

Fall 2000

A&M Florida A&M University Magazine for Employees, Alumni and Friends: The Return of the FAMU College of Law

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University

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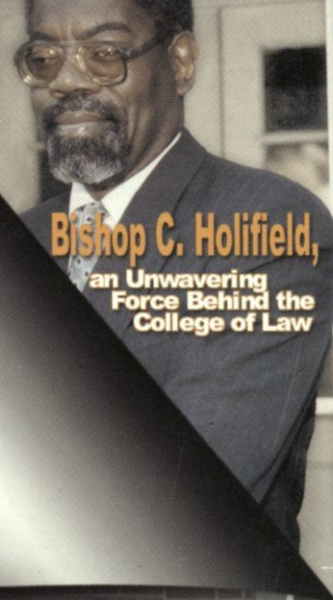
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A&M

FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE
FOR EMPLOYEES, ALUMNI AND FRIENDS



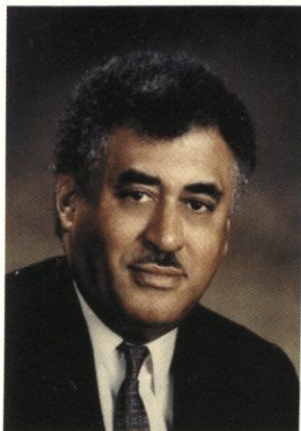
Bishop C. Holifield,
an Unwavering
Force Behind the
College of Law

COLLEGE OF LAW



**The Return
of the FAMU
College of Law**

President's Message



Frederick S. Humphries

Rarely in the history of the struggle for equality has a state had a greater opportunity than Florida to redress a social wrong and resurrect a people's faith in justice and fair play.

With the re-establishment of the FAMU College of Law, the Florida Legislature gave FAMU back a critical part of its history and a college that will produce graduates who will help shape the lives of Floridians in decades and centuries to come.

As we work to make this law school a reality, the entire process is filled with excitement and challenges. We have advertised for a dean and plan to fill the position by spring 2001.

This new college of law will have a curriculum designed to give students the opportunity to focus on civil rights, sports entertainment, environmental, international and other areas of law. Our goal is to continue FAMU's legacy of producing outstanding lawyers who will not only contribute to the quality of life but serve as the recourse for those who have been mistreated in our society. Lawyers are the keepers of civility. Surely the contributions of the gradu-

Celebrating the Return of the College of Law

ates of the FAMU College of Law have made America a more just society.

U.S. Congressman Alcee Hastings (class of '63) was the first African-American to serve as a federal judge in the State of Florida. Miami Attorney Jesse J. McCrary (class of '65) was the first African-American to serve as Secretary of State since reconstruction. The late Gwendolyn S. Cherry (class of '65) was the first African-American woman elected to the Florida House of Representatives.

This Homecoming we will honor the graduates and the members of the Florida Legislature who fought for the return of the law school and FAMUans of the Century.

Special thanks to FAMU General Counsel Bishop Holifield who served as historian and spokesman, Reginald Mitchell and Jim Davis who helped lobby for the law school's return and the thousands of students and alumni who have supported the effort for decades.

As you read through this issue of the *A&M Magazine*, you will learn more about the law school effort and also see a sampling of new faculty and members of the FAMU 2000 freshman class.

Each day the University becomes more equipped to be a major player in higher education. With your support we can continue our legacy of "Excellence With Caring."



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|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| EDITOR: | SHARON SAUNDERS |
| ASSOCIATE EDITOR: | GLYNDELL PRESLEY KEITH POPE |
| ASSISTANT EDITORS: | MARGARET LEONARD TRACEY PLUMMER |
| PHOTOGRAPHERS: | KEITH L. POPE |
| LAYOUT AND DESIGN: | SHARON SAUNDERS |
| COVER DESIGN: | KEITH L. POPE CHARLES COLLINS |
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EDDIE JACKSON

CONTRIBUTORS:
ALONDA THOMAS
KAREN YOUNG KIRKSEY

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The Rebirth of the FAMU College of Law

1949-1968 2000-Present

These are excerpts of Chapter Five in The Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University College of Law (1949-2000) written by Larry O. Rivers, freshman journalism major from Tallahassee.

From young college students and grassroots community leaders to educational administrators and high-ranking government officials, people of all ages and in all walks of life played influential roles in bringing the long lost law school back home.

From the outset, Tallahassee was the primary battle ground in the fight to retrieve the law college. Despite the fact that FAMU supporters faced an uphill fight, in 1985, a new general emerged who brought fresh, courageous vision and renewed energy to the effort.

Appointed the eighth president of Florida A&M University on June 1 1985, Frederick Stephen Humphries made the return of the College of Law a focal point of his long-term goals for the university.

