

Senate Resolution 639

By: Senators Orrock of the 36th, Merritt of the 9th, Halpern of the 39th, Wicks of the 34th, Kemp of the 38th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing February 2, 2026, as Clark Atlanta University Day at the state capitol; and for
2 other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Clark Atlanta University (CAU) was established in 1988 upon the consolidation
4 of its two parent institutions, Atlanta University, founded in 1865 by the American
5 Missionary Association, and Clark University, later changed to Clark College by the
6 Freedman's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) founded in 1869; and

7 WHEREAS, Clark Atlanta University was the nation's first four-year liberal arts college to
8 serve a primarily African-American student population; and

9 WHEREAS, the University's four schools offer 40 academic programs to 3,920 students
10 annually, making a valuable contribution to the future workforce, including training for
11 technology, engineering, business, social work, and education, as well as contributing to the
12 leadership of Georgia; and

13 WHEREAS, CAU has launched its first comprehensive campaign centered on Lifting Lives
14 and Leading the Way, a 10-year, ambitious campaign that aims to raise \$250 million to

15 support catalytic investments in students, faculty, infrastructure, and initiatives that
16 distinguish Clark Atlanta as an institution of choice; and

17 WHEREAS, the goal to raise funding for innovative research to help cure prostate cancer and
18 Alzheimer's disease creates new avenues of entrepreneurship and finding ways to eradicate
19 social and racial injustice; and

20 WHEREAS, CAU received a record breaking 52,212 applications for the class of 2029, this
21 was a 4.5 percent increase from the previous year and a 17 percent increase since 2021; the
22 average GPA admitted first time freshman was 3.7, up from 2.7 in 2021, and the freshman
23 population and transfer population went from 12 percent to 15 percent in 2026; and

24 WHEREAS, Clark Atlanta University's economic impact to the state of Georgia boasts
25 \$541MM combined gross, a direct impact of \$400MM, and labor producing 3,282 full and
26 part-time jobs that can contribute to Georgia's economy; and

27 WHEREAS, Clark Atlanta University is a founding member of the Georgia Research
28 Alliance and the home of the Center for Cancer Research and Therapeutic Development,
29 which has the distinction of being one of the nation's largest academic prostate cancer
30 research centers, providing opportunities for high caliber, basic and translational research,
31 training the next generation of scientists in cancer research, and offering an educational
32 environment for community outreach prevention, early detection, and treatment of prostate
33 cancer; and

34 WHEREAS, Clark Atlanta University held a ribbon-cutting and open house for the former
35 Robert H. "Bob" Bell Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development, one of the
36 nation's most progressive forums, integrating traditional academics, market research, and

37 intelligence and innovation to increase the level of competitiveness among CAU graduates
38 and local entrepreneurs; and

39 WHEREAS, Clark Atlanta University is the first private Historically Black University to host
40 a chapter of Phi Kappa Phi, America's most prestigious honor society for all academic
41 disciplines, in addition to Golden Key International Honor Society, Phi Eta Sigma Honor
42 Society, and Alpha Kappa Mu Honor Society as well as several discipline-specific honor
43 societies; and

44 WHEREAS, Clark Atlanta University is an important contributor to local, regional, and
45 national communities, engaging more than 1,000 student and faculty volunteers annually in
46 service to local nonprofit organizations supporting the educational systems of Fulton,
47 DeKalb, Cobb, Gwinnett, Rockdale, and nearby Georgia counties, and continues to reach
48 beyond the campus footprint to address critical issues through purposeful service; and

49 WHEREAS, since 1974, Clark Atlanta University has been the home of WCLK Jazz 91.9
50 FM, Atlanta's Jazz Station, which celebrates its 52nd anniversary of service to the
51 community in 2026; and

52 WHEREAS, Clark Atlanta university has produced stellar alumni who constitute
53 irreplaceable threads in the fabric of the state of Georgia and America as a whole, including
54 Fletcher Henderson, Grace Towns Hamilton, Irma Jackson Clayton Wertz, Evelyn Gibson
55 Lowery, Mary Frances Early, The Honorable Brenda Hill Cole, Georgia State Representative
56 Shelia Jones, Kenny Leon, Helen Smith Price, Georgia State Senator Horacena Tate,
57 Anthony White, Bomani Jones, Tharon Johnson, and Lorin Crawford; and

58 WHEREAS, under the leadership of President French, Clark Atlanta University has received
59 two of the largest unrestricted donations, a previous \$15 million gift, and a recent \$38 million
60 gift from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott elevating total giving at \$53 million, marking a
61 historic milestone; and

62 WHEREAS, in addition, a \$16.5 million gift, allocated over a 10 year period, as a part of the
63 Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation's \$50 million HBCU commitment; and

64 WHEREAS, President George T. French serves as the longest serving HBCU president in
65 the county, and has for many years provided dedicated service to higher education of
66 Georgia's citizens.

67 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
68 recognize February 2, 2026, as Clark Atlanta University Day at the state capitol.

69 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of this body commend the leadership of
70 President George T. French, Jr., Ph.D., and his considerable experience, expertise, wisdom,
71 and passion for advocacy to a better future for the young men and women of Clark Atlanta
72 University.

73 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
74 to make an appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to Clark Atlanta
75 University and President George T. French.