

Ivy Taylor becomes first woman to lead Methodist Rust College

by [Dawn Araujo-Hawkins](#) in the [September 9, 2020](#) issue



(Photo courtesy of Rust College)

This spring, Ivy Taylor became the first woman to lead Rust College, a United Methodist liberal arts school in Holly Springs, Mississippi. The college, where journalist and antilynching activist Ida B. Wells- Barnett matriculated, is one of the oldest historically black colleges in the nation.

Taylor, who previously served as mayor of San Antonio, Texas, became passionate about historically black colleges and universities after she joined the board of trustees at Huston-Tillotson University in Austin. The experience led Taylor to enroll in a higher education doctoral program at the University of Pennsylvania and to write her dissertation on leadership at HBCUs.

She received her degree in August.

“I am thrilled to be part of writing the next chapter for this historic institution,” she said in a statement.

Taylor succeeds David Beckley, who served as college president for 27 years.