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**UF's Bob Graham Center to honor education, historic preservation philanthropist Allen Lastinger; higher education expert, CRC Commissioner Nicole Washington**

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Friends and supporters of the University of Florida's Bob Graham Center for Public Service will gather in Orlando, Florida, at the Rosen Shingle Creek hotel on May 10 to honor two extraordinary citizens who have worked to make Florida a better place to live and work. The Citizen of the Year and Young Floridian awards highlight individuals who contributed to the state in a civic capacity above the requirements of professional duty.

Allen Lastinger, this year's Citizen of the Year award recipient, has been active in civic-minded endeavors throughout his life. After 27 years of service to Barnett Bank, where he advanced to the role of president and CEO, Lastinger retired with the hope of directing his time and talents to making a tangible difference in the world. He applied his visionary leadership to service and volunteerism in the realm of education and historic preservation.

As UF alumni, Lastinger and wife, Delores, donated \$2 million to the College of Education – the largest gift in the college's history – to create the Lastinger Center for Learning. Since its inception, The Lastinger Center has created a burgeoning network of under-resourced schools

that are working to improve student achievement, teacher practice, principal leadership and parental engagement. The center's innovations, such as Algebra Nation and Early Learning Florida, are providing high quality training to educators in virtually every community in the state.

Lastinger has also immersed himself in the preservation of historic properties in St. Augustine. As chair of the University of Florida Historic St. Augustine, Inc. (UFHSA), Lastinger has worked to ensure the long-term preservation of the "old city." Under his leadership, the organization has completed more than \$25 million in repairs and restorations to the historic properties in St. Augustine, refreshed its living history museum and assisted in improving the city's visitor experiences through authentic interpretations of history.

The Young Floridian award recipient, T. Nicole Washington, is an emerging leader in higher education policy. With more than 10 years of experience teaching, performing educational research and advocating for evidence-based educational policies, Washington exemplifies the best of Florida's next generation of leadership.

As the state policy consultant for the Lumina Foundation, she plays a key role in developing the foundation's Florida strategy and determining its investments. By collaborating with organizations such as the Institute on Higher Education Policy, Education Commission on the States and Jobs for the Future, Washington works to expand student access and improve student success in higher education.

She has served as the associate director of governmental relations for the State University System Board of Governors and as the budget director for education in the Governor's Office of Policy and Budget.

Washington currently serves as the vice chair of the education committee on the Florida Constitution Revision Commission and is a board member for Florida A&M University, Leadership Florida Connect, the LeRoy Collins Institute and the Veterans Trust. She is also a Miami Fellow. Washington has volunteered her time to a number of community organizations including Chapman Partnership, Miami Children's Museum and the Lotus House. She has also worked as a Women of Tomorrow mentor.

Washington earned her undergraduate degree from Princeton University and her master's degree in comparative education from Teachers College, Columbia University.

Tickets for the awards banquet can be purchased for \$200 on the Bob Graham Center website at [bobgrahamcenter.ufl.edu](http://bobgrahamcenter.ufl.edu) or by calling 352-846-1575. Price includes a pre-event cocktail reception and dinner. Former Florida Gov. and U.S. Sen. Bob Graham will present the awards. Special guest Dick Batchelor, former member of the Florida House of Representatives and president of Dick Batchelor Management Group, Inc., will serve as the emcee for the ceremony.

Sponsorship packages are also available. Proceeds from the fundraising event will support the students and programs at the Bob Graham Center for Public Service at the University of Florida.