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Press Release

38 STUDENTS RECEIVE PRESTIGIOUS UNCF/MERCK SCIENCE INITIATIVE AWARD

Partnership Closes STEM Discipline Gap Amongst Minorities

FAIRFAX, Va. (June 24, 2008) –UNCF—the United Negro College Fund—the nation’s oldest and most successful minority higher education assistance organization, and the global research-based pharmaceutical company Merck & Co., Inc., announced yesterday awards of scholarships and fellowships to 38 African-American student recipients of the UNCF/Merck Science Initiative award, during the 2008 UNCF/Merck Fellows Day.

Targeting students pursuing careers in biomedical research at the undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral levels, the science initiative was first announced in 1995 with a 10-year \$20 million grant from Merck to UNCF. Supported by the Merck Institute for Science Education and Merck Research Laboratories, in 2006, the UNCF/Merck Science Initiative program was renewed to provide more than \$13 million in scholarship grants over five years through 2010.

Each year, the initiative has provided scholarships and fellowships to promising science students, enhancing their potential with financial support, hands-on training, close mentoring relationships and institutional support. To date, 479 scholarships and fellowships have been awarded to promising African-American students through a competitive application process that selects candidates based on their academic achievements and their potential in the field of biomedical research. Fellows have gone on to pursue careers in a wide range of disciplines, from biochemistry and microbiology to pharmacology, neuroscience, biophysics, chemistry and bioengineering.

“Merck’s commitment to building a pipeline of minority students in the biosciences that extends all the way from undergraduate school through post-doctoral programs demonstrates its leadership and its understanding of the importance of preparing this nation to be able to compete in the global economy,” said Michael L. Lomax, Ph.D., UNCF president and CEO. “Merck’s investment in the future of science and education will enable these students to become the research scientists, professors, and teachers of tomorrow.”

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The disparity in the representation of minorities, as well as women, is becoming an increasing challenge for the biosciences and other science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines given the demographic changes occurring in society. African Americans, American Indians, and Latinos constitute 30 percent of the nation's undergraduate students, a proportion that is expected to grow to 32 percent in 2010 and 38 percent by 2025. During the past 10 years, African Americans have made up only three percent of the Ph.D.s in biological/biomedical sciences and chemistry. During the same time period, more than 14 percent of Ph.D.s in all life sciences and physical sciences have a bachelors degree from one of UNCF's 39 member Institutions, which represent private historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

"Merck is committed to promoting the development and training of future leaders in science and biomedical research, particularly among under-represented groups. This is vital not only to Merck as a company driven by scientific innovation, but also to enhancing economic competitiveness in the United States," said Richard T. Clark, Chairman, President and CEO, Merck & Co., Inc.

The 2008 UNCF/Merck Fellows will receive awards ranging from \$25,000 to \$85,000 each. Chosen for their academic achievements and potential in the field of biomedical research, award recipients were selected from a highly competitive pool of applicants from across the nation. In addition, alumni fellows from 1996-2007 organized a group, the Association of UNCF/Merck Fellows, to facilitate continued professional growth. This network allows former Fellows to collaborate in academia, government and the private sector by leveraging the collective wealth of knowledge and experience they share in varying scientific, technical and biomedical backgrounds.

"The UNCF/Merck Science Initiative program is a unique scientific resource, the national leader in funding and training minority scientists," said Milton Brown, MD, Ph.D., an Endowed Chair at Georgetown University Medical Center and a former graduate of UNCF member institution Oakwood University. "As a UNCF/Merck Fellow, I received tremendous support for my post-doctoral training, which enabled me to build a research platform so I could develop my research ideas independently and not only develop my career through joint publications and academic development grants with Merck, but make a real difference in people's lives."

The UNCF/Merck Science Initiative scholarships, fellowships, internships and institutional support target students at three levels including undergraduate students entering their final matriculation year, graduate students in their final two-to-three years of dissertation research, and postdoctoral fellows continuing their training at academic or nonacademic research institutions. African-American students at all four-year colleges and universities in the United States are eligible to apply for the scholarship. The awards include scholarships or fellowships to the Fellows and funding is also offered to their respective science departments. Undergraduate Fellows receive summer research internships at Merck Research Laboratories and each Fellow is paired with a mentor who provides valuable research assistance, guidance and support. This is the 13th Annual Fellows Day Celebration of the UNCF /Merck Science Initiative.

About UNCF

UNCF—the United Negro College Fund—is the nation's oldest and most successful minority education assistance organization. Its mission is to increase minority degree attainment by providing financial support to its 39 member institutions, reducing financial barriers to college and serving as a national advocate for minority education. UNCF institutions and other historically black colleges and universities are highly effective, awarding 18 percent of African American baccalaureate degrees. UNCF administers more than 400 programs, including scholarship, internship and fellowship, mentoring, summer enrichment, and curriculum and faculty development programs. Today, UNCF supports more than 60,000 students at over 900 colleges and universities across the country. UNCF's recently redesigned logo and brand identity feature UNCF's torch of leadership in education and its widely recognized motto, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste."[®] Learn more at www.uncf.org.

