



Photo courtesy of Samford University

ALABAMA STATE UNIVERSITY

126TH *Founders' Day* Convocation

Friday, February 6, 2026 | 10 a.m. | Dunn-Oliver Acadome

– Featured Speaker –

Orlando Jones

WHERE HISTORY IS MADE.
ALABAMA STATE UNIVERSITY

— Convocation Speaker —

Orlando Jones



As a groundbreaking writer, actor, producer, and cultural innovator, Orlando Jones has spent more than three decades shaping the landscape of television, film, and digital media. He recently starred as the African god Anansi in Starz's "American Gods"—a performance celebrated for its power and cultural resonance. His diverse acting credits span acclaimed projects such as "Abbott Elementary," "Swagger," "Drumline," "The

"Replacements," "Sleepy Hollow," "Liberty Heights," "The Family Business: New Orleans," and "Winning Time: Rise of the Laker Dynasty."

A true creative multi-hyphenate, Jones has been an early force in animation and gaming with voice roles in "King of the Hill," "Father of the Pride," "Black Dynamite," "Halo 2," and "L.A. Rush." He first gained national recognition as the face of the iconic "Make 7 Up Yours" campaign, and before that, helped redefine sketch comedy as a founding writer and original cast member of "MADtv"—one of television's longest-running and most influential comedy series.

Behind the scenes, Jones has shaped some of the most important shows in modern entertainment. He has written for "American Gods," "A Different World," and "Roc," and co-wrote pilots for "Martin" and "The Ben Stiller Show." As an early cable pioneer, he helped launch the FX Network as the host of "Sound FX," introducing the brand to millions. He later expanded into digital production as host and producer of the 88th Academy Awards digital broadcast and as creator of "The Orlando Jones Show."

Looking ahead, Jones continues to innovate. He is leading the "MAD REWIND" reunion podcast and comedy tour with the original "MADtv" cast and will launch his new solo stand-up tour, "Ask Me Anything," in 2026.

ASU's Rich Legacy

Alabama State University is the global entity that it is today in part because of the fortitude of nine freed slaves from Marion, Alabama. Each year, the ASU family looks back as it continues marching forward, remembering the "Marion Nine" whose foresight in 1867 created what is now Alabama State University. These co-founders and original trustees of this great institution are Joey P. Pinch, Thomas Speed, Nickolas Dale, James Childs, Thomas Lee, John Freeman, Nathan Levert, David Harris and Alexander H. Curtis.

Incorporated on July 18, 1867, Lincoln Normal School was founded at Marion in Perry County. In 1873, this predecessor of Alabama State University became America's first state-sponsored



William Burns Paterson

126TH Founders' Day Convocation

President Quinton T. Ross, Jr., Presiding

VIDEO PRESENTATION

From Nine to Now

Produced by the Office of Marketing and
Communications

PROCESSIONAL*

POSTING OF THE COLORS*

Air Force ROTC Color Guard
Detachment 019

Lt. Col. Daniel Land, Commander

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM*

The Star Spangled Banner

University Choir

Accompanied by Aaron Perez

THE NEGRO NATIONAL ANTHEM*

Lift Every Voice and Sing

University Choir

Accompanied by Emmanuel Iheyinwa

INVOCATION*

Damarcus Thomas

ASU Student

GREETINGS

Brenda Brown Dillard

President, ASU Board of Trustees

Dejuan Trotman

SGA President

Sydney Guy

86th Miss Alabama State University

TRADITIONAL SONG**

Blue Bells of Scotland

Jaelin Russell

TRADITIONAL POEM**

"What I Live For"

Zelia Stephens Early
Childhood Center

INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER

President Quinton T. Ross, Jr.

FOUNDERS' DAY ADDRESS

Orlando Jones

AWARD PRESENTATIONS

Aisha Ali

Assistant Director of Alumni Relations

Tanjula Petty, Ed.D.

*Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness,
Strategic Initiatives
and Transformation*

Col. Gregory L. Clark (ret)

*Vice President for
Institutional Advancement*

MUSICAL SELECTION

City Called Heaven

arr. Josephine Poelinitz Makayla Collins

George Gichero, Piano Soloist

Directed by Dr. Kristofer Sanchack

CLOSING REMARKS

President Quinton T. Ross, Jr.

*UNIVERSITY HYMN

University Choir and Audience

Accompanied by Emmanuel Iheyinwa

BENEDICTION

Pastor Albert Russell

Assistant Provost

RECESSIONAL

*The audience is asked to please stand.

