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**NATIONAL SOCIETY OF BLACK ENGINEERS HONORS UNCF/MERCK SCIENCE
INITIATIVE WITH GOLDEN TORCH AWARD**

WHITEHOUSE STATION, NJ, MAY 20, 2008 -- The UNCF/Merck Science Initiative was recently honored by the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) with the 2008 Golden Torch Award for Corporate/Education Partnership at the NSBE Annual National Convention in Orlando, Florida. The Corporate/Education Partnership award is given to a joint program between a corporation and an educational institution or program dedicated to improving African-American access to quality education, employment and technology.

The UNCF/Merck Science Initiative is a ground-breaking program established in 1996 to support the training and development of African-American scientists in the United States. "Merck's continued support for this initiative makes it a national leader in an area of critical importance to the nation's education system and the economy," said Michael L. Lomax, PhD, UNCF—the United Negro College Fund president and CEO. "We are grateful to Merck for its leadership, and for investing in UNCF, the program's over 400 recipients and the future of American science and education."

The UNCF/Merck Science Initiative provides financial support through scholarships and fellowships awarded at the undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral levels to outstanding African-American students pursuing studies in the biomedical sciences. Undergraduate scholars also receive paid internships for two summers at the Merck Research Laboratories, where Merck scientists volunteer to mentor scholars and fellows. Mentoring is a key program component and provides opportunities for enhancing research, career development and networking skills.

The UNCF/Merck Science Initiative is an example of how Merck's commitment to building capacity in the biomedical sciences is aligned with its core business. "Merck launched the

UNCF/Merck Science Initiative as a result of our strong belief in fostering diversity in the workplace and in promoting the development and training of future leaders in science and biomedical research. Scientific discovery and innovation are at the very heart of what Merck does," said Carlo Parravano, PhD, Executive Director, Merck Institute for Science Education.

Merck has contributed more than \$36 million to the Science Initiative. To date, more than 400 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 and bioengineering.

The UNCF/Merck Initiative is an integral component of the mission of the Merck Institute for Science Education (MISE). Founded to improve science education and raise the levels of science performance for students from kindergarten through 12th grade, MISE has been expanded to include college and graduate-level education. MISE works to build capacity in the biomedical sciences through partnerships with educational institutions. It is funded through a 15-year, \$35 million commitment from The Merck Company Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Merck & Co., Inc. For more information, visit www.mise.org.

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.

For more information on the UNCF/Merck Science Initiative, visit www.uncf.org.