

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oakwood University President, Dr. Leslie N. Pollard, to Receive the Prestigious Dr. Dorothy C. Yancy Vanguard Award at Wiley University**

Huntsville, AL (June 3, 2024) – Oakwood University is delighted to announce that President, Dr. Leslie N. Pollard, will be honored with the esteemed Dr. Dorothy C. Yancy Vanguard Award. This accolade is presented by the Higher Education Leadership Foundation, (H.E.L.F.) an organization founded to strengthen the leadership pipeline at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

The awards ceremony will take place during the Omicron Summer Institute, scheduled for the weekend of June 7-9, 2024, at Wiley University. In the higher education field, Dr. Dorothy Cowser Yancy (born April 18, 1944) delivered stellar and visionary leadership as an American academic, professor, and administrator. She is noted for her legacy of scholarship among African-American women. As a Fulbright scholar, she was the first African-American to achieve tenured professor status at Georgia Institute of Technology. In 1994, Dr. Yancy left Georgia Tech to become the president of Johnson C. Smith in North Carolina. In 2009, Dr. Yancy became the 14th president of Shaw University. She received many awards and honors for her dedication to higher education.

The news was relayed to Dr. Pollard from Wiley University President, Dr. Herman J. Felton, Jr., and founding principal of H.E.L.F., on May 9, 2024. Dr. Felton's message emphasized the recognition of Dr. Pollard's enduring and transformative leadership at Oakwood University during his tenure.

"Mr. President! The Higher Education Leadership Foundation will be honoring you on June 8, 2024, at our Omicron Summer Institute. You will be receiving our 'Dr. Dorothy C. Yancy Vanguard Award.' This honor is bestowed upon a person who has provided steady and transformative leadership as an HBCU President. While not yet at the end of your assignment and certainly not in the beginning, you represent a select few individuals who have stood the test of time and clearly demonstrated strong leadership during your tenure at Oakwood University. We invite you to teach a leadership class and serve on a panel during the institute. The foundation will provide transportation, lodging, and cover all expenses," wrote Dr. Felton. Dr. Felton observed: "Dr. Pollard's recognition with the Dr. Dorothy C. Yancy Vanguard Award underscores his unwavering commitment to his leadership of Oakwood University through numerous challenges, including COVID, that has sustained his HBCU during a time of instability and uncertainty in higher education, particularly within the HBCU community. His exemplary leadership has been instrumental in fostering graduate and online educational innovation at Oakwood University, retooling Nursing education, building a media center, Outdoor Pavilions, and refurbishing campus buildings, promoting STEM success from CAMP OAKS to nationally recognized medical school admittances, to leadership of Oakwood's deep engagement through the Community Health Action Center, ensuring that the institution continues to thrive and serve its mission to provide a quality Christian education.

The most recent Association of Theological Schools recommendation to offer the University's first doctoral program in the history of the University is a signal reflection of your expansive vision. All this and more is being done while our HBCUs face remarkable industry challenges. We honor your contributions Mr. President."

"It is a profound honor to be recognized with the Dr. Dorothy C. Yancy Vanguard Award," said Dr. Pollard. "Dr. Yancy was one of my role models and offered me sage advice at the beginning of my presidency of Oakwood. While I am humbled to accept this award, it is in no way a testament to my individual efforts, but I accept it on behalf of the collective sacrifices of the Oakwood University administration, faculty, staff, students, and alumni. I look forward to participating in the Omicron Summer Institute and engaging with colleagues and emerging leaders in higher education."

The Omicron Summer Institute is known for its engaging and insightful sessions, focusing on leadership development within higher education. While there Dr. Pollard will deliver the keynote address, "Invincible Faith in Uncertain Times: Leadership Vision, Resilience and Clarity in Noisy Environments." By attending and participating in educational panels and classes, Dr. Pollard will contribute significantly to the discourse on transformative leadership.

For more information about H.E.L.F., please visit the website at <https://heleaders.org/> or contact Herman J. Felton, Jr., Ph.D., J.D., at 904.703.2738.

OAKWOOD UNIVERSITY

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