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*****MEDIA RELEASE*****

Chamber presents diversity awards to Durham businesses and individuals

DURHAM, NC – The Multicultural Business & Professional Network of the Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce held its fourth annual Circle of Influence Diversity Awards this morning at the Millennium Hotel Durham and recognized individuals and businesses for their commitment to diversity in the workplace and community. Dr. Chuck Davis of the African American Dance Ensemble served as keynote speaker. Sharon Tazewell of NBC 17 served as emcee for the breakfast event. Nearly 200 people attended the awards program.

Guests were thoroughly entertained and enriched by Dr. Davis' comments. He involved all attendees in the program by inviting them to sing and dance – showing the harmony and union of the community.

William A. Downey, Carolina Theatre, Inc. and Skanska USA Building Inc. were all presented with Circle of Influence Diversity Awards for their efforts in promoting diversity in various aspects of their business and community involvement and activity. Long time Durham volunteer Sarah Woodard received the Duke Energy Citizenship & Service Award for her leadership and community service.

The Circle of Influence Diversity Awards are designed to recognize and reward a large company, a small company and an individual who, through their supplier hiring practices, diversity programs and individual efforts, clearly demonstrate their commitment to proactively pursuing further growth and development of minority and women-owned businesses and the spirit of diversity. These awards reflect the mission of the Multicultural Business/Professional Network, which brings together business and professional leaders from all cultural backgrounds in an effort to further enhance commerce and trade among these groups.

About the Winners:

Individual Category

William A. Downey, Sr. – President and CEO of L.A. Downey & Son, Inc. Helps to promote unity and understanding in the community through work with Durham Public Schools for 30+ years; encourages career and technical education, and applied learning as a means toward better retention rates, higher GPA's and higher self esteem for all students; was a charter member of the Durham Careers in Construction group and is currently co-chair on its advisory committee to the newly formed Southern High School Construction Academy; is a member of the Durham Workforce Development Board and

serves on its Youth Council; served as President of the Durham YMCA, received the Knight Outstanding Community Service Award, as well as three other local YMCA service awards.

Small Business Category

Carolina Theatre of Durham, Inc. – A performing arts center and cinema whose programs celebrate the rich diversity, help set a benchmark in the community for arts and entertainment, and continue magnetizing crowds to downtown Durham; provides vibrant, thought-provoking programs in the historic treasure, The Carolina Theatre; board members are selected based on experience and talents they bring to the challenges facing the organization and on mirroring the diversity of the community they serve; currently 29 percent of board members are minority, 38 percent of whom are women; the full time staff is comprised of 42 percent minority and 47 percent women; instituted a new performing arts series title: *Pathways to Understanding* in the 2006-07 season which allows arts and culture to play stronger roles in building bridges toward acceptance of diversity; produced the Gay and Lesbian Film Festival in 2006, celebrating its twelfth (12th) anniversary.

Large Business Category

Skanska USA Building Inc. – A wholly-owned subsidiary of Skanska AB, a global construction company. In 2006, Skanska's Carolinas/Virginia operations awarded \$85 million in contracts for construction project related goods and services to approximately 76 minority and women-owned businesses; it has implemented a newsletter which is published in both English and Spanish; committed to diversity with the formation of a Diversity Council/Steering Committee geared toward human relations; actively recruits employees from N.C. A&T State University, a historically black college in North Carolina; an active member of the National Minority Supplier Development Council, Inc.; Skanska's message to staff, clients, subcontractors, visitors and the like is that "at Skanska, we believe...a world of diversity creates a culture of inclusion."

Duke Energy Citizenship & Service

Sarah Woodard – volunteers because she cares about the world and the people in it. 2007 marks Sarah's 14th year as a patient/family volunteer and mentor/trainer with Duke (Triangle) Hospice; she successfully communicates and advocates for the patients and their families' needs through work with Duke Hospice; her volunteerism goes beyond Durham as she helps organize and execute the Asthma Walk, assists with the Teddy Bear Ball, and served as a docent for Duke Gardens; Sarah is a member of the Junior League of Durham/Orange Counties and currently serves as the North Carolina State Delegate for Public Affairs; this year, Sarah worked with the Neighborhood College, serving on the human relations panel on leadership for the city and as a board member for the Sister Cities League; on her lunch break, she volunteers for the Heart Center and offers communion to patients at Duke; Sarah believes in doing good for the community and she provides leadership that sets a standard for citizenship, service and community responsibility.