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**NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP CORPORATION AND UNCF  
ESTABLISH NEW COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

*UNCF Achievement Capstone Program  
sponsored by the National Achievement® Scholarship Program*

**(EVANSTON, IL/WASHINGTON, D.C.) September 17, 2015** - Today, National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) and UNCF (United Negro College Fund) announced the establishment of the UNCF Achievement Capstone Program. The new program, which will be administered by UNCF and underwritten by NMSC with funds from the National Achievement® Scholarship Program, will honor and grant financial assistance to high-achieving, underrepresented college graduates at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs) in the United States. The National Achievement Scholarship Program has recognized and honored academically talented Black American high school students for 51 years. The final group of high school students to be recognized in the program entered college in 2015. UNCF will carry on the National Achievement Scholarship Program's name and legacy through the newly-designed UNCF Achievement Capstone Program, launching in the spring of 2016.

UNCF Achievement Capstone Scholars will be nominated by their college or university presidents, chancellors, and deans based on outstanding academic performance, character, and demonstrated leadership honoring the legacy of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Awardees may use the scholarship to pay off outstanding undergraduate educational costs at their current institutions, or to finance additional degrees, professional certifications, and continuing education programs.

“UNCF is honored to carry on the name and legacy of a prestigious program which began at a time in our nation where earning a college degree was a social and financial challenge for many African Americans,” said Dr. Michael L. Lomax, UNCF President and CEO. “We are humbled to take on the mantle of the UNCF Achievement Capstone Program, which not only allows UNCF to help students make it to and through college, but now also helps them after they have earned a college degree.”

The National Achievement Scholarship Program is a privately-financed academic competition established in 1964 specifically to provide recognition and college scholarships for Black American high school students. The program has been conducted by NMSC, a privately-financed, not-for-profit organization that operates without government assistance,

and also conducts the National Merit® Scholarship Program. The two programs have been conducted simultaneously, but administered and funded separately.

NMSC is proud to partner with UNCF, the nation's largest and most effective minority education organization, to establish the UNCF Achievement Capstone Program. For more than 70 years, UNCF has worked to get students to and through college, and awards more than \$100 million in scholarships annually. This program will further expand UNCF's reach to African-American students across the country who will benefit from the honor, recognition, and financial assistance accompanying these awards.

In the half century since the National Achievement Scholarship Program was created, more than four million Black Americans have entered the program, and approximately 228,000 have received program recognition. Of those honored, more than 34,000 of the most outstanding participants were chosen to receive Achievement Scholarship® awards worth about \$108 million. Currently, about 3,200 of these young men and women are undergraduates at 300 colleges and universities across the nation.

Since the National Achievement Scholarship Program's funds will be redirected to provide awards for college graduates, Black American high school students will no longer have the opportunity to enter the National Achievement Scholarship Program. However, they can still compete for awards when they enter the National Merit Scholarship Program, and they may be eligible to receive awards from UNCF under this new program once they graduate from college.

"The history and accomplishments of the National Achievement Scholarship Program are great, and NMSC is proud of the program's 51 successful years," said Mr. Timothy E. McGuire, NMSC President and CEO. "Through its partnership with UNCF, NMSC looks forward to the new direction of the National Achievement Scholarship Program and its funding of awards for high-achieving, underrepresented college graduates in the newly-created UNCF Achievement Capstone Program."

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## National Merit Scholarship Corporation

Honoring the academically talented students of the United States

### About NMSC

National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC), a private, not-for-profit organization that operates without government assistance, was founded in 1955 specifically to conduct the National Merit® Scholarship Program to recognize and honor the academically talented students of the United States. The majority of scholarships offered each year are underwritten by approximately 440 independent corporate and college sponsors, including NMSC, that share the Corporation's goals of honoring scholastically talented youth and encouraging academic excellence at all levels of education. The National Achievement® Scholarship Program was established by NMSC in 1964, contemporaneously with the passage of the Civil Rights Act, specifically to recognize and honor academically talented Black American high school students and to encourage their pursuit of higher education.



### 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 nearly 20 percent of African American baccalaureate degrees. UNCF awards more than \$100 million in scholarships annually and 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 more than 1,100 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, but a wonderful thing to invest in."®