

Billy Hawkins, 2016 Hutchins Award Recipient

Drake Group Honors Scholar Author for Exposing Black Athlete Exploitation

The Drake Group, an organization whose mission is to defend academic integrity in higher education, has selected Billy Hawkins, a professor in the Department of Kinesiology at the University of Georgia, to receive the Robert Maynard Hutchins Award. The Hutchins Award is the Drake Groups' highest honor and is given annually to faculty or staff members who take a courageous stand to defend academic integrity at their institutions.

Robert Maynard Hutchins was the President of the University of Chicago from 1921 to 1951. He vigorously defended academic freedom, opposing faculty loyalty oaths in the 1950s. He was a strong supporter of the rights of racial minorities and women.



Dr. Hawkins has worked in education for over twenty years. His research focuses on racial issues in the context of collegiate and professional sports. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Iowa. His previous research and scholarly contributions have addressed the experiences of intercollegiate Black athletes, the media representation of Black males and Black male athletes, and various socio-cultural aspects of sports and physical activity.

For Hutchins, the purpose of education is “to unsettle the minds of the young and to inflame their intellectual interests.” Hawkins’ research and teaching do just that. His award winning book, *The New Plantation*, draws parallels between colonialism, the American slave system, and the structure of the athletic industrial complex, Hawkins makes a powerful case that the predominantly white universities give far greater priority to exploiting the bodies of black male athletes than to developing their minds.

Hawkins further unsettles minds by calling for collective accountability from the communities that bear the burden of nurturing athletic talent as well as from the institutions that benefit from it. The Drake Group is honoring Dr. Hawkins for his scholarship and advocacy for social justice. The award ceremony will be held at a luncheon on April 21, 2016 at the Downtown Marriot Hotel in Columbia, South Carolina.