



Contacts: Vanessa Coombs  
Virginia Union University  
(804) 257-5856

Windy Campbell  
Campbell Communications  
(804) 314-0205

## **Virginia Union University Hosts Randall Robinson '67 at Kick-Off Event Recognizing 150 Years of Advancing Higher Education**

*Author and foreign policy advocate speaks on VUU: A Bridge to Intellectual Freedom and Equality*

RICHMOND, VA (Sept. 8, 2014) – Virginia Union University today held the first of a series of events designed to recognize the university's 150 years of leadership in advancing educational opportunities for students. Founded in 1865, Virginia Union is one of the oldest historically black colleges in the South.

The 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Kick-Off Celebration featured a keynote address by Randall Robinson, VUU Class of 1967, an internationally respected foreign policy advocate and author, who was joined by university leaders, staff, faculty, students, alumni, and other community and corporate supporters.

"Our 150-year legacy is evident in our students today, as well as those who have come before them," said Claude G. Perkins, Ph.D., President and CEO, Virginia Union University. "We are honored that Randall Robinson has joined us here today as we begin an exciting year in this university's history. Dr. Robinson's leadership in the anti-apartheid movement and his advocacy here and throughout Africa and Haiti, has won him international recognitions of the highest honor."

In his address, Robinson spoke on the sesquicentennial theme of "Virginia Union University: A Bridge to Intellectual Freedom and Equality." Born in Richmond and educated in Richmond Public Schools, Robinson graduated from Virginia Union with a B.A. in sociology in 1967 and moved on to Harvard University Law School, where he joined a campus protest against apartheid in South Africa. In 1970, he was awarded a law degree and won a Ford Foundation fellowship that allowed him to work in Tanzania. Attending a Black Leadership Conference, Robinson recognized the absence of African voices in international policy making and the general neglect of black countries, which in 1977 led him to establish TransAfrica. He stepped down from TransAfrica in 2001; today, he is an author and a professor of law at Penn State University.

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On April 3, 1865, missionaries and teachers from the American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS) arrived in the fallen Civil War Confederate capital of Richmond, establishing the Richmond Theological School for Freedmen to educate freed slaves. Early classes were held at the site of Lumpkin's Jail, a former auction house for slaves, in what was known as the "Devil's Half-Acre" of the city's Shockoe Bottom. In 1899, ABHMS merged Richmond Theological with Wayland Seminary, which was founded in Washington, D.C. with the same mission of educating freed slaves. Out of that merger came the Virginia Union campus currently located on Lombardy Street in Richmond. Hartshorn Memorial College and Storer College joined Virginia Union in 1932 and 1964, respectively.

The 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Kick-Off Celebration on September 8 is the first of a series of events, centered on the theme of "Creating a Bridge to Intellectual Freedom," to be hosted by Virginia Union University. These events will culminate on April 9, 2014, with the VUU Rededication and Prayer Service. For information on VUU's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, including a schedule of events, please visit

[http://www.vuu.edu/vuu\\_150th\\_anniversary.aspx](http://www.vuu.edu/vuu_150th_anniversary.aspx).

Accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Virginia Union University has a commitment to excellence and diversity. Its mission is to provide a nurturing, intellectually challenging and spiritually enriching environment for learning that will empower students to develop strong moral values for success, leading them to be scholars, leaders and lifelong learners of a global society. To accomplish this mission, Virginia Union University offers a broad range of educational opportunities that advance liberal arts education, teaching, research, science, technology, continuing education, civic engagement, and international experiences.

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