Humphries came to the helm of FAMU's efforts to reestablish the College of Law with a fiery passion molded by past experiences. An Apalachicola, Florida, native, upon

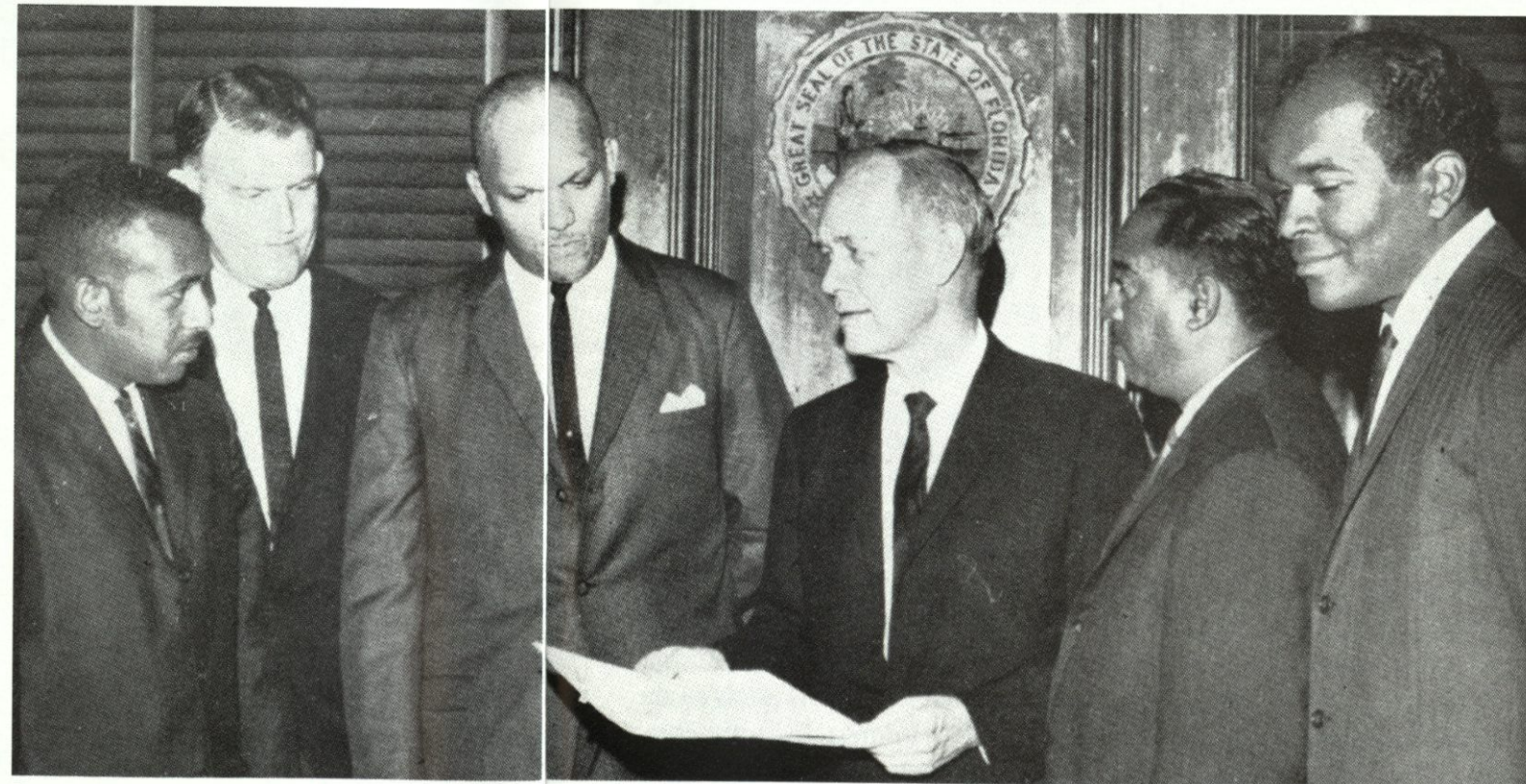
graduating from the all-black Wallace M. Quinn High School, he entered FAMU as a chemistry major. While studying for his bachelor's degree, he saw firsthand the benefits and contributions of the College of Law during its most prominent years of growth and expansion.

Following graduation, he completed two years of service in the U.S. Army and then entered the University of Pittsburgh in 1959, working as a chemistry teaching assistant while completing course work toward his Ph.D. in physical chemistry, which he earned in 1964. Returning that year to his undergraduate alma mater as an assistant professor of chemistry, Humphries deeply involved himself in the scholastic, social, and political affairs of the university.

During this time, he witnessed the College of Law being attacked from a number of fronts and then gradually phased out by the state government. Like many FAMU supporters, he saw the removal of the law school as a disturbing wrong com-



Florida Gov. Jeb Bush signs the bill to reestablish the FAMU College of Law.



