

Former U.S. Secretary of Transportation Will Reflect On Legacy of Dr. Benjamin Hooks Feb. 9 at U of M

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Rodney Slater

Rodney Slater, former U.S. Secretary of Transportation under President Bill Clinton, will speak Thursday, Feb. 9, at the University of Memphis. His topic will be “Reflections on Living in Service to Others: Dr. Benjamin Hooks and the Heirs of His Legacy.” A reception will begin at 5 p.m. in the Michael D. Rose Entertainment Theatre Lobby, followed by the program at 5:30.

Sponsored by the Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change at the U of M, both events are free and open to the public. Parking is available in the Zach Curlin garage adjacent to the Rose Theatre.

Slater will meet with students, emerging leaders, young professionals, and members of the community to discuss combining civic and public service opportunities with career goals. He also will talk about *Duty of the Hour*, a documentary on the life of Hooks, which illustrates how a committed individual can help create a more just nation.

Slater is a member of the Hooks Institute National Premiere Steering Committee, which is working with the Hooks Institute to promote and support the documentary and other programming. A trailer of the film will be shown during the program, and information on the public release of the documentary will be provided.

Slater is the second African-American to hold the position of U.S. Secretary of Transportation and the first African-American to serve as director of the Federal Highway Administration. He is a partner with Patton Boggs in Washington, D.C.

Slater’s bipartisan and inclusive approach as Secretary of Transportation enabled him to pass several historic legislative initiatives. These include the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, which guaranteed a record investment in surface transportation through 2003, and the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment Reform Act for the 21st Century, which provides funds to improve the safety and security of the nation’s aviation system.

In 1996 University of Memphis officials received approval from the Tennessee Board of Regents to create the Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change in the College of Arts & Sciences. The mission of the Institute is teaching, studying, and promoting civil rights and social change. The Hooks Institute archives include Hooks’ personal papers, which are housed in the Mississippi Valley Collection in the University’s McWherter Library.

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