UGA announces the endowment of the Donald L. Hollowell Professorship of Social Justice and Civil Rights Studies

Atlanta, Ga. – At the April 15 premiere of the documentary Donald L. Hollowell: Foot Soldier for Equal Justice, the University of Georgia School of Social Work announced that the Donald L. Hollowell Professorship of Social Justice and Civil Rights Studies has been fully endowed.

The professorship, the first distinguished professorship named for an African American at UGA, has been endowed through the UGA faculty-hiring initiative, donations and ticket sales from the documentary premiere.

“The person chosen for this distinguished professorship will advocate for social and economic justice for individuals, families and communities and collaborate with the Foot Soldier Project to advance civil rights scholarship,” said Maurice Daniels, dean of the School of Social Work and director of the Foot Soldier Project for Civil Rights Studies.

Vernon E. Jordan Jr., chair of the Hollowell Professorship endowment committee, made the endowment announcement following the film’s premiere and a panel discussion in which he participated moderated by Judge Glenda Hatchett, star of the television courtroom series Judge Hatchett. In addition to Jordan, other panelists included Mary Frances Early, the first African-American UGA graduate and Federal Judge Horace T. Ward, a member of the law team that sought to desegregate UGA.

“It was my special honor to work with the University of Georgia, School of Social Work, and the university community while serving as chairman of the Donald L. Hollowell Professorship Endowment Committee,” said Jordan. “Mr. Hollowell was one of the most prominent attorneys and social justice advocates during the Civil Rights era. It is a fitting tribute that the University of Georgia establishes the first distinguished professorship named for an African American in his honor.”

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Donna L. Hollowell: Foot Soldier for Equal Justice is a production of the Foot Soldier Project for Civil Rights Studies, an interdisciplinary documentary and research program at UGA dedicated to chronicling Georgia’s history in the civil rights movement.

The documentary chronicles the life of Hollowell, one of the movement’s legendary advocates for social justice. Georgia Public Broadcasting will air the documentary on April 18 at 7 p.m.

Born and raised in Wichita, Kan., Hollowell did not encounter the Jim Crow restrictions of the South. But he did face racial discrimination while serving in the U.S. Army during World War II. Hollowell’s experiences with segregation and his involvement with the Southern Negro Youth Congress after the war inspired him to study law, which ultimately became his weapon of choice in the fight for social justice in the South and across the nation, according to Daniels.

In 1959, Hollowell was among a group of black Atlanta leaders who tapped Hamilton Holmes and Charlayne Hunter to apply for admission to the then segregated University of Georgia. Over the next two years, Hollowell and Constance Baker Motley, assisted by Ward and Jordan, fought numerous courtroom battles that ended with a federal judge ordering UGA to admit Holmes and Hunter in 1961.

“His dedication and sacrifice for the ideals of equal opportunity and social justice changed the course of our nation’s history and will continue to open doors of opportunity for generations to come,” said Daniels.

Hollowell died of heart failure on Dec. 27, 2004, at the age of 87.

For more information on the UGA School of Social Work, see http://www.ssw.uga.edu/.

For more information on Hollowell, see www.dlhprof.uga.edu.

For more information on the professorship, see www.dlhprof.uga.edu/professorship.html.

To view the documentary trailer, see http://video.yahoo.com/watch/6758870/17564462.

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