



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

February 11, 2022

Good afternoon and welcome. It is great to have so many of our Eagles, friends, and special guests join us, on this cold but exciting day. Thank you for being here. There are few stakeholders that I would like to acknowledge:

- Members of the CSU Foundation Board, led by Alicia Ritchie
- National Alumni Association, led by President Tish Madry
- The Fanny Jackson Coppin Planning Committee, led by Tara Turner
- Mr. Sam Patterson, Roy Thomas, Delaney Contractors and RKK Architects
- I would like to thank all our generous donors. This would not have been possible if not for your support and belief in this endeavor
- My Cabinet, and our four Academic Deans
- Thanks, Toinette, for your support and encouragement
- Let me acknowledge our incredible FJC Scholars. These high achieving students are great ambassadors of our university

I also want to take a moment to thank two incredibly important people – Drs. Winky and Peaches Camphor. Not just for their support as the lead sponsors on this project, but for being great philanthropists, amazing people, and unwavering believers in all things Coppin. Peaches, you and Winky, are an inspiration to us all. We love you and thank you.

When I brought the team together and introduced the vision to develop a plaza and erect a sculpture of Fanny Jackson Coppin on campus, it was an interesting discussion. The overwhelming response was one of widespread excitement, with an ounce of cautious optimism. There were some concerns about past attempts that did not fare well, questions if we could get enough donor participation, and doubts about identifying someone who could bring to fruition what we were envisioning. I told the team, don't worry... "I know a guy," and we will get this done.

Pastor Frederick Hightower, a native of West Virginia, is an extraordinary artist. He is also Senior Pastor and Founder of All Nations Revival Center, in Institute West Virginia. Pastor Hightower graduated from West Virginia State University with a bachelor's degree in fine arts. He continued his studies at Marshall University, pursuing a master's degree in psychology. Fred, I want to thank you for taking on this project and I deeply appreciate your friendship.

Sixteen short months ago we embarked on a quest to erect a sculpture of Fanny Jackson Coppin on campus. And while a global pandemic may have delayed this dedication, this is a day that would not be denied. Today, we gather and pause to honor and celebrate a remarkable woman, a trailblazer and champion of education, and to officially welcome Fanny Jackson Coppin home. In this place, she will stand for all time - majestically watching over the beautiful campus that bears her name.

This is a sculpture of our collective achievements, and it attests to the strength and determination of the Coppin spirit. I want everybody, students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends to see this sculpture and to be reminded of what we can accomplish, and that the pursuit of a quality education is never unattainable. I want Fanny Jackson Coppin's presence on campus to harden our pride in Coppin, serve as a symbol of Black excellence, and foster an appreciation of her journey as motivation for our own. I want our students to look at her and to understand her life was not easy, she faced hardships, she had doubts, she had setbacks; and they, too, will encounter challenging times, but despite living in the darkest period of our history, she triumphed – and so will they. Her life, her story, tells us that every journey will have its tough moments, but no goal is impossible.

It is my hope that Fanny Jackson Coppin's legacy and presence on campus will continue to foster confidence, across the Coppin community, and for all who pass this way. She lived a life of extraordinary service. Her purpose was to transform every environment she entered. Fanny understood and embraced the ideology that on the other side of a quality education - was a better quality of life. She committed herself to this belief, and it became her life's work.

And I am beyond proud that we have brought her home. The sculpture that stands behind me is extending a diploma to all who seek transformation through education. Fanny will stand, tirelessly, greeting new students and welcoming back returning students, every fall and spring. She will, powerfully, serve as a constant symbol of optimism, courage, dignity, grace, and wisdom.

As a new Coppin tradition, on the morning of graduation, I will lead candidates by Fanny Jackson Coppin, to symbolically accept the degree she offered to them when they first entered the university. It will be on that day, as they near the completion of their own journey, that they will pass by her for the final time as a student, at Coppin State University.

It gives me great pleasure, on this day, to officially dedicate the Fanny Jackson Coppin Plaza on the campus of Coppin State University and to present to you this beautiful bronze sculpture in her image. To help with the unveiling, I would like to invite Dr. Peaches Camphor to join me on the plaza to present Fanny Jackson Coppin.

Fanny Jackson Coppin's shadow of academic excellence is long and serves as an excellent example for us to draw both strength and inspiration from. I am asking for your continued support of the Fanny Jackson Coppin Scholarship. Your generosity helps us nurture the intellectual curiosity of future Eagles with dreams of soaring high and changing the world.

With Fanny Jackson Coppin as our guide and in the spirit of our mission – let us never waver in our commitment of “nurturing potential...transforming lives.”

Thank you, enjoy Homecoming and Go Eagles!