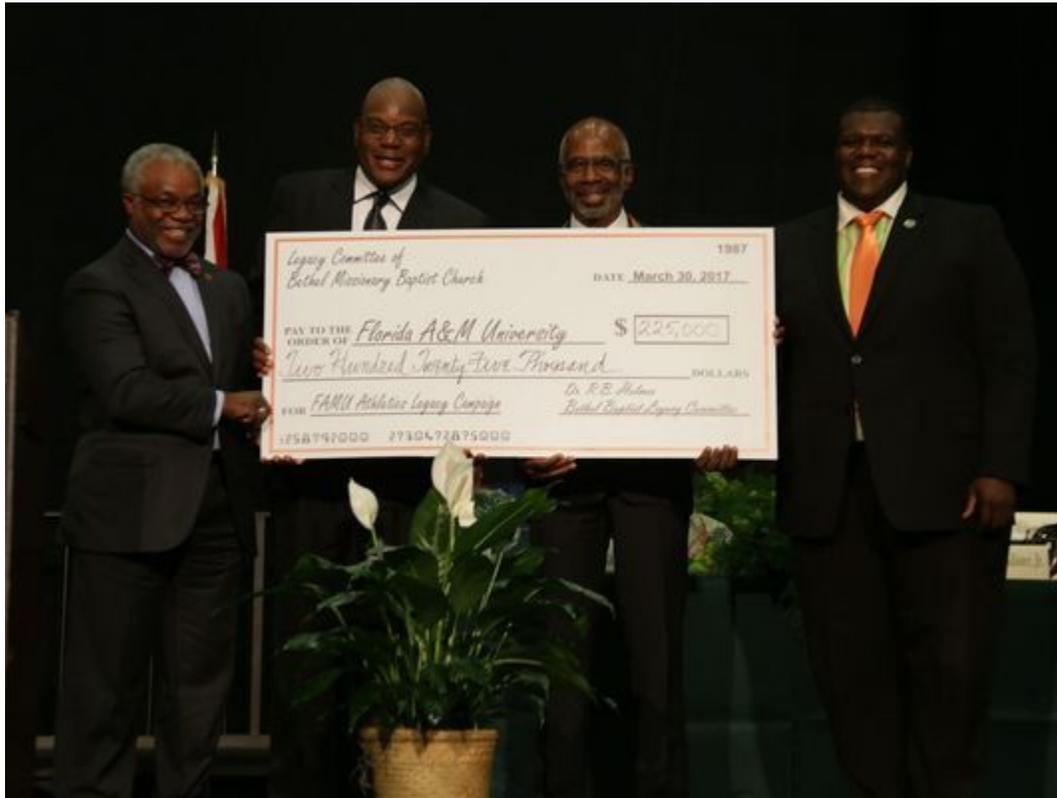


Holmes, local churches net \$225K for FAMU athletics

[Jordan Culver](#), Democrat staff writer 5:52 p.m. ET April 3, 2017



FAMU VP for Advancement George Cotton, Rev. RB Holmes, Interim President Larry Robinson, Ph.D., and Athletic Director Milton Overton hold the Legacy Banquet check for \$225,000.(Photo: Special to the Democrat)

The Rev. R.B. Holmes wasn't shocked or amazed he and a group of local and statewide pastors surpassed what they thought could raise for Florida A&M's athletic department.

He was just thankful.

During this year's Legacy Banquet on Thursday, Holmes, on behalf of the Legacy Committee, was able to present FAMU Athletic Director Milton Overton Jr. with a check for \$225,000 – more than double [Holmes' original fundraising goal of \\$100,000](#), which was set in 2015.

Coming into this year's Legacy Banquet, the Bethel Empowerment Foundation had already raised \$64,356. This year's event generated the additional money, which was then presented in the form of a single, giant, check.

“I’m very thankful to the legacy committee, to the faith community, Bethel Baptist and Bethel AME,” Holmes said. “It was a united effort to make this happen.”

The entire amount is for the Rattlers’ athletic department, which is looking to repair Bragg Memorial Stadium before the start of the 2017 football season on Aug. 26.

The latest projected cost for the renovations to the stadium, according to Overton, is \$450,000, down from \$622,000 when the problems with the stadium were first announced.

During a March 17 Board of Trustees conference call, Overton said he already secured \$200,000 for the stadium.

“It says that this community will respond when you have a strategic plan and you’re willing to execute that plan,” Holmes said. “It’s a commitment to a vision. For people to buy into the vision, regardless of who the AD is, we can always look out for the best interests of FAMU.”

Overton, interim President Larry Robinson and Vice President for University Advancement George Cotton Sr. were in attendance for the banquet.

In a March interview – before the banquet – with the Tallahassee Democrat, Overton detailed part of the payment schedule for Bragg Stadium.

“We’re on schedule,” Overton said. “The first distribution was \$60,000 for design. The next distribution is going to be around \$175,000 to start the work on April 1. We gave ourselves all the way to June 30 to raise the money anyway.

“If we continue on our track for fundraising this year, we’re already 54 percent ahead of where we were last year in terms of total fundraising.”

During the BOT conference call, Overton also said FAMU’s projected revenue shortfall is at \$122,883. He plans to get that number close to zero.

“I’m starting to see a light,” Overton said. “Quicker than I thought I was going to see it. A lot of good things need to happen in order for us to balance our budget, but we can. That’s the thing. There’s the ability to do it.”