

Civic Engagement



The Auburn Black Caucus was established in 1988, chartered in 1991, and is a stand alone organization. It was initially set up as a place for African Americans at Auburn to congregate. Today, its mission has evolved to be more inclusive and to address the problems and issues of employees who are marginalized. Currently, the officers include President Ivan Watts, Vice-President Jarred Russell, Treasurer Wadine Williams, and Secretary Tanja Matthews. Dr. Watts states, "We invite everyone and always have, but especially now."

Because a large amount of the Auburn Black Caucus' focus is presently geared toward discrimination and worker issues, they decided to bring in attorney Julian L. McPhillips, Jr. to speak about these problems. McPhillips is a formidable civil rights lawyer. He has been practicing for over thirty years, and in that time has represented at least 300 faculty and staff of Auburn University in cases against the administration. Most of these cases he won. Everyone from custodians to professors to administrators were at this event, and McPhillips did an excellent job informing them of their rights.

During his presentation, McPhillips

ered discriminatory practices. He also told the audience that they should try to address their issues within Auburn University and avoid lawsuits if possible. Employees, however, often feel they cannot be heard within the insitution. After his interaction with those present, Julian said he was suprised that these employees do not know how to deal with discrimination or even who to go to first when they have a complaint. Through guest speakers like McPhillips and other initiatives, the Auburn Black Caucus is working to bring discriminatory actions to light and rectify them.

Watts believes that Auburn is definitely taking note of the Caucus's work. He sees this in the fact that Lee Armstrong, General Counsel for Auburn University, was present at McPhillips talk. Also, he says the Caucus has annual meetings with President Gogue to brief him on what the group is doing. Most of all, Watts emphasized, "We love Auburn. We just want to make it better for everyone."

THIS PAGE, TOP RIGHT: Dr. Ivan
atts, Dr. Evelyn Crayton, Julian
cPhillips, and Tanja Matthews
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ilian McPhillips shares his ex-
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AGE, TOP LEFT: Dr. Pambani-
ia Whaley, Dr. Evelyn Crayton,
ad Shirley Scott-Harris discuss
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ngagement event. THIS PAGE,
OP RIGHT: Dr. Evelyn Crayton
ddresses the crowd. -Photos by
aylor Henderson

