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**Department of Student Housing and Residence Life**

Division of Student Life

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Dear Awards Committee:

I am delighted to write this letter of reference for Vera Jackson who has been nominated for the SEAHO Founder’s Award. I have known Vera for about twenty years and consider her an excellent candidate for this prestigious award.

Vera has been a vital member of the housing profession not only in the state of Mississippi but in the region as well. Her tenure as a housing professional began at Jackson State University, a historically black institution, in the heart of Jackson, Mississippi. Vera’s leadership was instrumental in moving the Jackson State Housing Department from a place recognized as having serious crime issues , to a well maintained, student focused part of the university. She re-vamped the housing organization and brought the realization to the university administration of how important housing is to the success of the university student. As a result, the housing facilities on the Jackson State campus are now considered among the best in the state offering students state of the art accommodations.

Vera has been a strong leader in MAHO, the state association and has provided guidance to housing professionals in the state. On many occasions, Vera has offered the Jackson State campus for MAHO planning meetings as well as the campus where housing directors in the state could meet to discuss critical issues. A number of years ago, Vera organized a meeting between the State student affairs vice presidents and the housing directors to discuss facility issues that affected all our campuses. As a result of this meeting, the VPs took the recommendations made at the meeting to the presidents and chancellors of each institution and a push was made on all campuses to find ways to invest in university housing facilities. To this date, Mississippi State University, University of Southern Mississippi, Jackson State University, Delta State University, and University of Mississippi have all undergone either the building of new facilities, or the renovation of current housing stock. This would not have happened as expeditiously as it did without the leadership and initiative of Vera.

Vera has been very involved in the SEAHO membership and has provided mentorship for many new professionals along the way. She has served in various capacities, not the least of which was as SEAHO president in 2004-05. She was very active in the hosting of SEAHO in 1999 and is currently on the SEAHO 2011 Conference Leadership team.

On a more personal note, Vera is a respected housing professional whose knowledge extends far beyond the Jackson State Campus. She handles challenges with diligence and stamina and she is passionate about what she feels is needed for her profession and her university. Yet through these challenges, her sense of humor does much to give realistic perspective to what’s really important – the students she serves.

It is for these reasons that I enthusiastically support Vera Jackson’s nomination for the SEAHO Founder’s Award.

Sincerely,

Lorinda Krhut

Director