**The favorite song and poem of second ASU President William Burns Paterson

liberal arts institution for the higher education of Blacks, beginning ASU's rich history as a "Teacher's College." William Burns Paterson, ASU's longest-serving president, was appointed in 1878 and held the office of president for 37 of its first 48 years. On his birthday, the University family pauses annually to honor its founders by holding Founders' Day observances. Traditionally, Paterson has been honored on Founders' Day as the architect of the modern Alabama State University because he was instrumental in the move from Marion to Montgomery in 1887.

The legacy set forth by the Marion Nine, William Burns Paterson and other key developers endures even now. Today, ASU is a comprehensive regional institution with high-demand graduate and undergraduate programs in multiple academic units including the College of Education, the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, the College of Business Administration, the University College, the College of Visual and Performing Arts, the College of Health Sciences, the College of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, and The Harold Lloyd Murphy Graduate School.

About the Awards

The Spirit of Marion Award 2026 | Cubie Gilmer-Hayes

The Spirit of Marion Award recognizes individuals whose professional efforts have created innovation, positive change or notable advancement in an industry, environment or concept. Like the Marion Nine, the recipient of this award must demonstrate great vision, honorable citizenship and success in the face of challenge.

The Spirit of Tullibody Award 2026 | Dr. Joseph Henderson

The Spirit of Tullibody Award is given in honor of Dr. William Burns Paterson, ASU's longest-serving president who is revered as a brave and forward-thinking pioneer. The Tullibody Award honors alumni who exemplify Dr. Paterson's estimable qualities by making notable contributions to their communities and to Alabama State University.

The Gold Standard Award 2026 | Antoinette Campbell

The Gold Standard Award recognizes a staff or faculty member whose commitment to exceptional customer service advances institutional excellence and fosters a culture of quality across the University. Recipients demonstrate authenticity, empathy, and active listening in every interaction, value diverse perspectives, and consistently exceed expectations while modeling service-centered values aligned with the University's mission.

The Community Stewardship Award 2026 | State Senator Bobby Singleton

The Community Stewardship Award recognizes an individual or community partner/organization whose philanthropic support advances academic excellence and strengthens the University's continued success. Honorees create lasting opportunities for ASU students through meaningful contributions, including gifts made within the last fiscal year in support of the ASU Cares Retention Scholarship.

For a complete list of past award recipients, visit alasu.edu/FoundersDay.



Zelia Stephens Early Childhood Center Participants

Aryam Alomar	Olivia Robinson	Lateef Richardson
Jream Baldwin	Lamar Thompson	Devante Smiley
Messiah Calhoun	Micah Washington	Xhosa Thomas
Daxon Carter	Lamont Anderson	London Williams
Aubree Cochran	Londyn Arrington	Michael Bennett
Makiah Coleman	Aiden DeVaughn	Jurnee Brown
Brenton Foster	K'Niyla Gross	Curtis Davis
Zarah Hasan	Kaliya Holmes	Kaderries Goodson
Tramell Holmes	Makhi Hood	E'Laysia McDole
Dashawn Jackson	Mckenzie Hood	Mahila Miles
Tashai Larkai	Melody Jackson	Brooklyn Pettway
Randy Martin	Tiana Moorer	Kingston Smith
Karrington Miller	Kamiyah Nathan	Royce Stowes
E'llijah O'Field	Ke'Hari Patterson	
Janora Posey	Ma'Laysia Patterson	

LIVING THE LEGACY OF BLACK HISTORY

All February long, ASU celebrates Black History Month and "A Century of Black History Commemorations," highlighting 100 years of progress, pride, and purpose that continue to shape our campus.



VISIT THE CALENDAR OF EVENTS
alasu.edu/blackhistorymonth

Board of Trustees

Gov. Kay Ivey
Ex Officio Member

Brenda Brown Dillard
President

Delbert B. Madison
President Pro Tempore

Napoleon Bracy

Paulette Edwards

LaRaunce Anderson Fleming

George Gore

Darrell Hudson

Mario Lumzy

Tiffany B. McCord

Angela McKenzie

Larry Means

Christopher Spencer

Pamela J. Ware

Joe Whitt, Sr.

ASU Presidents

George N. Card
1873 - 1878

William Burns Paterson
1878 - 1915

John William Beverly
1915 - 1920

George Washington Trenholm
1920 - 1925

Harper Councill Trenholm
1925 - 1962

Levi Watkins
1962 - 1981

Robert Lee Randolph
1981 - 1983

Leon Howard
1983 - 1991

C.C. Baker
1991 - 1994

William H. Harris
1994 - 2000

Joe A. Lee
2001 - 2008

William H. Harris
2008 - 2012

Joseph H. Silver, Sr.
2012

Gwendolyn E. Boyd
2014 - 2016

Quinton T. Ross, Jr.
2017 - present