About Merck

Merck & Co., Inc. is a global research-driven pharmaceutical company dedicated to putting patients first. Established in 1891, Merck discovers, develops, manufactures and markets vaccines and medicines to address unmet medical needs. The company is widely recognized for its extensive efforts to increase access to medicines through far-reaching programs that not only donate Merck medicines but help deliver them to the people who need them. Merck also publishes unbiased health information as a not-for-profit service. For more information, visit www.merck.com.

About Merck Institute for Science Education

The Merck Institute for Science Education (MISE) is a non-profit organization established by Merck & Co., Inc. in 1993 to improve science education in public schools and raise the levels of science performance for students from kindergarten through 12th grade. Now expanded to include college and graduate-level education, MISE works to build capacity in the biomedical sciences through partnerships with education institutions. For more information, visit www.mise.org.

2008 UNCF/MERCK SCIENCE INITIATIVE FELLOWS

Undergraduate Science Research Scholarship Awards (up to \$25,000 each)

- ◆ **Jonathan Ashby**, Trinity College, Hartford Connecticut (Wethersfield, CT)
- ◆ **John Awowale**, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (La Crosse, WI)
- ◆ **Tiffany Brown**, Chicago State University (Chicago, IL)
- ◆ **Tiffany Buchanan**, North Carolina Central University (Durham, NC)
- ◆ **Whitney Fields**, University of Maryland Baltimore County (Baltimore, MD)
- ◆ **Lateira Haynes**, Spelman College (Atlanta, GA)
- ◆ **Tamika John**, University of Maryland Baltimore County (Baltimore, MD)
- ◆ **Christina Jones**, Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge (Baton Rouge, LA)
- ◆ **Ryan Lang**, Oakwood College (Huntsville, AL)
- ◆ **Eual Phillips**, Grambling State University (Grambling, LA)
- ◆ **Jonathan Saffold**, Creighton University (Omaha, NE)
- ◆ **Diana Spell**, Spelman College (Atlanta, GA)
- ◆ **Cierra Spencer**, University of Alabama, Birmingham (Birmingham, AL)
- ◆ **Tesia Stephenson**, University of Maryland Baltimore County (Baltimore, MD)
- ◆ **Kandis Stubblefield**, Howard University (Washington, DC)
- ◆ **Kristina Williams**, Spelman College (Atlanta, GA)

Graduate Science Research Dissertation Fellowships (up to \$52,000 each)

- ◆ **Dare Ajibade**, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (Newark, NJ)
- ◆ **Charlene Blake**, Duke University (Durham, NC)
- ◆ **Jacinta Cooper**, University of Colorado Denver, Anschutz Medical Campus (Aurora, CO)
- ◆ **Neville Forlemu**, University of North Dakota (Grand Forks, ND)
- ◆ **Marjorie Letitia Hubbard**, Duke University (Durham, NC)
- ◆ **Gerri Hutson**, University of Chicago (Chicago, IL)
- ◆ **C. Brandon Ogbunugafor**, Yale School of Medicine (New Haven, CT)
- ◆ **Mobolaji Olurinde**, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Cambridge, MA)
- ◆ **Ekama Onofiok**, University of California, Davis (Sacramento, CA)
- ◆ **Kareen Riviere**, University of California, San Francisco (San Francisco, CA)
- ◆ **Shamayra Smail**, The Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore, MD)
- ◆ **Steven Townsend**, Vanderbilt University (Nashville, TN)

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Postdoctoral Science research Fellows (up to \$85,000 each)

- ◆ **Melinda Baker, Ph.D.**, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (Newark, NJ)
- ◆ **Kafui Dzirasa, Ph.D.**, Duke University (Durham, NC)
- ◆ **Damien Fair, Ph.D.**, Washington University in St. Louis (St. Louis, MO)
- ◆ **Princess Imoukhuede, Ph.D.**, The Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore, MD)
- ◆ **Zayd Khaliq, Ph.D.**, Harvard University (Boston, MA)
- ◆ **Chiatogu Onyewu, M.D., Ph.D.**, George Washington University (Washington, DC)
- ◆ **Alicia Reid, Ph.D.**, Weill Cornell Medical College (New York, NY)
- ◆ **Montrell Seay, Ph.D.**, Yale University (New Haven, CT)
- ◆ **Rena Sowell, Ph.D.**, University of Kentucky (Lexington, KY)
- ◆ **Urbain Tchoua, Ph.D.**, Baylor College of Medicine (Houston, TX)

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