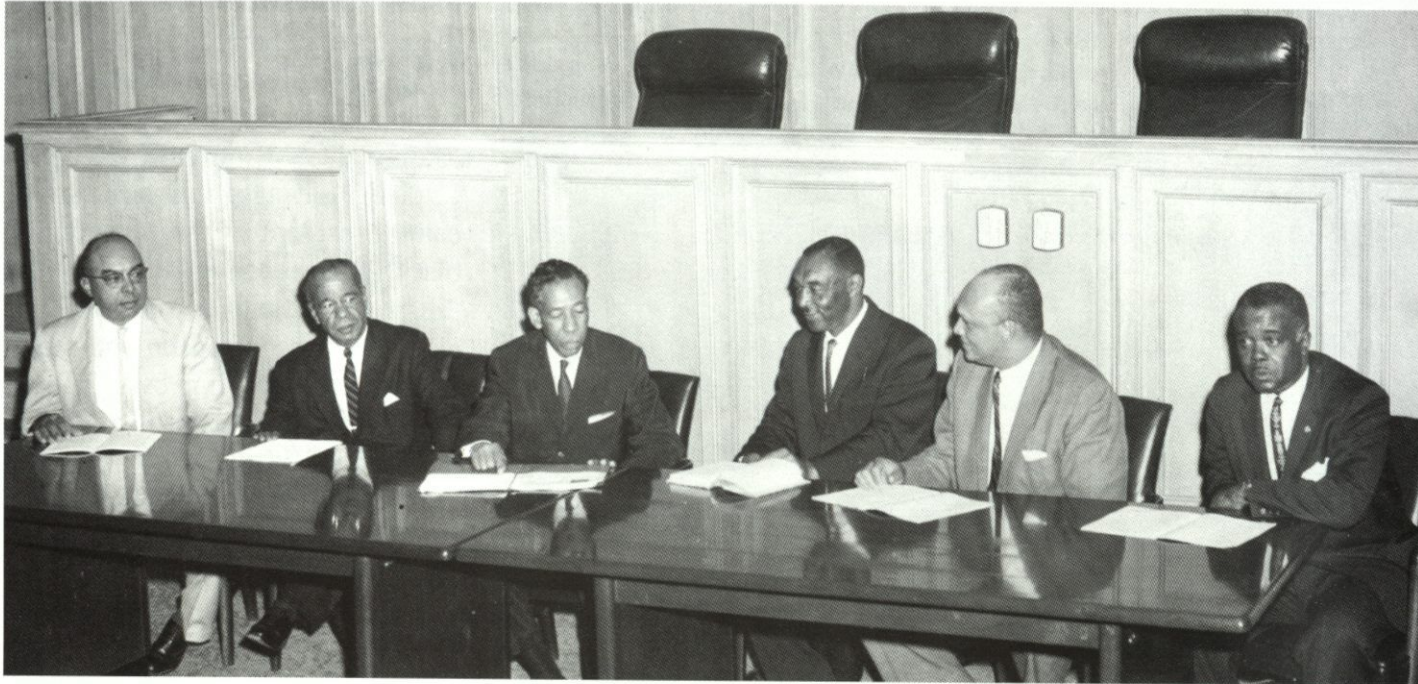
Former Dean of the FAMU College of Law Thomas M. Jenkins and law students who successfully passed the Florida Bar examination receive congratulations from Governor Farris Bryant and associate.

mitted against the institution and longed to ameliorate it.

In 1975, Humphries used the spirit of leadership and vision he developed at FAMU to undertake a new challenge. During this year, he became president of the historically black Tennessee State University. In this position, he gained national acclaim for his outspoken and tenacious dedication to improving opportunities for students at historically black universities.

The Florida Board of Regents's (BOR) unanimous March 29, 1985, selection of Dr. Humphries to lead FAMU opened yet another new chapter in the then 50-year old educator's career of service.

As FAMU's leader, Humphries commenced an extensive effort to rebuild and improve the university through upgrading facilities, expanding the faculty, increasing the number of programs of study, recruiting more students, and of course, seeking to return the College of Law. By this time, the objective of bringing back the law school touched Humphries even more personally. After graduating from Morehouse College with a bachelor's degree in political science, his eldest son, Frederick Stephen Humphries, Jr., earned his Juris Doctorate (J.D.) degree from Temple University and began practicing law in Nashville, Tennessee. While very proud of the college at which his son received a legal education, Dr. Humphries Sr. saw no reason why there should not be a reputable law school at an historically black university in Florida for aspiring attorneys like his own son to attend. In order to bring this goal into fruition, Humphries enlisted a number of talented individuals to co-



The Planning Committee of the College of Law included (from left to right) N.L. Adams, assistant director; J.R.E. Lee, vice president; George W. Gore, Jr. president of Florida A&M University; H.M.

Efferson, dean of the University; T.M. Jenkins, dean of the College of Law and R.L. Williams, director of the Institute.

als to coordinate the effort. Two of the most important of these persons were Bishop Clarke Holifield and Reginald J. Mitchell. The men were both FAMU alumni who had earned professional legal degrees from highly selective institutions. Holifield, who graduated from FAMU in 1966 with a B.A. in political science, received his J.D. from Harvard University. In 1976, FAMU President Benjamin L. Perry selected him to be the university's first General Counsel.

