

HISTORY

Inspired by W.E.B. DuBois' writings about the persecutions and triumphs of African Americans living in Georgia and aided in his mission by private and religious organizations, Joseph Winthrop Holley founded the Albany Bible and Manual Training Institute in 1903, and he served as its president for the next 40 years. The new school was successful in its mission to provide religious and basic education, as well as teacher training, to the local black population. In 1917, the state of Georgia began providing financial support to the school, granting it two-year status. Responding to the needs of the state, the school added training in agriculture and was renamed the Georgia Normal and Agricultural College.

With the creation of the Board of Regents in 1932, the institution joined the newly formed University System of Georgia and, in 1943, was granted four-year status. Concentrating on teacher education and home economics, the school was again renamed, this time as Albany State College. Over the next few years, the College added majors in the humanities and social sciences. In 1954, it began adding degrees in secondary education and, in 1961, nursing, adding health care to its tradition of serving the region.

During the middle decades of the 20th century, the people of Albany State extended the college's mission of education and uplift to include political action. In 1961, Albany State College's students joined with Martin Luther King, Jr., the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and other local black organizations in eight months of protest. Despite warnings from the college's president, William Dennis, many students participated in protests, marches, and an organized effort to test the state mandated desegregation of Albany's bus station. As a result of the protests and the arrest of several students, 40 students were expelled from the college. In May of 2011, 50 years after the events, 32 of these students were finally able to attend graduation as Albany State University awarded them honorary degrees.

With the passage of the Higher Education Act of 1965, the federal government formally recognized and began funding historically black colleges and universities, including Albany State College.

In the 1970s, the college worked with other institutions to offer graduate degrees in a variety of education fields and in business administration.

In 1981, after increasing the number of faculty with doctorate degrees by more than fifty percent, Albany State College began offering graduate degrees designed and delivered solely by faculty and staff of the college.

In 1994, the school earned its nickname, "unsinkable." Tropical storm Alberto, which had submerged almost a half million acres of Georgia farmland, raised the Flint River to 44 feet, flooding most of the college. Under the leadership of president Billy C. Black, students and faculty banded together to carry on the college's mission, and, with the support of Governor Zell Miller and a \$153 million recovery fund, rebuilt, renovated, and expanded the campus. During the rebuilding process, on the strength of the school's growing graduate programs, the Board of Regents in 1996 approved the renaming of the institution: Albany State University. In the following two decades, the university added residence halls, a student center, a stadium, and a fine arts center.

On November 10, 2015, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia voted unanimously to begin the process of consolidating Albany State University and Darton State College. The new Albany State University unifies the distinction, values, and missions of the two

institutions. To lead the two institutions through the complex process of consolidating, the USG appointed Dr. Arthur N. Dunning as the ninth president of Albany State University and Dr. Richard Carvajal as the interim president of Darton State College.

The new Albany State University continues a combined legacy of more than 100 years of providing leadership in southwest Georgia in access to education, academic excellence, social change, and economic impact. A nationally top-ranked HBCU, it serves an increasingly diverse student body and community by offering the region a uniquely comprehensive array of programs, from associate to graduate degrees.

In the 21st century, Albany State University continued to strengthen its mission, attracting nationally renowned scholars and researchers to its faculty and preparing students for leadership in the region and beyond. Between 2000 and 2017, the University granted over 8,500 undergraduate and over 2,800 master's and educational specialist degrees and received over 130 million dollars in grant funding. Albany State College was granted university status in July 1996, and the name of the Institution was changed to Albany State University. During this impressive growth and development, the University has been guided by the following presidents:

Joseph Winthrop Holley, D.D., LL.D (1903-1943)
 Aaron Brown, Ph.D., LL.D., Ed.D. (1943-1953)
 William H. Dennis, LL.D. (1953-1965)
 Thomas Miller Jenkins, J.D., LL.D. (1965-1969)
 Charles L. Hayes, Ed.D. (1969-1980)
 Billy C. Black, Ph.D. (1980-1996)
 Portia Holmes Shields, Ph.D. (1996-2005)
 Everette J. Freeman, Ed.D. (2005-2013)
 Arthur N. Dunning, Ph.D. (2013-2018)
 Marion Fedrick (2018- present)