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U of M's Hooks Center Receives \$250,000 for Educational Resource Center

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The State of Tennessee has awarded \$250,000 to the Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change for creation of a resource center for area school teachers and school children and their parents.

The announcement was made today at the University of Memphis, where the Institute is housed, by Jimmy Naifeh, speaker of the Tenn. House of Representatives, and Lois DeBerry, deputy speaker of the House.

Dr. Shirley C. Raines, president of the University, said the gift, the first from state government, will give a needed boost to the Institute's programs for elementary school and high school students. "It is important for students in grades K-12, especially African-American students, to learn the history and to appreciate the significance of the accomplishments of African-American people in America," Raines said. "With this funding from the State of Tennessee, the Hooks Institute can move forward with plans to improve that facet of education for students, their teachers, and their parents."

Plans call for the expanded Hooks Center to include a permanent exhibit showcasing how Dr. Hooks and a number of other black citizens of Memphis rose from poverty to lives of distinguished achievement. The display would help visitors, especially children, understand that, with perseverance, obstacles can be overcome and dreams achieved.

The resource center would also contain materials to help K-12 educators understand the conditions of urban life and the special needs of low-income urban students.

Other initiatives under consideration for the enhanced Hooks Center include:

- Hosting an annual banquet to honor excellent student scholars
- Recognizing exemplary teacher performance with an annual award
- Discussions by internationally known guest lecturers in person and via videoconferencing
- Creating curricular modules and training workshops for teachers, in cooperation with the University of Memphis College of Education and the FedEx Institute
- Providing easily accessible information to parents to help them encourage their children.

The Hooks Institute was created as an academic research center supporting the urban research mission of the University of Memphis. The gift announced today is the first received from the State of Tennessee.

For more information about the Hooks Institute for Social Change, call 901-678-3974.

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