

## Honoring a pioneer - Carolina Panorama (Columbia, SC) - April 25, 2019 - page 1

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The College of Arts and Sciences honored **James L. Solomon Jr.**, the first African American mathematics student at the university on Monday, April 22 during a special ceremony held in the Campus Room at Capstone.

During the ceremony, mathematicians and civil rights scholars commemorated Solomon's contributions to the college and the nation. Johnny Houston, co-founder of the National Association of Mathematicians, was the keynote speaker. The National Association of Mathematicians is a professional association for mathematicians of color in the United States. Its mission is to promote excellence in the mathematical sciences and promote the mathematical development of all underrepresented minorities. It was founded in 1969, six years after **James L. Solomon Jr.** integrated the University of South Carolina to major in mathematics.

During his speech, Johnny Houston, founder of the National Association of Mathematicians, was the keynote speaker.

Houston spoke about the importance of math to the development of mankind and society. He also lamented the small number of African-American mathematicians.

"There is only one Historically Black College or University that awards Ph.Ds in Mathematics," Houston said. "That is Howard University. But there are 125 other institutions that award Ph.Ds in Mathematics."

Houston went on to say that there are only 500 mathematicians in the United States who are African-Americans, less than one percent of the total. America is missing out on a great opportunity to develop its homegrown talent, he said, instead of importing potential talent from overseas.

Developing homegrown mathematics talent is what the University of South Carolina did in 1963 when it admitted Solomon. **James L. Solomon Jr.** played a large role in the university's integration in 1963 along with Henrie Monteith and Robert Anderson. He received a master's degree in mathematics and has led a life of public service, earning him the Order of the Palmetto.

During the ceremony, the College of Arts and Sciences unveiled a commemorative plaque honoring Solomon for his contributions to our university, state and nation. It will be housed in USC's LeConte College.

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