

THE ATLANTA VOICE

Denny's invests \$500,000 in law school to support future lawyers



By Clayton Gutzmore
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Many companies promise commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, but not all honor it. Denny's breakfast restaurant chain matches its words with action by launching Denny's Community Initiative, a five-year commitment to invest 3.3 million dollars into 14 civic and educational organizations.

The first recipient on that list is St Thomas University. Denny's donated \$500,000 to the University's Benjamin L. Crump College of Law.

"We want to give every young person, especially those who traditionally could not

afford legal education, a chance to get their law degree," said Benjamin L Crump, Attorney.

"Those young people checked all the boxes and did everything right, but financial challenges kept them from law school. With Denny's commitment and donation, it is helping Derrick Johnson build the next generation of civil rights leaders and social justice warriors in the lineage of the great NAACP lawyers like Thurgood Marshall and Constance Baker Motley," said Crump.

Denny's held a press conference for the launch of the community initiative on Thursday, May 30, at the Benjamin L. Crump College of Law at St. Thomas University in Miami Gardens, FL.

Denny's is forming a nationwide community alliance to invest in organizations that represent marginalized communities.

Some organizations include the NAACP, the Hispanic Association of Corporate Responsibility (HACR), and the National Urban League. Denny's wants to empower these organizations to launch local initiatives in cities nationwide. An example of these initiatives is using Denny's mobile relief dinner to deliver hot meals to underserved communities. Donating to the Benjamin L. Crump College of Law exemplifies one of the critical pillars for this initiative, cultivating an inclusive leadership pipeline.

"Today is an example of positive corporate behavior. Diversity is a business imperative. Today's consumer looks like America, and America is more diverse than ever," said Derrick Johnson, President of the NAACP.

"We see corporations make commitments only to find that less than 20% of those companies honor those commitments. I commend Denise for standing true to their competitors, not walking away," said Johnson.

St Thomas University named its College of Law after Benjamin Crump in 2023. Enrollment has been up 71 percent since 2018. St. Thomas University expects 300 law students to enter the program in Fall 2024. Denny's 500,000 donation will help students not abandon their dreams of becoming Lawyers.

"Success of this program looks like Dean Navaro

and President Armstrong sitting across the desk from black and brown students and saying, we can help you realize your dream here at St. Thomas University. I've been a lawyer. I don't think there's anything more important than what we can do to make the American Dream real for all Americans," said Crump.

"I applaud Denise for stepping up in this way. Going to Law School is an investment. Many students sometimes worry about whether or not they can pay their rent. They can't work full-time because of the rigor of the training. Having a scholarship program to ensure students can have the ease of existence in law school is crucial. We want them to become the critical thinkers society needs," said Johnson.

The \$500,000 donation is the first action in Denny's Community Initiative. Crump and all the guests at the event expressed how historic the day was. Even though Denny's is the most recent company that donated to the Law school, they do not want to be the last company making this investment.

"To make our first endowment to the Benjamin Crump School of Law is just such an honor. Our workforce and the people we serve are diverse, so we must meet them where they are. I hope others see what we are doing and join us," said Denny's CEO and President Kelli Valade.

The post Denny's invests \$500,000 in law school to support future lawyers appeared first on The Atlanta Voice.