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Paine College Announces the Passing of Dr. Silas Norman, Jr., Past –Board Chair, Devoted Alumnus and Philanthropist

“Only a Life Lived for Others is Worth Living” -- By Helene T. Carter

The Paine College Administration, Faculty, Staff, Alumni and the Board of Trustees mourn the passing of Dr. Silas Norman Jr., Past-Chairman of the Board of Trustees, dedicated alumnus, civil rights activist and philanthropist. Dr. Norman was appointed to the Paine College Board of Trustees in 2009 and later elected Chairman of the Board until he vacated his position in 2014.

Having graduated from Paine College in 1962, Dr. Norman passed away Friday morning, July 17, 2015 after an extended illness.

“Dr. Norman, one of our many giants in the history of Paine College, is a hero among heroes,” said Dr. Mallory Millender, Paine Historian, classmate and friend. “His outstanding work is not limited to the history of Paine College. He is one of the nation’s unsung heroes. He took that same passion that he demonstrated at Paine College as a student leader to Selma, Alabama to Mississippi and to other places in the country. He took that passion to Wayne State University where he served as associate dean of Admissions, Diversity and Inclusion.”

Reflecting on Dr. Norman’s student leadership, Dr. Millender said, “He led the student movement in Georgia. As president of the Paine College student body, he was head of the Student Non- violent Steering Committee (SNCC) and the Chairman of the NAACP statewide student chapter. When the students decided to boycott the buses in Augusta, Silas was first on the bus and he was among five students who were arrested. Silas and the others filed a lawsuit against the City of Augusta and the bus company. The upside of that was they won the lawsuit and as a result the segregated buses were outlawed in Augusta and in the state of Georgia.”

In May 2015, during the Paine College Alumni Reunion Weekend, Dr. Norman was inducted into the Paine College Athletics Hall of Fame. He played in the position of Center on the Paine College Football Team during a time when the College did not offer athletic scholarships. His family and many friends were present to accept the award in his absence.

Dr. Norman, a 1976 graduate of the Wayne State University School of Medicine, received its Trailblazer Award in 2010. The award honors outstanding alumni and faculty who have made substantial contributions and demonstrated courage, initiative, innovation, risk-taking and leadership.

A driving force for diversity, fairness and compassion at Wayne State University, Dr. Norman received the School of Medicine's Distinguished Service Award for having served the school with distinction for more than 25 years. According to Dr. Valerie Parisi, a colleague, "Dr. Norman exemplified a notable quote by Albert Einstein: *Only a life lived for others is worth living.*" "He had overseen one of the most diverse student bodies in the United States."

A medical suite at the State Prison of Southern Michigan in Jackson is named after Dr. Norman, who served as the facility's medical director. His commitment to social and humanistic medicine also led him to serve as chief medical officer for the Michigan Department of Corrections and medical director for the Wayne County Jails.

He served as a consultant to the Detroit Health Care for the Homeless project and to the Detroit Health Department, working to see that thousands of uninsured and underserved people received much-needed health care.

In 2000, Dr. Norman received the Alumni Achievement Award from the United Negro College Fund. During the same year, the Wayne State University Organization of Black Alumni selected him for its Alumni Achievement Award. Also in 2000, the Michigan Department of Community Health presented him with the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials Vision Award.

"We will miss his rich deep bass voice that rolled like thunder," said Mildred N. Kendrick, Paine College Director of Alumni Relations. "Silas supported this College generously with his financial gifts and service. Many of our graduates were the beneficiaries of his generosity and financial support."

Condolences may be extended to the Norman Family c/o 4598 Cameron Circle, Dexter, Michigan 48130. Emailed messages may be sent to spnorman@umich.edu.

"There were two things that my dad loved in this world and they were his church and Paine College," reflecting Silas Prescod Norman. In lieu of flowers, friends are encouraged to make donations to Paine College (Augusta, GA) or to Hartford Memorial Baptist Church (Detroit, MI).

Dr. Norman is survived by three sons: Silas Prescod Norman (physician), Joseph Wiley Norman (physician), and Michael Edward Norman (attorney). He is also survived by a brother, James Howard Norman, and two sisters: V. Elaine Sturkey and Jessye Norman.

Dr. Norman, who will be sorely missed, will leave a legacy that will be cherished by his friends, colleagues, Paine alumni and beneficiaries of his service and generosity for generations to come. The Paine College family extends its heartfelt condolences to the Norman family.