FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The Lee Adrion Company Breaks Ground on First-of-Its-Kind HBCU Student Housing Development Near Jackson State University

Fueled by a $3 Million Investment from Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., The Lee Adrion Company Launches a Replicable Model for HBCU Student Housing Nationwide

JACKSON, MS — The Lee Adrion Company, a Los Angeles-based multidisciplinary real estate firm operating at the nexus of strategic acquisitions, value-add investment, and property management, will break ground this Sunday, July 26, 2026 on the rehabilitation and development of 14 duplex structures adjacent to Jackson State University (JSU) in Jackson, Mississippi. Located at 1110 Prose Avenue and 1218–1222 W. Silas Brown Street — directly across from the JSU practice football field — the development will deliver modern, energy-efficient housing for 112 students, steps from one of the nation's most celebrated HBCUs.

The project represents the company's first HBCU student housing development and the first of its kind in the region, with an explicit vision to replicate the model at institutions across the country.

The Jackson Planning Board voted unanimously 8–0 to approve the required rezoning on March 25, 2026 (Case No. 4323), with the Jackson City Council granting final approval on May 18, 2026. Student occupancy is targeted for Spring 2027.

A Historic Investment from Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

The Jackson State development is being built by The Lee Adrion Company in strategic partnership with Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., which committed $3 million to the project. The investment is one of the most significant financial commitments by a Divine Nine organization to HBCU student housing infrastructure in recent memory. Sean McCaskill, Executive Director of Alpha Phi Alpha, has been an integral partner from the earliest stages of the initiative.

"Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.'s commitment to The Lee Adrion Company and Historically Black Colleges and Universities reflects our enduring conviction that education is the cornerstone of Black advancement and the most powerful instrument for creating lasting change," said Sean McCaskill, Executive Director, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

“Together, we are investing in institutions that have shaped generations of leaders, expanded opportunity, and served as pillars of innovation, excellence, and community progress. This commitment honors our legacy while empowering future generations to lead, serve, and excel.”

The Lee Adrion Company views this partnership as a blueprint. The company hopes to replicate the model in collaboration with other Divine Nine organizations, creating a coordinated, community-driven approach to solving one of Black higher education’s most persistent challenges.

Addressing a Decades-Long Crisis

Over 95% of the nation’s 107 active HBCUs face a student housing crisis that has persisted for decades. These institutions have been systematically underfunded and overlooked by institutional capital compared to predominantly white institutions, a disparity that has direct consequences for enrollment, retention, and student success. Today’s students, particularly Gen Z, expect housing quality comparable to that offered at PWIs. When HBCUs cannot deliver, enrollment decisions are affected.

The Lee Adrion Company was founded, in part, to confront this gap head-on, using the tools of private real estate investment to deliver what philanthropy and institutional funding have not.

Alongside The Lee Adrion Company’s development work, because WE should (bWs) — an affiliated 501(c)(3) nonprofit — serves as the mission-driven partner dedicated to enriching and enhancing the lives of HBCU students. Where Lee Adrion builds and provides the infrastructure, bWs is solely focused on its mission to support students through housing, transportation, and tailored campus-life programs.

“Together with The Lee Adrion Company, we are creating more than housing,” said AnGèle Cade, Executive Director, because WE should. “We are building communities where HBCU students have the opportunity to succeed, belong, and lead.”

Led by Those Who Lived It

The JSU development is led by Erin Earls, Chief Strategy Officer at The Lee Adrion Company, alongside company founders Dennis Earls, CEO, and Mikáel Pyles, Co-Founder and Chief Operations Officer. All three are members of Divine Nine organizations. Dennis Earls is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.; Mikáel Pyles is a graduate of Clark Atlanta University and a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.; and Erin Earls is a graduate of Clark Atlanta University and a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Their personal connection to HBCU culture and community is foundational to the company’s approach.

“The housing crisis at HBCUs is not a new problem, rather a neglected one,” said Erin Earls, Chief Strategy Officer at The Lee Adrion Company. “We are building what students

deserve: quality housing that reflects the value of the institutions they chose and the futures they are building. Jackson State is where we start. It will not be where we stop.”

“This project is the proof of concept we have been working toward,” said Dennis Earls, Co-Founder and CEO, The Lee Adrion Company. “When you combine disciplined real estate investment with a genuine commitment to community, you get something that lasts. Jackson State is a historic institution, and these students deserve housing that reflects that. We are proud to be here.”

Community Collaboration and Historic Preservation

The development is situated within the Washington Addition/Gowdy neighborhood, a historically significant community adjacent to the JSU campus. Throughout the approval process, The Lee Adrion Company engaged directly with the Washington Addition/Gowdy Neighborhood Association, whose president, Felicia McClinton, participated in the Planning Board hearing. The company has committed to ongoing collaboration with the association and to respecting the character of the neighborhood throughout the development process.

What’s Next: Prairie View A&M and Beyond

The Lee Adrion Company’s next major HBCU development is already underway. The firm has a 42-acre parcel in escrow adjacent to Prairie View A&M University in Texas. The project is envisioned as a full community destination housing 800–1,000 students, with amenities including retail and restaurants, a sports facility, hotels, and hospitality. Phase 1 environmental studies have been completed and returned clean. Development is targeted to begin in 2027.

“Prairie View A&M represents the next chapter,” said Mikáel Pyles, Co-Founder and Chief Operations Officer, The Lee Adrion Company. “We are developing a full community destination that goes beyond student housing to generate real economic opportunity for the residents of Prairie View. We are in active conversation with Divine Nine organizations about replicating the Alpha Phi Alpha model at every HBCU campus we touch, and the goal is nothing short of transforming what HBCU student life looks like in this country.”

The Lee Adrion Company’s HBCU work is part of a broader national strategy. From its recently announced $13 million rehabilitation of The Willows Apartments in New Orleans East to its growing HBCU development portfolio, the firm is building a track record of high-impact investment in communities that institutional capital has long overlooked.

About The Lee Adrion Company

The Lee Adrion Company is a Los Angeles-based multidisciplinary real estate firm operating at the nexus of strategic acquisitions, value-add investment, and property management. Driven by disciplined operations and long-term ownership, the firm builds and manages high-performing assets that strengthen communities, elevate resident experiences, and generate enduring value across commercial multifamily apartments and collegiate housing.

The company was founded by Dennis Earls and Mikáel Pyles, whose combined decades of experience in real estate investment, brokerage, and operations form the foundation of The Lee Adrion Company's disciplined, community-forward approach. The firm's HBCU Division, led by Erin Earls, Chief Strategy Officer, reflects The Lee Adrion Company's commitment to developing quality student housing at and near Historically Black Colleges and Universities — investing in the ecosystems that serve and sustain the next generation of Black professionals and community leaders. For more information, visit theleeadrioncompany.com.

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