Mitchell, who served as FAMU's student government president (SGA) during the 1985-1986 school year, graduated from FAMU with bachelor's degrees in political science and business administration. He went on to earn his master of business and J.D. degrees from the University of Minnesota. Subsequently, Mitchell returned to FAMU as an executive assistant to Humphries.



Moot court trials were common scenes at the FAMU College of Law.

Among the most ambitious of their efforts was the development of two Need Statements for the FAMU College of Law. These studies, which Holifield and Mitchell coauthored in 1990 and 1993, presented a detailed history of the first FAMU law college.

As men and women on the FAMU campus worked to shine light on the story of the university's law school and the need for its return, Tallahassee community leaders such as the Rev. R.B. Holmes, Jr., also commenced efforts to advance and preserve the FAMU College of Law



FAMU law students relaxing in off hours.

legacy. Pastor of Bethel Missionary Baptist Church and a respected activist in the Capital City's black community, Holmes organized at the grass-roots level numerous activities to petition for the law school's reestablishment. "We want to show our pride and persistence," Holmes emphasized, "The law school at FAMU should have never been closed. Never!"

During the 1994 state legislative session, Holmes led a city-wide

march on the Florida Capital and spoke before the Board of Regents in an effort to plead for the law college's return.

Foot soldiers in the Florida Legislature continued trudging through long mires of red tape and political negotiations in hopes of getting a fresh law school bill passed in the House and Senate. Two of the most outstanding leaders of this effort were Carrie Pittman Meek (D-Miami) and Alfred "Al" Lawson (D-



Ms. Dorn Gaines (front-center), one of the first African-American women to become a lawyer in Florida, with FAMU Student Bar Association members.

Tallahassee). In the chambers of the Florida Senate, Meek, a 1946 FAMU graduate and former FAMU professor of health and physical education, emerged as an important early supporter of reestablishing the law school.

In 1992, Meek would join Alcee F. Hastings in becoming the first black U.S. congressional representative from Florida since Reconstruction. Lawson, also a FAMU graduate, provided a strong voice in the Florida House, filing six bills between 1991 and 1998 that proposed returning the FAMU College of Law.

The turning point in the controversy finally emerged in 2000, when State Senators Betty Holzendorf (D-Jacksonville) and Mario Diaz-Balart (R-Miami) headed a joint effort between black and Hispanic legislators to create colleges of law at FAMU and FIU respectively. The initiative was also supported by Senators Jim Hargrett (D-Tampa), Kendrick Meek (D-Miami), Daryl Jones (D-Miami) and Representatives Al Lawson, Willie Logan (D-Opa Locka), Rudy Garcia (R-Miami), Gaston Cantens (R-Miami), Carlos Lacasa (R-Miami), Frederica Wilson (D-Miami), Alex Villalobos (R-Mi-

ami), Rudolph Bradley (R-St. Petersburg), and Alzo Reddick (D-Orlando). The coalition of lawmakers worked quickly to make the proposed two law schools a reality. During the 2000 legislative session, Diaz-Balart, Holzendorf, and Hargrett sponsored

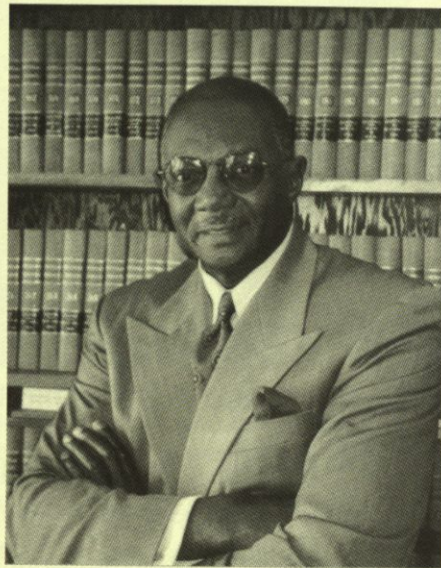
Senate Bill 68 for this purpose. A similar measure was proposed in the House when Bradley, Cantens, and Logan introduced House Bill 2129. With the aid of Senate President Toni Jennings and House Speaker John Thrasher, the measure creating col-

leges of law at FAMU and FIU passed. On Wednesday July 14, 2000 the College of Law Bill Signing Ceremony took place in the Foster-Tanner Band Rehearsal Hall before an excited, overflowing audience of FAMU students, staff faculty, ad-

