To My Fellow Donors,

It is with great pride that I write my first column for the Missouri Southern Foundation newsletter. As we settle into another fall semester, it is my hope that you and your loved ones have enjoyed a healthy and prosperous year as fellow members of our great community.

As you know, Missouri Southern State University has been through many changes of late. And although change, for some, can initially lead to a measure of uncertainty, my hope is that the students, employees, and supporters of Missouri Southern share a tremendous feeling of pride and optimism for the future of the university we all love.

I consider it a great privilege to be able to take the helm at this university, which I am very proud to call my alma mater. I graduated with my bachelor’s degree in psychology in 1979, and although a few decades of aging may change the man – and many of the surroundings here, for that matter – no amount of time changes the heart of this place. It’s something I’ve been delighted to rediscover.

This fall, we have been repeating a single and simple phrase to our current and prospective students: “Believe.” We feel it gets to the core of why they are here – why they set out to accomplish the goal of a college education in the first place. They must believe in themselves. And we must believe in them. I know I do. And I see every day how much the faculty and staff here do as well.

But as much as we encourage our students to come to college and finish their degrees, there is an element of support that only you can provide. It’s not news that state support for higher education continues to decline – it has unfortunately become customary for universities to anticipate and plan for continued decreases in state appropriations. But one thing we can do is to increase engagement and involvement of our alumni and supporters.

The gifts you give literally change the lives of our students. They can believe in their futures because of you. Whether it’s a scholarship that helps them afford tuition, an in-kind gift that opens their eyes to a new piece of culture, or something as large as a facility that changes their educational experience entirely, the gifts you provide make a tremendous difference in the lives of our students.

It is my hope that your involvement with Missouri Southern is as positive and life-changing as mine has been. I encourage you to reach out to our Foundation office and let us help you find a way to make a difference in the lives of our students, for their future success will pay great dividends for all of us.

Sincerely,

Alan D. Marble, Ph.D.
Interim President, Missouri Southern State University
Members of the Missouri Southern State University family experienced a historic moment on the first day of classes when a new iconic structure was officially unveiled.

The bronze statue of a lion standing 10 feet tall and 12 feet long was unveiled August 19th during the opening day picnic to the delight of more than 2,000 students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members who came to witness the event. The lion was brought to life thanks to contributions made by the Student Senate and by alumni Bill and Tracy Gipson, ’85 and ’93.

The lion stands proudly on the Lion Pride Plaza outside of Billingsly Student Center. Designed to attract students and visitors, the plaza features graduated seating walls, ground pavers, and plant life and is lit at night.

The unveiling ceremony included remarks from Interim President Alan Marble, ’79, and members of the Student Senate, and was streamed live on the Missouri Southern website. Brittany Lampe, an education major who served on the Lion Icon Committee, assisted the Gipsons in unveiling the statue.

The statue was created for Missouri Southern by Brian Hanlon of Hanlon Sculpture Studio in Toms River, N.J., and is one of more than 200 original art pieces Hanlon has sculpted throughout the world. RDG Planning & Design designed the plaza and RE Smith, an education major who served on the Lion Icon Committee, assisted the Gipsons in unveiling the statue.

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