



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT: Daphne Thomas, PR & Marketing Director (901) 435-1539
(901) 220-3098

Alumna's \$1 Million Gift a Symbol of Alumni Pride, Generosity and Commitment to Education

MEMPHIS, TN (October 19, 2012) Once a Magician, always a Magician. That was LeMoyne-Owen College alumna Wylodine Taylor Patton's philosophy. Although she passed away in 2009, College officials earlier today announced her generosity lives on in the form of a \$1 million gift.

In 2001, Ms. Patton not only demonstrated her love for her alma mater, but also her unparalleled generosity when she set up a revocable trust bequeathing the College 75 percent of her estate. The college received an initial gift of nearly a half-million dollars from her estate in 2010.

Today's gift more than tripled that making it the single largest donation in LeMoyne-Owen College's 150-year history. In all, Ms. Patton has contributed more than \$1.5 million, all to the college's annual fund, which is used to bridge the gap between the school's cost of doing business and tuition revenue, helping to keep tuition fees stable.

"We can never overstate the important role our alumni play in the College's ongoing success," LeMoyne-Owen College President Johnnie B. Watson said earlier today at a ceremony announcing the major gift. "For the past 150 years, this college has educated some of our country's most impactful leaders, clergy, and community servants thanks to the unwavering generosity of alums like Ms. Wylodine Patton."

After graduating LeMoyne-Owen College in 1940, Wylodine Patton attended the University of Illinois' College of Business, eventually taking and passing a civil service exam. She went on to work as a signal corps inspector and later as a professional in the state's compensation division. She met her husband James and they moved to Marysville, California, and then on to San Francisco where they acquired properties and lived out their years.

ADD ONE: \$1 MILLION GIFT

The great granddaughter of slaves, her astounding gift did not arise from a profitable business or a trust fund passed down to her. Rather, she and her husband, James, who passed away in 1990, worked decades as public servants—Ms. Patton for 40 years with federal and state governments and James Patton for more than 20 years in the United States Army.

“I think that it is amazing that Wylodine’s legacy can be traced back to enslaved great-grandparents who could not read or write,” said Fredricka Allen Hodges, a LeMoyne-Owen College trustee and Patton family relative. “I can imagine how proud they would be to know that one of their offspring had left resources to an institution of higher education - LeMoyne-Owen College.”

The couple had no children and Ms. Patton’s two siblings preceded her in death.

“We will forever be grateful to Mrs. Patton and her surviving relatives,” LeMoyne-Owen College Board of Trustees chair Robert Lipscomb said. “Her selfless generosity demonstrates her unwavering belief in LeMoyne-Owen College’s worth and continued relevance.”

Over the years, Ms. Patton was an active member of the LeMoyne-Owen College alumni community. During an interview in 2010, her niece, Agnes Jetson, summed up her aunt’s inspiration for the gift: “She simply loved her alma mater. She was a wonderful person who shared her life and time with the people and the things that she cared about.”

Patton was well known for her school spirit through her affinity for all things purple and gold—from magazines to coasters to apparel and much more. “She was very proud of having attended LeMoyne,” Jetson said.

For more information, contact Roger Brown at (901) 435-1527.

###