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## **ESTABLISHMENT OF HBCU CENTER IN WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**(WASHINGTON, D.C.) February 19, 2021** – Jacqueline Lewis, philanthropist and founder of WISH (Washington Intern Student Housing) announces the inauguration of a National Center for Historically Black Colleges and Universities in downtown Washington, D.C.

WISH was established to house interns in the nation’s capital with the mission of diversity and inclusion and over 25 years is the leading student housing program on Capitol Hill.

“Mackenzie Scott’s recent gifts to HBCU were a strong vote of confidence in their mission,” Lewis said, “and I see internships changing lives and want to keep it going.”

Lewis, longtime advocate for experiential learning, has established a foundation to run the Center with a \$1M gift pledge to pay semester housing costs for 175 student interns in Washington, D.C. The Center will provide multi-use educational facilities and serve as a premier living and learning experience for the students. The market rate for sort-term student housing in D.C. is \$1,400 per month,” says Lewis, “and this gift will make a living/learning community affordable in this expensive city.”

A landmark, 5-story building on Connecticut Avenue, N.W., will house the Center originally built by Boston University for students interning in D.C. The location creates a national presence for schools seeking to enhance educational experience and to showcase HBCU-sponsored programs. Other institutions sharing the building will connect participants to students around the world.

The Center will house students and faculty for the purpose of advancing their experiential education and research programs within a city that offers exceptional opportunity for high impact internships, undergraduate research and specialized programs. Institutions, of all size enrollments, will have access as well as alumni who may participate by mentoring interns in government, science, law, business, medicine, entertainment, and other fields they are in.

The location, north of the White House, is close to Metro and academic and nonprofit organizations, including the American Council on Education, Boston University, Johns Hopkins University, Arizona State University Washington Center, Marquette University Les Aspin Center, the University of California, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, the Brookings Institution and many embassies.

Lewis is a former classroom teacher of 22 years with federal service on the President's Intergovernmental Advisory Council on Education, appointed by President Reagan in 1982 and reappointed by President George H.W. Bush. She has named Marie Dennis, currently CEO of WISH/WiSE to serve as Center Director and to work with HBCU representatives, nominated by their institutions. She will coordinate with a student life professional creating programs and ensuring student safety and conduct, similar to other institutions in D.C.

#### **ABOUT WISH/WiSE:**

For over 25 years, WISH has been a leading provider in experiential learning in Washington D.C. Over 25,000 student interns have lived in their properties.

WiSE, the Washington Intern Study Experience, is an academic component to WISH, founded in 2017, so interns could make more of their resources by working at their dream job while earning college credit to advance their studies and career. For more information, visit [www.InternsDC.com](http://www.InternsDC.com).

#### **ABOUT THE FOUNDATIONS:**

The WISH/WiSE Foundation was created to support internships in the nation's capital for all students despite economic challenges. The Foundation provides grants to schools enabling those students to be in their program.

The Robert and Jacqueline Lewis Foundation provides financial support for unexpected hardships during an internship, so that the student may complete the program.

The newly established HBCU National Center Foundation provides financial support to schools sending interns to Washington, D.C. to cover their housing costs.

#### **ABOUT MACKENZIE SCOTT:**

Gifts from author and philanthropist, Mackenzie Scott, surpass \$800 million to colleges and universities across the country dedicated to serving large numbers of Black, Latino and Native American students. Scott's gifts will, among other things, deepen academic offerings.