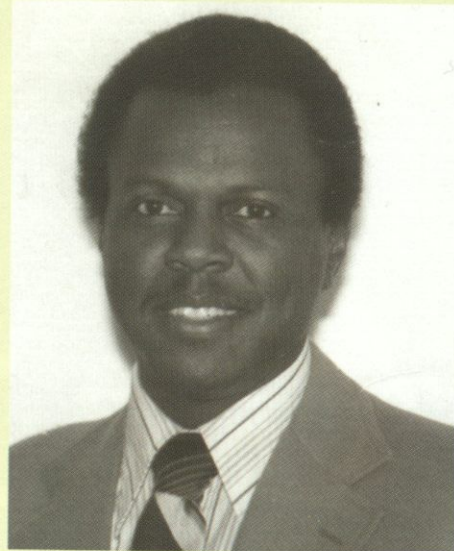
ministrators, and supporters. Jeb Bush, Governor of Florida was joined on stage by the men and women who played key roles in returning the College of Law to FAMU after thirty-two years. Holzendorf, Bradley, Diaz-Balart, Cantens,

Hargrett, and Lawson all delivered post-signing comments. On FAMU's behalf, General Counsel Holifield, SGA President Derric Heck, National Alumni President Bernard Kinsey, and Regent James Corbin delivered words of joy and

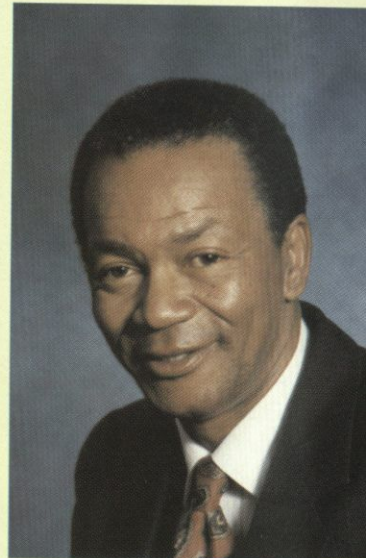
optimism. It was President Humphries, the ceremony's presiding officer, who best summed up the feeling of all parties involved when he stated: "Restoring the law school to FAMU is good for the state. It is a situation where everybody wins."



Elbert L. Hatchett, Esq.



Judge Perker L. Meeks, Jr.



Jesse J. McCrary, Jr., Esq.

FAMU College of Law Ends, Graduates Pick Up Torch and Develop Bright Futures

By Karen Young Kirksey

The late 1960s marked the end of an era for the original Florida A&M University College of Law, but the beginning of bright futures for its graduates.

FAMU's 57 law school alumni prevailed. They became lawyers, judges, professors, administrators and public servants. There was also a pastor, a newspaper publisher and a bail bondsman.

Newly-elected State Representative Arthenia L. Joyner (D-Tampa)

was a member of the Florida A&M University Class of 1968, and the only woman among the law school's final five graduates.

She remembers the FAMU College of Law as "a place where Black students knew they would get a quality education from someone who looked like them and cared about them."

Joyner also remembers finals week, when law books were removed from the shelves at FAMU and loaded into trucks headed for Florida State University. Despite student protests downtown, the FAMU College of Law was in its final days.

"We didn't feel good about it," says Joyner. "We didn't think it was right. I had a sinking, sad feeling, but we had to deal with taking our exams."

From there it was uphill for Joyner. "After graduation, she went home to study for the Bar. She returned to Tallahassee to work when the 1969 Legislative session opened. Joyner was employed for many years as legislative aide to Joe Lang Kershaw, the first Black legislator in Florida since Reconstruction.

Joyner, former president of the National Bar Association, is elated that the law school has been returned to FAMU. "I held fast to my dream," she says, "that one day it would open again."

Retired judge Dan D. Mangiamiele II (Class of '67) is one of three white graduates of the FAMU College of Law. He applied to the Law School on the recommendation of a friend, appellate judge Eugene Pinchum.

The Chicagoan has not returned to the campus since he left, but Mangiamiele has fond memories of his times at FAMU. "It was an excellent education, and the professors were top-notch," he says. There were only six students in his class, "but we were a tight-knit group, and we helped each other."

Over the years, Mangiamiele has kept apprised of his classmates' careers. Until recently, he communicated regularly with Glenn Pritchett (Class of '68), who was also living in Chicago, but has since moved.

Mangiamiele's career has come full circle. He started with a private practice, stepped down from the bench after 19 years as an administrative law judge, and is now in private practice again. Mangiamiele says news of the law school returning to FAMU makes him "happy and proud, because it's a good school." He has never had any regrets about attending the FAMU College of Law, because "It was a wonderful experience, and I got what I wanted—I became a lawyer."

C. W. Grant (Class of '59) describes the FAMU College of Law as "a very wholesome environment where everybody knew everybody," he explains, "The dean at the time, Thomas Miller Jenkins, was my mentor."

According to Grant, Jenkins was



U.S. Representative Alcee Hastings



Arthenia L. Joyner, Esq.

nicknamed "The Red Raider" by students. At about 6'6" and 245 pounds, the dean "was tenacious in his resolve

to make us successful at all costs. He asked me to come back after I finished law school and get on the staff, so I worked as a law librarian and instructor from 1961 until 1966." Jenkins left FAMU in 1965 to become president of Albany State University. Grant retired as vice president for student affairs at Albany State in 1996. He recently returned as director of the Weekend University.

