, traveling to different places speaking and educating people on AIDS.

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