

History of Albany State University

Albany State University was founded in 1903 as the Albany Bible and Manual Training Institution by Joseph Winthrop Holley. The institution provided religious and industrial education for African Americans in southwest Georgia. In 1917, the institution became a state-supported, two-year college with a board of trustees. The school was known at that time as Georgia Normal and Agricultural College and offered programs in agriculture, industrial education and teacher training. In 1932, the college became a part of the University System of Georgia, under the jurisdiction of the Board of Regents, and in 1943, it became a four-year, teacher-training institution and assumed the name Albany State College. At the same time, Dr. Holley retired and Dr. Aaron Brown became president.

Albany State grew tremendously from 1943-1996 when it became Albany State University. Five presidents served during this period, Dr. Aaron Brown (1943-1954); Dr. William H. Dennis (1954-1965); Dr. Thomas Miller Jenkins (1965-1969); Dr. Charles L. Hayes (1969-1980); and Dr. Billy C. Black (1980-1996). Dr. Portia Holmes Shields became the first female president in 1996, and she was followed by the university's eighth and current president, Dr. Everette J. Freeman, on September 7, 2005.