Florida Supreme Court Justice Leander J. Shaw, Jr., was a member of the FAMU College of Law faculty for three years. Upon graduating from Howard University's Law School in 1957, Shaw considered relocating to St. Louis to take over the law practice of a friend who had been appointed to the bench. But after spending a winter in Missouri, he received word from his father, Dr. Leander J. Shaw, Sr., then-dean of FAMU's graduate school, that the Law School was looking for a professor. I said, "Give him my name."

Teaching at FAMU's College of Law proved to be "a unique experience that I really enjoyed," says Shaw. "It had to be the best legal education in the country—it was almost one-on-one. We had a handful of students and we got to know those students and their capabilities. It was a wonderful experience for both the student and the teacher."

Shaw recalls that FAMU's College of Law came into existence "to avoid integrating the University of

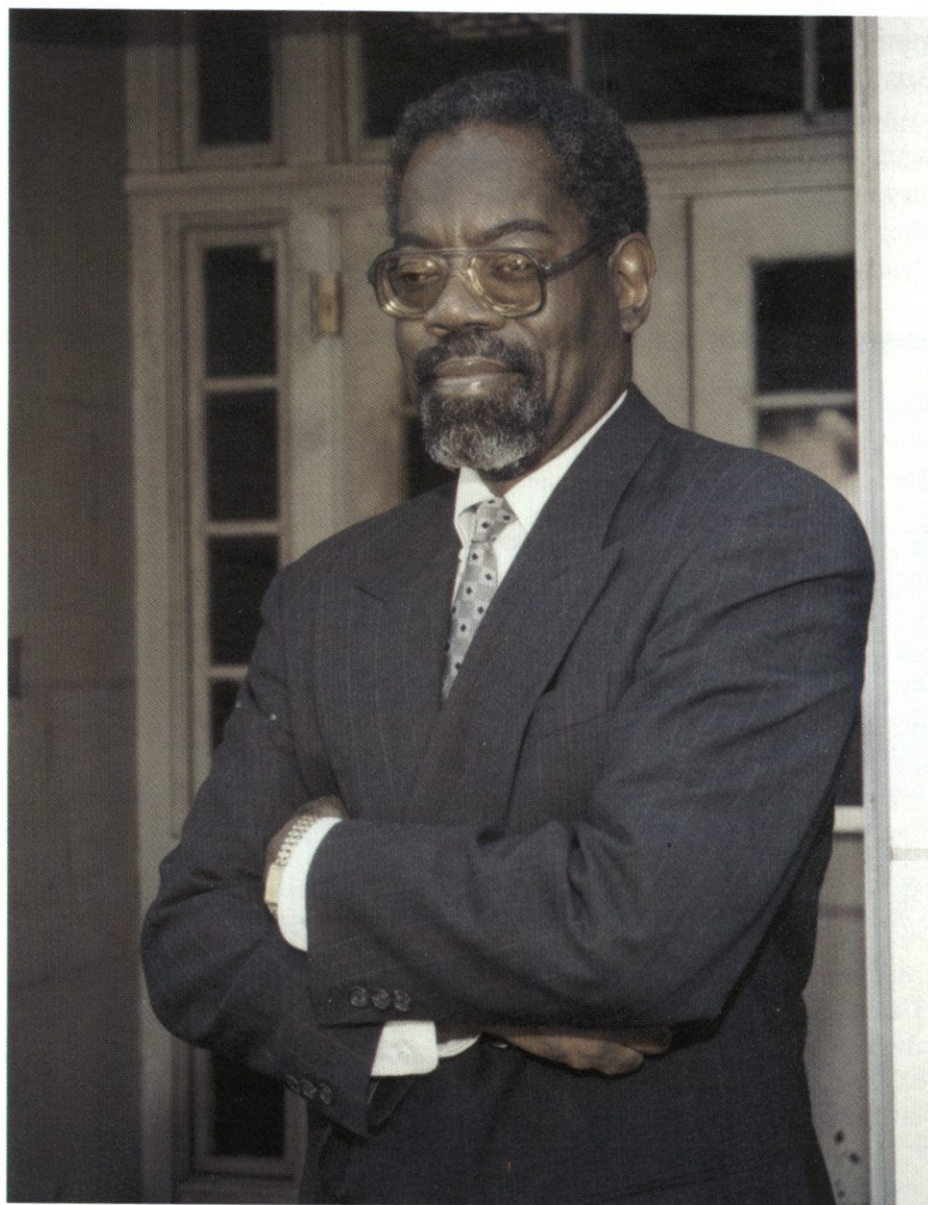
Florida's Law School. I guess the dominant feeling was whatever it cost it was worth it."

Shaw says when he first heard that FAMU's Law School was closing, "It was surprising. Then when I thought about it, I wasn't too surprised at all. It would be shocking for something like that to happen today, but at that time, it wasn't quite that shocking."

