



For Immediate Release

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FAMU Mourns the Loss of Trustee Thomas W. Dortch, Jr.

Florida A&M University mourns the loss of Trustee Thomas W. Dortch, Jr. Board of Trustees (BOT) Chairman Kelvin Lawson announced Dortch's passing during a BOT Committee meeting Wednesday afternoon. Dortch was 72.

"This is a sad day for FAMU. Thomas Dortch has been an outstanding trustee and friend. He made significant contributions to this University, both in his leadership and monetarily. He even brought friends to the table to contribute philanthropically to the University," said Lawson.

He also praised Dortch's tireless efforts to improve the lives of African American youth and entrepreneurs, and the sustainability of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

"He will surely be missed, not only as a trustee but as an avid supporter of Florida A&M University," Lawson added. "It is truly a loss not only to FAMU but to the nation. He would be best described as a humanitarian."

A member of the BOT since 2016, Dortch was re-appointed to serve a five-year-term by the Florida Board of Governors in November 2020. He was chairman and chief executive officer of TWD, Inc., based in Atlanta, Georgia. Chairman emeritus of the 100 Black Men Inc., Dortch established the National Black College Alumni Hall of Fame Foundation, Inc., and co-founded the Georgia Association of Minority Entrepreneurs. The Fort Valley State University graduate also founded the Annual Sustainability Summit for HBCUs.

President Larry Robinson, Ph.D., praised Dortch for being a great friend of FAMU and the Black community.

"What a tremendous loss. He was a world class individual from every perspective. I can't tell you how much he meant to us as a member of our Board of Trustees for a number of years, but also as a parent of students who have matriculated from this institution," Robinson said on hearing the news.

"He was great not only for us, but the whole community of African Americans and in general. What a great human being. He understood that Florida A&M University and other HBCUs are in the business of preparing young people to live their best life," Robinson continued. "His commitment to Black excellence was unmatched. He was committed to ensuring that students at the nation's HBCUs had as much opportunity as anyone else. I don't think this community has ever had a greater friend and supporter than Tommy Dortch."

Both Lawson and Robinson extended condolences to the Dortch family.

Photo captions: Trustee Thomas W. Dortch, Jr. (Credit: FAMU)

Trustee Dortch at a June 2022 BOT meeting. Credit: Glenn Beil/Office of Communications

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