



# University of the District of Columbia

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*"...a new day,  
a new opportunity"*

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **University of the District of Columbia to Confer Four Honorary Degrees at Annual Commencement Convocation**

*Washington, D.C.* — The Board of Trustees of the University of the District of Columbia will confer honorary degrees on four leaders of diverse backgrounds as part of the University's 28<sup>th</sup> Commencement Convocation, scheduled for 10:00 a.m., Saturday May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2005 at the MCI Center. Mr. Thomas N. Todd, prominent attorney and civil rights leader, will be the keynote speaker for Commencement, which will be presided over by University President William L. Pollard, PhD.

As a part of the graduation activities for the only public university in the nation's capital, honorary doctoral degrees will be conferred on the Honorable Alberto R. Gonzales (Doctor of Laws), the Honorable Augustus F. Hawkins (Doctor of Letters), Dr. N. Joyce Payne (Doctor of Laws) and Dr. John Hope Franklin (Doctor of Humane Letters).

The Honorable Alberto R. Gonzales was sworn in as the nation's 80th Attorney General on February 3, 2005, becoming the first Attorney General of Hispanic-American heritage. Prior to serving at the Department of Justice, he was commissioned as Counsel to President George W. Bush in January of 2001. Before his service in the White House, he served as a Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas. He also served as Texas' 100th Secretary of State from December 2, 1997 to January 10, 1999.

The Honorable Augustus F. Hawkins served from 1962 to 1990 as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from California. During his tenure, he also chaired the House Education and Labor Committee. A Democrat who also served 28 continuous years in the California State Assembly, Representative Hawkins originally hailed from Shreveport, Louisiana.

N. Joyce Payne, Ph.D., is the Director of the Office for the Advancement of Public Black Colleges (OAPBC) of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) in cooperation with the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). She is an alumna of the District of Columbia Teachers College, a UDC predecessor school, and has also served as chairperson of the University of the District of Columbia's Board of Trustees.

Dr. John Hope Franklin is the James B. Duke Professor Emeritus of History, and for seven years was Professor of Legal History in the Law School at Duke University. A native of Oklahoma, he has taught at a number of institutions, including Fisk University, St. Augustine's College, North Carolina Central University, and Howard University. Dr. Franklin has chaired academic departments at Brooklyn College and the University of Chicago. He was the subject of the documentary film "*First Person Singular: John Hope Franklin*," which was featured on Public Broadcasting System (PBS) in June 1997.

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The University of the District of Columbia is the sole public source for accessible, inclusive, affordable, and comprehensive public higher education in the District of Columbia and provides additional life-long learning opportunities. The University delivers quality instruction and uses student-centered approaches to empower and benefit both individuals and its local communities. The University, an urban land grant institution, is a very diverse community, a gateway to the world, and a significant investment engine for the District of Columbia. The University is located at 4200 Connecticut Ave, NW Washington, and is conveniently located at the Van Ness/UDC stop on the Red Line of Metro. For more information on other University activities, contact Mike Andrews, Senior Director for Communications and University Spokesman at (202) 274-5685 or visit the University's web site at [www.udc.edu](http://www.udc.edu).

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**NOTICE TO MEDIA: Media are welcome to observe and report on highly visual activities taking place in concurrence with the University of the District of Columbia's Commencement Convocation. Media interested in covering this event should contact Mike Andrews, Senior Director for Communications at (202) 274-5685 prior to the event.**