It comes as no surprise to Shaw that so many graduates of FAMU's College of Law have enjoyed such brilliant careers. "I knew they would be good lawyers. I had no doubt that they would pass the Bar and become successful lawyers." He drops a few names to prove his point—Representative Arthenia Joyner, Congressman Alcee Hastings (Class of '63), the first African American to serve as a federal judge in Florida, and Jesse McCrary (Class of '65), a man of many firsts in Florida—among them, the first African American Secretary of State since reconstruction and Assistant Attorney General.

"There was no frame of reference for an African American in Florida to become Secretary of State," says Shaw, "but I knew they had the capability. There was nothing that could have stopped them other than the climate at that time."

After 17 years of existence, FAMU's Law School was ordered by the Florida Legislature to close its doors and make way for a new law school at Florida State University. But FAMU's 57 Law School alumni prevailed. They became lawyers, judges, professors, administrators and public servants. There was also a pastor, a newspaper publisher and a bail bondsman.



Bishop C. Holifield, Esq.

Harvard Graduate and FAMU General Counsel, Bishop C. Holifield, a Force Behind the Return of the College of Law

As Florida A&M University General Counsel, Bishop C. Holifield has encountered many challenges.

Since the early 1990s, it has been his charge to make a case to justify the return of the law school to Florida A&M University with the help of Avery McKnight, associate general counsel; Reginald Mitchell, executive assistant

to FAMU President Frederick S. Humphries; and Thomas Brown, a Tallahassee attorney in private practice.

Holifield talks about the history of the original Florida A&M University College of Law, and his role in securing the new law school.

Question: When did you know that you wanted to be a lawyer?

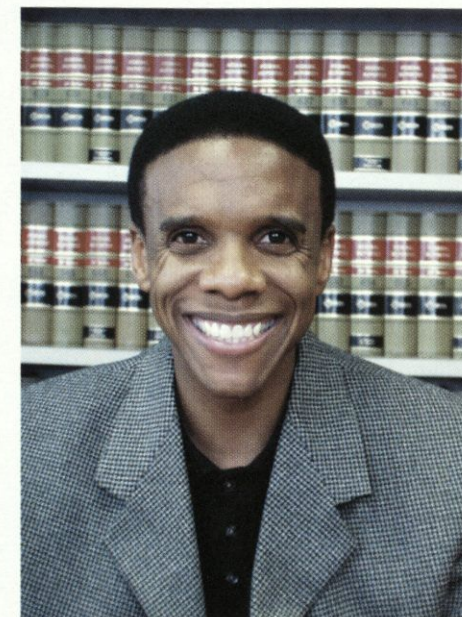
I went back and forth among a number of career options. I started out saying I wanted to be a scientist. And then when I came to college I had a double major in math and political science. I did well in math, but I liked political science more. Then, while I was in college, I decided I wanted to join the foreign service, and I actually had been accepted into a graduate program designed to lead to a career in the U.S. Diplomatic Corps. However, during my junior year, Harvard Law School started recruiting me.

I thought a law degree would give me the greatest amount of versatility no matter what career I chose to follow. I had always been impressed with law since reading the biography of Clarence Darrow when I was still in grade school. Clarence Darrow was one of America's great lawyers. He argued some of the greatest cases in this country, including one on behalf of an African American, who in the process of defending his home against a White mob that attacked him and his family, killed a white person. Clarence Darrow was able to get him exonerated showing that the man was defending his home. And I thought that if someone could actually save a human life from improper execution, then that had to be a worthy profession.

What was your role in Florida A&M University's regaining the Law School and what is your role now?

My role in regaining the Law School was to help gather the information—the data that would justify a law school being reestablished at Florida A&M University. It also consisted of helping to persuade those who needed to be persuaded, including the Board of Regents, the Legislature and the Florida Bar Board of Governors, that it was a good idea.

My current role is to assist in the site selection process, if needed, to provide general advisement and serve as a resource person for issues that come up. There's a lot of work to be done, and



Avery McKnight, Esq.



Reginald Mitchell, J.D.

based on the fact that I am an attorney with a fair amount of experience, it seems natural for me to assist in the process.

You were a FAMU student in the mid-60s. Did you know anything about the Law School at that time? Had you ever considered attending law school at FAMU?

I was always aware of the law school

it seems, because we always had programs there even when I was growing up as a teenager. We had what we call 'declamation' contests. That's an old-fashioned word for speech contests. Those usually took place in the Moot Court Room of the FAMU College of Law. I considered going to FAMU College of Law. In fact, Dean Robert Williams offered me a full scholarship. I enjoyed my four years at FAMU, but I thought it was time for me to try another educational institution. And of course, Harvard is projected as representing a great challenge, and at that time, I thought a challenge was what I needed.

You have been in your position since 1976. Did you ever think FAMU would regain the Law School?

Yes, I thought FAMU would get the Law School back. When you look at the fact that the State of Florida has an African-American population that is 15 percent of the total, yet African Americans comprise only 2 percent of the members of the Florida Bar, clearly, there is a need. And with that kind of under-representation of African Americans in the Florida Bar, it seems that a really feasible and effective way of solving that under-representation would be for Florida A&M University to get its Law School back.

