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UNCF CONGRATULATES CLASS OF 2015 GATES MILLENIUM SCHOLARS *Program Announces 1,000 Scholarship Recipients*

WASHINGTON (May 1, 2015) – UNCF’s (United Negro College Fund) flagship scholarship program, the Gates Millennium Scholars (GMS) Program, has announced its Class of 2015 high school student recipients. Each of the 1,000 students will be awarded a scholarship that can be used to pursue a degree in any undergraduate major and selected graduate programs at accredited colleges or universities.

"We are constantly reminded that young people will need a quality education to remain competitive in the 21st century. For the 20,000 young men and women who will attend college as Gates Millennium Scholars, the financial support, leadership training, mentoring and academic and social support they receive will enable them to become college graduates and our next generation of leaders," said Michael L. Lomax, Ph.D., president and CEO, UNCF. "Through their generous funding and program support, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation amplifies the importance of investing in the next generation of extraordinary scholars to support our country’s economic strength and competitiveness."

Established in 1999 with the goal of developing *Leaders for America’s Future™*, the GMS program is funded by a \$1.6 billion grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The GMS program removes the financial barriers to education for high-performing, low-income students. Each year it enables 5,000 students to attend and graduate from 800 of the most selective private and public schools in the country, including Ivy League colleges, flagship state universities, UNCF member institutions and other minority-serving institutions.

"We are excited to welcome the class of 2015 Gates Millennium Scholars," said Larry Griffith, Senior Vice President, Programs and Student Services for UNCF. "Their GMS program peers have already demonstrated that students from these backgrounds are rich in talent and that they excel at the highest levels in any of the nation’s colleges and universities they choose to attend. I am confident that this cohort of extraordinary students will add to the depth and breadth of the GMS program."

The GMS program provides recipients with leadership development opportunities, mentoring, academic and social support as well as financial support. The program is known for its recipients’ high graduation rates – a six-year rate of more than 87 percent (28 percent higher than the national graduation rates for all students and comparable to the rate for students from high-income families). This year’s cohort represents 47 states, the District of Columbia and seven U.S. territories and American Territories.

UNCF has partnered with the American Indian Graduate Center Scholars (AIGCS), the Hispanic Scholarship Fund (HSF) and the Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund (APIASF) to select and provide service to Gates Millennium Scholars.

About GMS

The Gates Millennium Scholars (GMS) Program, funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, was established in 1999 to provide outstanding low income African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian Pacific Islander American, and Hispanic American students with an opportunity to complete an undergraduate college education in any discipline they choose. Continuing Gates Scholars may request funding for a graduate degree program in one of the following discipline areas: computer science, education, engineering, library science, mathematics, public health or science. The goal of GMS is to promote academic excellence by providing thousands of outstanding students, who have significant financial need, the opportunity to reach their full potential.

About UNCF

UNCF (United Negro College Fund) is the nation's largest and most effective minority education organization. To serve youth, the community and the nation, UNCF supports students' education and development through scholarships and other programs, strengthens its 37 member colleges and universities, and advocates for the importance of minority education and college readiness. UNCF institutions and other historically black colleges and universities are highly effective, awarding 20 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. Its logo features the UNCF torch of leadership in education and its widely recognized motto, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste.®" Learn more at UNCF.org.