



THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA®

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of the
ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY-EIGHTH COMMENCEMENT



May 3-4, 2019 • Coleman Coliseum

THE FACULTY AND STAFF OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA EXTEND A WARM
WELCOME TO THE FAMILY, FRIENDS AND VISITORS OF THIS GRADUATING CLASS.



Autherine Lucy Foster
HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENT



The story of leading American civil rights movement and University of Alabama legend Autherine Lucy Foster is one of persistence, patience and the desire for self-improvement.

In 1952, after graduating with an English degree from Miles College, the Shiloh, Alabama, native's acceptance to The University of Alabama was rescinded, because she was African American. After a legal battle backed by then-NAACP lawyer Thurgood Marshall, Foster was admitted to the University by court order.

On Feb. 1, 1956, she registered as a student in the University's College of Education. Two days later, she attended her first class as a graduate student in library science, becoming the first black person in the state admitted to a white public school or university. After protests and riots, the board of trustees removed her, citing safety concerns for Foster and other students.

In 1988, the University officially annulled her expulsion, and the next year she re-enrolled at the University with her daughter Grazia. Foster earned a master's degree in elementary education in 1991 and participated in the graduation ceremony in May 1992 with her daughter, who majored in corporate finance. Also in 1992, UA officials announced the formation of an endowed scholarship to be called the Autherine Lucy Foster Endowed Scholarship, which is awarded each year to a student by the Black Faculty and Staff Association.

A decade later, the University named an endowed fellowship in Foster's honor and unveiled a portrait of her in the student union. She was further recognized in 2010 when the University dedicated the Autherine Lucy Clock Tower, acknowledging her as one of three UA desegregation pioneers, along with Vivian Malone and James Hood. And on Sept. 15, 2017, Foster was once again honored with the unveiling of the Autherine Lucy Foster historic marker in front of Graves Hall.