

## ADAMS NAMES JOHNSON C. SMITH UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT AS GUEST TO STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS



**From** Spencer, Sam <Sam.Spencer@mail.house.gov>  
**To** Spencer, Sam <Sam.Spencer@mail.house.gov>  
**Cc** Akarakiri, Oorebomi <Oorebomi.Akarakiri@mail.house.gov>  
**Date** 2022-02-28 17:07

### For Immediate Release

February 28, 2022

Press Contact:

Sam Spencer, Communications Director

[Sam.Spencer@mail.house.gov](mailto:Sam.Spencer@mail.house.gov)

### ADAMS NAMES JOHNSON C. SMITH UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT AS GUEST TO STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

*Congresswoman Alma Adams Invites Clarence D. "Clay" Armbrister, the 14th president of Johnson C. Smith University as Virtual Guest to President Biden's State of the Union Address to Congress*

**CHARLOTTE** – Congresswoman Alma Adams (NC-12) is uplifting *Clarence D. "Clay" Armbrister, the 14th president of Johnson C. Smith University* as her Hometown Hero virtual guest to President Biden's State of the Union Address to Congress on Tuesday. Armbrister is currently leading efforts to invest in and improve Charlotte's West Side, both at JCSU and along the Beatties Ford Road corridor, that have been made possible by the American Rescue Plan.

The State of the Union Address will highlight the achievements and work still to be done under the leadership of President Biden. While safety protocols mean this year's in-person attendance will be limited, Adams said inviting Armbrister as her virtual guest is an important way to honor the people of Charlotte and uplift their stories. Armbrister is a hero to many in the Charlotte community for cancelling JCSU student debt during the pandemic.

"Our country has made tremendous strides this past year thanks to the American Rescue Plan and the Infrastructure Law. So, for this year's State of the Union Address I wanted to highlight one of the millions of hardworking Americans whose perseverance in the face of the challenges presented by the pandemic fueled our nation's historic recovery. People like my guest, President Armbrister, are the true heroes behind America's progress over the past year, and I am proud to uplift him as my virtual guest to the State of the Union Address," **said Congresswoman Adams.**

"I am honored to be the virtual guest of Congresswoman Adams for President Biden's State of the Union Address," **said Clarence D. Armbrister, President of Johnson C. Smith University.** "Rep. Adams

worked closely with her colleagues in Congress and the Biden Administration to pass legislation that has helped Historically Black Colleges and Universities endure the unprecedented challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic over the past two years. The funds provided helped us, among other things, weather the storm of reduced revenues due to lower enrollments and to cancel debt of needy students at Johnson C. Smith University. I'm grateful to Congresswoman Adams for her leadership and for this recognition of the work we're doing at Johnson C. Smith University to make a high-quality college education accessible and affordable for diverse students."

Armbrister plans to watch the speech with his wife, Denise, while in Washington, D.C. for UNCF meetings this week.

In addition, Armbrister is one of the workstream leads for the Mayor's Racial Equity Initiative, a Public-Private Partnership that is the corporate response to Charlotte Mayor Vi Lyles' call for a more equitable Queen City. \$60 million of the \$250 million in funding for the Mayor's Racial Equity Initiative is made possible by American Rescue Plan funds. "For too long we have approached equity from our various silos, chipping away with fits and starts," [\[Johnson C. Smith\] University President Clarence Armbrister said at the announcement of the initiative](#). "This public-private partnership has the potential to transform Charlotte into the 'standard bearer' for cities seeking racial equity and upward mobility."

### About President Armbrister

- **Clarence D. "Clay" Armbrister** is the 14th President of Johnson C. Smith University (JCSU), a Historically Black University (HBCU) in the heart of Charlotte, North Carolina.
- Armbrister's career began as a lawyer in the Public Finance Department of Saul, Ewing Remick & Saul. He later served as the City of Philadelphia's Public Treasurer before becoming the Managing Director of Philadelphia School District, the 4th largest school district in the country at the time.
- He moved to Charlotte from Philadelphia, where he was president of Girard College, an independent college preparatory school for academically capable students from economically disadvantaged families.
- Beliefs: "Success is not the result of a spontaneous combustion. You must set yourself on fire." What that means to me is that you must take personal responsibility and be committed to what you're doing.
- Achievements and Career
  - Education Background: 14th President of Johnson C. Smith University; Chief Operating Officer at Temple University; Chief of Staff at John Hopkins University; Chief Executive Officer at Girard College; Managing Director of Philadelphia School District
  - Volunteer history: Former President of the Board of the National Adoption Center. Appointed

Philadelphia City Treasurer by then-Mayor Ed Rendell, Chair of the Audit Committee and a member of the Compensation Committee of Health Partners Plans Inc.

- Board Memberships: Board of Directors for Health Partners Plan; Board of Trustees of Devereux Advanced Behavioral Health; Board of Charlotte Regional Business Alliance.

###