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Memphis's Only HBCU has been Named a Finalist in the 2015 RETOOL YOUR SCHOOL Campus Improvement Grant Program for Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Up to \$50,000 in Grants to be Awarded as LeMoyne-Owen College Encourages Alumni and the Community to Vote

New York, NY– March 18, 2015 – Tennessee's LeMoyne-Owen College, a Historically Black College and University (HBCU), has been announced as a finalist in The Home Depot's 2015 RETOOL YOUR SCHOOL Campus Improvement Grant Program. Designed to reinvigorate HBCUs, finalists are competing for \$255,000 in grants for on-campus improvements and are now asking their communities and the public to help them win. The voting opened February 27, 2015 and closes April 20, 2015. During this period, supporters can visit www.retoolyourschool.com to vote. Supporters can also capture votes for their school by using **#leMoyne_RYS15** on their social media channels. Each use of a school's Retool Your School designated hashtag counts as one social media vote.

This year, the Retool Your School Grant Program will award a total of \$255,000 in grants to nine accredited HBCUs in \$50,000, \$25,000 and \$10,000 grant denominations. Based on student enrollment, schools will be categorized into one of three clusters — schools with 4,000 students or more, schools with between 3,999 and 1,201 students, or schools with less than 1,200 students.

Following the online voting, a panel of distinguished judges will also evaluate each school's project proposals within the qualifying clusters. Judges will consider the depth of each proposal and the school's ability to execute the project within the respective budgets of \$50,000, \$25,000 or \$10,000, as applicable.

Proposals for all three grants must highlight how each project will make a lasting, positive impact on the HBCU campus. Retool Your School will announce the grant recipients May 12, 2015.

"Campus improvements are a major part of ensuring our students enjoy the best possible college experience we can provide," LeMoyne-Owen College president Johnnie B. Watson said. "Outstanding corporate citizens like Home Depot help make it possible for Historically Black Colleges and Universities to continue to provide the unique brand of education that has produced some of America's most outstanding citizens for more than 150 years."

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LeMoyne-Owen plans to use the grant funds to make the campus grounds more convenient for students to study and enjoy campus activities outdoors. Planned campus improvements include planting additional trees and shrubs and installing gazebos and additional solar lights and ramps for the disabled.

To apply for the Retool Your School grants, HBCUs were required to submit an application via the “Retool Your School” website by February 10, 2015. Applicants that provided their Phase 1 proposals by the deadline were able to continue and submit full proposals for Tier I, Tier II and Campus Pride campus improvement grants. During the online voting period, which is currently underway, consumers can cast one vote per day, per device for their favorite HBCU. Following the online voting period, a panel of distinguished judges will also evaluate each school’s proposal. Tier I and Tier II projects will be judged based on the number of votes posted to the website, as well as the judges’ evaluation of the relevance to the proposal requirements as listed on the website and application. The winning schools will be determined based on a combination of online votes and the judges’ evaluations. The awarding of the Campus Pride grant will be based on the number of votes and social media activity the winning school receives.

LeMoyne-Owen College will face stiff competition from finalist schools in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, US Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia. Therefore, Tennessee residents, LeMoyne-Owen College alumni, friends and family should log on and vote at www.retoolyourschool.com to ensure that the Magicians bring home the grand prize. Please remember every Tweet, Instagram and Facebook post received featuring will act as social media activity. This activity counts toward LeMoyne-Owen College’s social media activity for final judging.

Some of the potential improvement projects entered by the HBCU finalists include projects that will affect the campus and community as a whole, such as installing campus-wide lighting to help to conserve energy & reduce utility expense; building an on-campus sustainable community raised bed garden and farmers market; remodeling a lower level alumni library and installing eco-friendly bathrooms and external landscaping; and, transforming an outdoor campus area into an outdoor classroom. These proposed improvement projects will enhance campus life for current students and generations to come.

For more information and updates on The Home Depot’s Retool Your School Campus Improvement Grant Program or to vote online visit www.retoolyourschool.com.

Online voting ends on April 20, 2015, at 11:59 pm EST.

ABOUT LeMoyne-Owen College

The American Missionary Association founded LeMoyne-Owen College in 1862 at the Union Army’s Camp Shiloh in Shiloh, Tennessee, to educate freedmen and runaway slaves during the Civil War. The school relocated to Memphis a year later, but was destroyed during race riots in 1866. Lincoln Chapel, as the school was then known, was rebuilt and reopened in 1867 with 150 students and six teachers. Lincoln Chapter was renamed LeMoyne Normal and Commercial School in honor of benefactor, physician and abolitionist Dr. Francis Julian LeMoyne and relocated to its current site at 807 Walker Ave in 1914. After more than 50 years of steady growth, LeMoyne merged with Owen College in 1968. Today, LeMoyne-Owen College, as Memphis’ only historically black college, has a student body of more than 1,000 students and offers 4-year degrees in five disciplines: business and economic development; education; fine arts and humanities; natural, math and computer sciences; and, social and behavioral sciences.

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