



**The Reverend Dr. Lester A. McCorn**  
**President, Paine College, Augusta, Georgia**

[Rev. Dr. Lester A. McCorn](#) is described as a transformational leader, scholar, activist, and non-profit executive, with nearly 40 years of leadership experience. A native of Worcester, Massachusetts, he is the 18<sup>th</sup> President of [Paine College](#) in Augusta, Georgia, a private historically Black college (HBCU) founded in 1882 by the United Methodist Church and Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church in Augusta, Georgia. He is the former President of [Clinton College](#) in Rock Hill, South Carolina. Under his leadership over seven and half years, Clinton College experienced dramatic growth in enrollment, athletics and student success, as well as a transformative \$25 million campus building program, which included its first new medical clinic, a newly constructed Academic Center for Excellence, and a Digital Library and Learning Commons. Clinton successfully completed its 10-year accreditation reaffirmation evaluation with zero suggestions, findings, or recommendations.

Dr. McCorn has taken the helm of Paine College at an inflection point in its 143-year history. The College has recently adopted a ten-year Transformation Plan in partnership with the Augusta National Golf Club, Bank of America, United Negro College Fund, Community Foundation of CSRA, and EAB. Paine has received several major grants under Dr. McCorn's leadership, including \$5 million from the National Park Service, \$1 million from the Reinvestment Fund, \$100,000 from the United Negro College Fund and \$450,00 in congressionally directed spending through the office of U.S. Senator Raphael Warnock. Paine College is in the process of adding nine new bachelor's degrees and nine new master's degrees in business, technology, nursing, healthcare administration, and teacher education. The College has been rebranded with the motto: "Preparation for Transformation." He is leading the transformation of Paine's 60-acre campus with renovations to all the residence halls and other historic buildings on the campus, securing over \$5 million in grants from the National Park Service.

President McCorn is an alumnus of Morehouse College (class of 1988), Yale Divinity School, and Chicago Theological Seminary. He holds the Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) from United Theological Seminary, where he was a Gardner C. Taylor Fellow in social justice and prophetic leadership. He also served as an adjunct professor and doctoral mentor to the Taylor Fellows at United Seminary for several years. He is currently completing the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Leadership and Change from Antioch University in Yellow Springs, Ohio, with an expected graduation in the Spring of 2026. His dissertation is entitled, *"Good News for the Poor and More: Towards Reclaiming Martin Luther King Jr.'s Radical Gospel of Economic Justice in Pursuit of the Beloved Community."* His research explores the roots of Dr. King's prophetic rhetoric through his education in the Black Social Gospel tradition, beginning at Morehouse College, and its relevant lessons for ethical action in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Dr. McCorn overcame very challenging circumstances as a product of a single-parent household in the housing projects of Worcester. He experienced housing insecurity for most of his teenage years. Despite

his situation, he graduated as president of his high school class. He is the subject of a documentary titled, “No House to Morehouse,” chronicling his journey from homelessness to Morehouse College and the college presidency. A student leader at Morehouse College, Dr. McCorn was the president of his freshman class and a Martin Luther King International Chapel Assistant. He was one of the first recipients of the Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship at Morehouse. He was initiated as a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Alpha Rho Chapter. He served as a congressional intern to John Lewis. He had a 31-year career as a Pastor and community activist, beginning in his junior year at Morehouse, having led churches in Summerville, Menlo, and Winder, Georgia while a student. McCorn is a retired ordained elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and a former pastor of churches in Boston, New Haven, Connecticut, Chicago, Atlanta, and Baltimore. Prior to his appointment to Clinton College, he was the Senior Pastor of the historic, 1500-member Pennsylvania Avenue AME Zion Church of Baltimore. He is the author of *“Standing on Holy Common Ground: An Africentric Ministry Approach to Prophetic Community Engagement”* (MMGI Press: Chicago).

Dr. McCorn is an inductee of the Morehouse College Martin Luther King Jr. Board of Preachers and Collegium of Scholars. He is a former Fellow of the Next Generation Leadership Program of the Rockefeller Foundation, Leadership Greater Chicago, and the Harvard University New Presidents Program. He served as the Vice President of the New Haven Board of Education in New Haven, CT. He is also the former board chair of Habitat for Humanity of York County in South Carolina. He currently serves on the Boards of the Augusta Metro Chamber of Commerce, Augusta Downtown Development Authority, and Accelerate Augusta. Dr. McCorn received the President’s Lifetime Achievement Award from President Joe Biden in 2024.

Dr. McCorn is a proud Life Member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. He is married to Mrs. [Charlene M. McCorn](#), a former elementary school teacher. They are proud parents of four adult children and six grandchildren.