The Florida A&M University College of Law had 57 graduates. Many have had and continue to have illustrious careers. Does that surprise you?

Anybody that knows Jesse McCrary, Arthenia Joyner, Alcee Hastings, John Due or Gwen Cherry would not be surprised by them having illustrious careers. They were outstanding students. I can remember Jesse McCrary and other law school students holding court on "The Set." They were always impressive in the abilities that they had to make persuasive arguments. Jesse could argue either side of an issue and make you want to accept his position no matter what side of an argument he was supporting. The



Former Dean Thomas M. Jenkins shakes hands with the Honorable Scovel Richardson, Judge, U.S. Customs Courts, New York, during the Pre-Legal Society Leadership seminar. Second from

the left is Attorney Spottswood R. Robinson, dean of Howard University School of Law. Others are Theodore Nims and Doretha Mathis.

FAMU College of Law students were looked up to by undergraduate students at FAMU.

Is it true that the Board of Control (now the Board of Regents) screened the applications of white students who were interested in attending the Florida A&M University College of Law?

What our research revealed is that the Board of Control, in effect, prevented FAMU from accepting white students in the FAMU College of Law. By doing that, they actually circumscribed the growth of the FAMU College of Law. The FAMU College of Law was opened in 1951, but it wasn't allowed to accept white students until 1963. And it took a challenge on the part of the United States Department of Education to get the State of Florida to allow white students to come to the FAMU College of Law. I mean the state had to be threatened with the cutoff of federal funds before white students were admitted here.

You were away at Harvard when

Florida A&M University's College of Law was forced by the Florida Legislature to close its doors. Were you surprised to hear the news?

I graduated from FAMU's undergraduate program in 1966. And I knew at that time efforts were underway to close it. I was hoping that it didn't happen, but I knew that forces were at work to bring that about.

How did you make a case for returning the Law School to Florida A&M University?

As a part of our various presentations, we developed a need statement for the FAMU College of Law which captured a lot of the historical factors entering into the creation of the FAMU College of Law, including the whole history of Virgil Hawkins being denied admission to the University of Florida's College of Law and FAMU's College of Law being created as an alternative. My research was made easier because of the excellent history of FAMU that had been written by Dr. Leedell Neyland.

There were always forces at work designed to impede the growth of the FAMU College of Law. The budget was never more than \$100,000 a year throughout the entire history of FAMU's College of Law. I think it should be noted that the FAMU College of Law ushered in the Florida Bar exam. That is, in 1909, when the University was created, all an individual who attended a Florida law school had to do in order to become a member of the Bar was to graduate from a chartered law school in the State of Florida. That policy was changed in 1951 and went into effect in 1954, which incidentally was the first year that FAMU's College of Law had a graduating class. So the policy was changed to the effect that even if you graduated from a law school in the state of Florida, now you had to take the Florida Bar.

And what I find most interesting now is that currently there is pending before the Supreme Court of Florida, a proposal

(Continued on Page 33)



at the Leaning tower of Pisa in Italy.s

Holifield Continued (from page 24)

by the Florida Board of Bar Examiners, that the passage score for the Bar exam be increased yet again, in two stages. These increases would parallel the opening of the new FAMU College of Law. Again, there are always forces at work to stop the progress that African Americans are trying to make. I think that we have to overcome those just as we have in the past. But getting the law school approved by the Legislature and getting the law school built are two different things. As you well know, we have not yet been accorded a site, although a committee has made a well-grounded recommendation for a site.

The return of the FAMU College of Law will assist in helping create an African-American community that is a fuller participant in the legal profession, including the judicial profession and the legal education profession.

And it will also help create a group of skilled practitioners who can help the rest of the Black community achieve success in the business world and in otherwise accomplishing dreams that they may have.

Holifield, a 1966 political science

graduate of FAMU, was born in Boston, Massachusetts, and raised in Tallahassee. In 1969 he graduated from Harvard Law School and in 1976 assumed the post as FAMU's general counsel.

He comes from a family of achievers. His father, the late Bishop Holifield, Sr., received a degree in agronomy from Tuskegee Institute and went to work for the United States Department of Agriculture. He was the first African-American soil conservation agent in Florida. Holifield's mother, Millicent, is a graduate of FAMU's School of Nursing. After becoming a registered nurse at Boston City Hospital, she returned to Tallahassee and started a Licensed Practical Nurse program—the first such school that area African Americans could attend. Holifield's sister, Marilyn, is a Miami attorney. His brother, Edward, is a Tallahassee physician. Holifield is married to the former Carolyn Stone, an administrative judge for the State of Florida. He is the father of three children.



FAMU College of Law graduates at the Law School bill signing ceremony. From left to right are: Howard Knight, C. Bette Wimbish, Athenia L. Joyner and Benjamin Lampkin.