FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 18, 2022

Mary LeSueur
Director of Public Relations
Office of Public Relations
662-252-8000, ext. 4915
662-544-0950, Cell
mlesueur@rustcollege.edu

RUST COLLEGE RECEIVES SECOND AWARD: $500,000 TO PRESERVE WASHINGTON HALL, ON THE HISTORIC CAMPUS OF MISSISSIPPI INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE

HOLLY SPRINGS, MS – Mississippi’s oldest and most prestigious HBCU (Historically Black College and University) announced today that it has received their second large grant funding that will aid in the restoration of historic Mississippi Industrial College (MIC), an HBCU which closed in the 1980s. The National Park Service recently announced $9.7 million in grants to assist 21 preservation projects in 9 states for the preservation of historic structures on Historically Black Colleges and University (HBCUs) campuses. Of that $9.7 million, Rust College has been awarded $500,000.00 for the restoration of the historic Washington Hall, which sits on the campus of MIC. Located directly across the street, Rust College acquired the property 2008 and is working to reimagine the former HBCU. This project will address repairs to the roof and building envelope.

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.
Washington Hall was founded in 1905 and is contributing to Mississippi Industrial College Historic District. 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.

Since the 1990s, the NPS has awarded more than $87 million in grants to over 85 of the remaining active HBCUs. Congress appropriates funding for the program through the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF). The HPF uses revenue from federal oil and gas leases on the Outer Continental Shelf, proving assistance for a broad range of preservation projects without expending tax dollars. Accredited HBCUs are eligible to apply for this grant program, and eligible projects include physical preservation of sites listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

“The intertwined histories of Rust College and MIC are worthy of preservation. These recent awards, focused on preserving Rust College’s historic assets are welcome investments in the past and the future of these HBCUs,” said President Ivy R. Taylor.

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 $500,000.00 award is a critical step towards realizing this plan. Rust College is continuing to build momentum around preserving the MIC campus and has planned an outdoor celebration on the campus, July 29th at 10:00 a.m. This event is open to community stakeholders, investors, historians and the media 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 join us Friday, July 29th, 10:00 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. on the historic Mississippi Industrial College Campus, Memphis Street, Holly Springs, MS. Invitation is attached. For media inquiries, contact pr@rustcollege.edu.

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.

###