



RUST COLLEGE

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RUST COLLEGE AWARDED \$500,000 TO PRESERVE CARNEGIE HALL, HISTORIC SITE ON THE CAMPUS OF DEFUNCT HBCU MISSISSIPPI INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE

HOLLY SPRINGS, MS – For the second time this Spring, Rust College President Dr. Ivy R. Taylor, announced receipt of a large grant that will aid in the restoration of Mississippi Industrial College (MIC), an HBCU which closed in the 1980s. The National Park Service recently awarded \$16.2M in grants to help preserve African American civil rights history. Of the \$16.2 million, Rust College has been awarded \$500,000.00 for the restoration of the historic Carnegie Hall which sits on the campus of MIC. MIC, which is located adjacent to the campus of Rust College, closed in the 1980s and the buildings have since stood unoccupied and deteriorating. In 1979, a short time before the doors to MIC closed, four of the buildings—including Carnegie Hall,—were entered into the National Register of Historic Places. In 2008, Rust College assumed control of the buildings in an attempt to save them from further deterioration. Since President Taylor’s arrival in 2020, it has been her vision to restore the MIC campus back to life and make it part of the Rust College campus community.

Carnegie Hall has major architectural and social significance in the state of Mississippi. Originally funded by a donation from Andrew Carnegie, Carnegie Hall was built in 1923 and contained the largest auditorium and performance venue in Mississippi that was open

to blacks and it was known as the Carnegie Auditorium. Even in its current condition, Carnegie Auditorium remains one of the best examples of Colonial Revival architecture in Holly Springs, Mississippi. An earlier stabilization project at Carnegie Hall was funded in part by a Mississippi Department of Archives and Heritage Community Heritage Grant.

“The intertwined histories of Rust College and MIC are worthy of preservation. These recent awards, including \$155,000 for a campus masterplan focused on preserving Rust College’s historic assets are welcome investments in the past and the future of these HBCUs. Our students and the entire Holly Springs community will benefit from a restored Carnegie Auditorium to showcase the area’s artistic and cultural heritage.” said President Ivy R. Taylor.

Earlier this spring, Rust College received its first congressional special project appropriation recommended by Senator Roger Wicker. This \$1 million allocation was awarded to facilitate creation of the Ida B. Wells Social Justice and Interpretive Center on the MIC campus in the Booker T. Washington Hall building, which is also on the National Register of Historic Places. These efforts are both apart of President Taylor’s larger vision to restore the MIC campus which will be a \$35+ million-dollar renovation with the potential to offer new and innovative academic programming to Rust College students, and to serve as a place to restore the arts and meet the needs of the Holly Springs community and surrounding area.

“The African American Civil Rights grants are critical to helping preserve and interpret a more comprehensive narrative of the people, places, and events associated with African American Civil Rights movement.” **said NPS Director Chuck Sams.** This years’ National Park Services grant awards will benefit 44 projects in 15 states and support the continued preservation of sites and history related to the African American struggle for equality.

President Taylor and the Rust College Board of Trustees will continue to engage stakeholders in the effort to revitalize MIC and integrate it into the Rust College campus community. Preservation of the MIC campus will provide space for student and community organizations and this \$500,000 award is a critical step towards realizing this plan. Rust College is continuing to build momentum around preserving the MIC campus and is planning an outdoor celebration on the campus later this summer. This event will be open to community stakeholders, investors and historians to celebrate the momentum happening with restoring one of our historic HBCUs.

If you are interested in learning more about the preservation efforts of the historic MIC campus, please email us at publicrelations@rustcollege.edu.

“This project is supported through an African American Civil Rights grant, provided by the Historic Preservation Fund, as administered by the National Park Service, Department of Interior.”

About Rust College

Rust College is the oldest most prestigious historically black college in Mississippi founded in 1866 by the Freedmen’s Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Offering degree programs in business, education, humanities, science and mathematics, and social science, Rust College equips and inspires students for excellence and service in their communities and throughout the world. Located in Holly Springs, MS, just 35 miles southeast of Memphis,

Tennessee, Rust College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award associate and baccalaureate degrees.

For more information about Rust College, call (662) 252-8000, ext. 4915 or visit www.rustcollege.edu.

About Mississippi Industrial College

Mississippi Industrial College was founded in 1905 by the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. Bishop Elias Cottrell wanted to found a college for Negro youth which would inculcate Christian ideals, provide a practical education, and make better citizens. The first classes were held that fall. For the next 77 years the school fulfilled that mission, expanding to teacher education, the ministry, and the liberal arts. The 1960 *MIC Key*, shows that the overwhelming number of graduates majored in elementary education; physical education and mathematics also had high graduation numbers. In addition, MIC offered programs in auto mechanics, home economics and commercial subjects. As with many historically black colleges, MIC lost students when they were allowed to attend formerly all-white schools. Changing expectations of a new generation of black students led to greater enrollment losses at MIC. After federal funding was cut in 1981, MIC was forced to close in 1982.

About the National Park Service

More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 423 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov, and on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).

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