FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To: News Media
From: The Office of Public Information
Date: January 21, 2025
Re: Voorhees University Celebrates Leadership, Service, and Unity at 3rd Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Breakfast

Bamberg, South Carolina (January 2026) — Purpose, faith, and unity filled the room Monday morning as Voorhees University hosted its 3rd Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Breakfast, recognizing nine distinguished individuals whose lives reflect selfless dedication, civic responsibility, and a deep commitment to uplifting others.

Held in observance of the life and legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr**.**, the annual breakfast brought together elected officials, faith leaders, educators, and residents to celebrate those whose daily actions continue to shape stronger, more compassionate places to live, work, and grow.

This year's honorees included:

- Dr**.** Valerie C. Cave of Allendale
- Mrs. Constance Ferguson of Bamberg
- Mr. James Wallace of Barnwell
- Mr. Lenon G. Brooker of Blackville
- The Honorable Mayor Harold Johnson of Denmark
- Ms. Tonya L. James of Norway
- The Honorable Mayor Wilma Edmonds of Govan

Two individuals received Lifetime Achievement Awards in recognition of decades of unwavering service, faith, and influence: Reverend Dr. Rosemary Griffin and Bishop Virgin Johnson, Jr., Esquire**.**

During remarks following the presentation, Harold Johnson, Mayor of Denmark, first gave honor to God for the recognition. "For it is through His grace, guidance, and strength that I have been honored to receive this award. Without Him, none of this would be possible," Mayor Johnson said. "I sincerely thank Voorhees University President Dr. Ronnie Hopkins, Dr. Thelma Sojourner, and the entire Voorhees University family. This recognition reflects a shared commitment to academic excellence, character building, faith, and justice. It renews my resolve to serve, to stand in purpose, and to help shape a more equitable future for generations to come."

The breakfast was attended by Bamberg County Councilwoman Sharon Hammond and Bamberg County Councilmen Evert Comer, Jr., and Larry Haynes, who praised the honorees for their visible impact and enduring example. “Today’s celebration affirms that progress is driven by people who show up consistently and serve with heart,” Councilwoman Hammond said. “Each honoree reminds us what is possible when purpose meets action.”

Councilmen Comer and Haynes echoed those sentiments, noting that the honorees’ dedication continues to move counties and towns forward. “Their influence reaches far beyond titles or roles,” Comer said. “They are building something lasting.” “This program reminds us that service is not an event—it is a lifelong commitment,” Haynes added.

The program concluded with an oratorical tribute from Orangeburg High School Sophomore, Miss Madisyn Jefferson, who recited Dr. King’s historic *I Have a Dream* speech, reminding attendees that *“we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.”*

As those words continue to resonate across generations, the morning served as both a celebration and a call—affirming that the dream endures when people work together with faith, resolve, and shared purpose.

Bamberg County Council and Administration extend sincere congratulations to all award recipients, applauding their remarkable contributions and thanking Voorhees University for preserving Dr. King’s legacy through recognition, reflection, and continued service.

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For more information on this news release, email info@bambergcounty.sc.gov.