

PRESS RELEASE

Concerned Alumni Organize to Save Historic Buildings at Lincoln University

Lincoln University, Pa.---November 9, 2013 – A distinguished group of alumni of Lincoln University, PA, have formed the Lincoln University Historical Initiative (“LUHI”) a nonprofit Pennsylvania corporation. LUHI was formed in response to threats and a proposed master plan by university President, Dr. Robert Jennings, to tear down several historic buildings on the campus that date back to the time of the Civil War. LUHI’s mission is to preserve and sustain the heritage of Lincoln University as embodied in its many historic structures, arts and rare books collections and to educate and seek funding to rehabilitate, restore and bring as many of the respective buildings in various states of disrepair, back into use.

Carol Black, '67, president of the group, exclaims that, “our organization has uncovered a survey carried out by the state preservation agency at the request of the university in the 1980’s that essentially finds that up to 15 of the buildings on Lincoln’s Campus, qualify for a Historic District.” Black goes on to say that “a number of state legislators and government officials find LUHI’s goal of seeking Federal Historic Designation as worthy of support as a prospective economic boon and boost in Tourism dollars and jobs for Chester County and the State of Pennsylvania overall.”

In May of this year, Dr. Jennings matter-of-factly reported his intention to the Alumni Association of Lincoln University that he was going to demolish Azikiwe-Nkrumah Hall and replace it with a new welcome center. Many alumni were in shock that Jennings, a product of another Historically Black College & University, Morehouse College, and with no prior connection to Lincoln University, would seek to raze one of the oldest buildings on campus. The proposed new Welcome Center would provide offices for campus police, a firearm range, holding cells, command center, evidence lock-up, retention room, weapon lock-up, equipment storage, training/classroom area, exercise area, men’s and women’s locker and shower rooms and welcome/reception area for parents and students.

Azikiwe-Nkrumah Hall was built shortly after the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln and at the approximate time that the university changed its name from the Ashmun Institute to the name of the slain 13th President of the United States. Lincoln University is the oldest HBCU degree granting institution in the nation. Robert Ingram, president of Lincoln’s Alumni Association and VP of LUHI

intones that, "LUHI is comprised of the best and brightest of Lincoln's distinguished alumni." Ingram continues, "LUHI members include renowned Architects, Urban Planners, Engineers, College Administrators, Historians, Lawyers, Doctors and persons of the ilk and character who recognize the travesty and gross negligence that would be committed if the university continued on a course to not do all that is reasonably possible to maintain and bring back into use all of its historic structures."

Over 1,000 concerned alumni and friends have signed a petition to have Dr. Jennings and the Board of Trustees to hear LUHI proposals to work with the university to save the buildings. At the time of this release, Board of Trustee Chair Kimberly Lloyd and Dr. Jennings have refused to meet with the group.

About LUHI: The Lincoln University Historical Initiative's stated purpose is to protect and preserve and enhance Lincoln University's exemplary historic and academic legacy. Its members, all alumni of Lincoln, have as a goal to work with the University President, the University Board of Trustees, and other interested parties to construct and ultimately adapt a long-range plan to protect Lincoln University's historical assets—not just buildings or other physical structures dotting the campus, but artifacts, memorabilia, books, personal papers, pieces of art, anything that can be used to tell Lincoln's story and preserve that story for the edification of future generations. LUHI also looks to obtain national recognition of all historic buildings on the campus of Lincoln University as a state supported Historic District and to have it placed on the National Register of Historical Buildings. It must be noted that LUHI does not claim to represent the school administration or the University Board of Trustees. LUHI is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization in Pennsylvania that is not affiliated with Lincoln University (PA). The LUHI Board of Directors have notified The Lincoln University of its intent to work with the Administration and the University Board of Trustees (as well with other alumni and Friends of the University) to develop the University's unique historical and cultural attributes as national and international treasures.

Contact: To learn more about LUHI and its fight to protect and preserve the University's historical legacy, contact Ms. Carol A. Black, President, at 484-962-0615 or info@luheritage.org