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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THE GATES MILLENNIUM SCHOLARS PROGRAM-A PROGRAM OF UNCF -ANNOUNCES
1,000 NEW SCHOLARS FOR THE CLASS OF 2011**

FAIRFAX, VA (May 3, 2011) – UNCF (the United Negro College Fund) today announced that the nation’s largest scholarship program, the Gates Millennium Scholars (GMS) Program, has awarded good-through-graduation college scholarships to this year’s cohort of 1,000 students. The scholarships can be used to pursue degrees in any undergraduate major at the accredited college or university of the recipients’ choice. The Class of 2011 Gates Millennium Scholars represents 44 states, the District of Columbia and five U.S. territories: American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and will be attending 334 colleges and universities.

Established in 1999 with the goal of developing the next generation of America’s leaders, UNCF’s Gates Millennium Scholars Program is funded by a \$1.6 billion grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. To date, over 15,000 students have received GMS scholarships, attending more than 1,500 schools, including Ivy League colleges, flagship state universities, and Minority Serving Institutions including UNCF member Historically Black Colleges (HBCUs).

The Gates Millennium Scholars Program provides recipients with leadership training, mentoring, and academic and social support as well as financial support. The Program is known for its recipients' high graduation rates--a six-year rate of 90 percent (45 percent higher than the national graduation rates for all students) and comparable to the rates for students from high-income families.

“I didn’t know how I was going to pay for college and felt like I was at a dead end”, said Andre Williams, a 2011 Gates Millennium Scholar recipient from Anacostia Senior High School in Washington, DC. “As a Gates Millennium Scholar I will be able to achieve my dream of earning a Ph.D. in computer science”.

“Gates Millennium Scholars' success proves that given the financial, academic and social support that other students take for granted, low-income minority students can not only succeed in college, but excel,” said Michael L. Lomax, Ph.D., UNCF President and CEO. “For these students, the Gates Millennium Scholarship is a pathway to a college degree and the opportunities that come with it. And for the country, it is a blueprint for how we can produce the college graduates the U.S. needs to remain competitive in the global economy.”

UNCF’s management of the Gates Millennium Scholars Program is a partnership with the American Indian Graduate Center Scholars (AIGCS), the Hispanic Scholarship Fund (HSF) and the Asian & Pacific Islander

American Scholarship Fund (APIASF) to serve Gates Millennium Scholars in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

“Education has always been the best pathway to opportunity, and we believe that college costs should not be an obstacle along that path,” said Jim Larimore the deputy director for student success at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. “That’s why scholarships like the Gates Millennium Scholars Program and others are so important because they provide students who have the will to get a postsecondary education with a way to get one.”

For more information about GMS and a list of the Class of 2011 Gates Millennium Scholars, visit www.gmsp.org.

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—the 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 39 member colleges and universities, and advocates for the importance of minority education. UNCF institutions and other historically black colleges and universities are highly effective, awarding 21 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 www.UNCF.org.