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

Chamber presents Circle of Success awards to Durham businesses and individuals

DURHAM, NC – The Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce held its Circle of Success Awards this afternoon at the Sheraton Imperial Hotel & Convention Center and recognized individuals and businesses for their commitment to diversity in the workplace and community. The Chamber also presented the Duke Energy Citizenship & Service Award and the Professional Women’s Network Inspiration Award. Byron Pitts, CBS chief national correspondent and 60 Minutes served as keynote speaker. Debra Morgan of WRAL served as emcee for the luncheon event. More than 200 people attended the sold out awards program.

Donna Sylver, Latino Community Credit Union and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina 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 and community activist Stephen Hancock received the Duke Energy Citizenship & Service Award for his leadership and community service. Dr. Sharon Elliott-Bynum received the PWN Inspiration Award.

The Circle of Success 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.

About the Winners:

Individual Category

Donna Sylver, CPA, MBA – Senior Managing Member of Sylver CPA, PLLC. She has been active in a number of organizations that work to improve the quality of life for all Durham residents such as the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness in Durham, St. Joseph’s Historic Foundation, the Parrish Street Advocacy Group and My Sister’s House – a domestic violence shelter. Professionally, she travels the country to speak to a number of organizations about financial responsibility and is participating in the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants’ 360 Degrees of financial literacy program that teaches basic financial tools to children and adults. Named one of the 25 Most Powerful Women in Banking by U.S. Banker in 2005, her 25 years of financial services experience recently led her to launch her own business – a CPA firm.



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Small Business Category

Latino Community Credit Union (LCCU) is the only bilingual, multicultural financial institution in North Carolina. The organization was created in 2000 to provide a safe environment for the Latino community to secure their hard-earned money and offers a number of resources to its members and the community promoting financial literacy. Since its inception, the organization has grown to seven locations state-wide and more than 50,000 members. With 52 employees representing 14 countries, they truly embody a diverse workforce. Their downtown Durham office is adorned with flags of several countries – a visual of its commitment to diversity. They also utilize the services of minority and women owned businesses for services such as graphic design, catering and video production, continuing to build upon its pledge to diversity. They not only help start small businesses, through affordable, low interest loans, but help families of North Carolina realize the dream of becoming home owners. As of December 2008, they had zero percent delinquency on mortgage loans.

Large Business Category

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC) has been a provider of health care products and services in North Carolina for 76 years. The company believes diversity is the key to employee health and business success. Its mission – One culture, all-inclusive, where diversity contributes to the success of the company and the continued health of the community – has encouraged the company and its employees to take a broad approach looking beyond race and including work style, regional background, career, family and social and economic status. Supplier Diversity is a big part of the company's procurement process. In 2007, they established a diversity office to continuously enhance inclusiveness and leverage diversity in the workplace as well as in daily business practices. Over the past two years, they have increased the number of minority and women owned businesses they do business with by 50 percent. In the community, they are active with organization such as El Pueblo Inc., NC Pride Parade, Women In Action, Durham Public Schools and Futures for Kids to continue its tradition of helping all North Carolinians.

Duke Energy Citizenship & Service

Stephen Hancock – President and Managing Shareholder of Thomas, Knight, Trent, King and Company has been dedicated to his profession and to the community and civic participation for more than 35 years. Inclusion is his mindset, integrity is his backbone, stewardship is his discipline, teamwork is his methodology and accountability is his practice. He works to ensure that all clients' expectations are exceeded even if it means staying late to get the job done – it's the quality of work in which he prides himself. He believes that he is personally responsible for his employees and their families and works to ensure that their needs and concerns are met first. Whether it is celebrating a birthday, holiday, or some other special occasion, he has been unfailing in support of his team. His compassion extends beyond the office. You can often find him serving food to families or on the sidewalk with a bell in hand to help raise money for those in need during the holidays. He has been active in organizations such as the Salvation Army of Durham, Durham Arts Council, Friends of Durham, Durham Merchants Association



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Foundation, Durham Rescue Mission, Habitat for Humanity and a number of other organizations. He strives to understand the issues facing our community and is committed to being a part of the solution.

Professional Women's Network Inspiration Award

Dr. Sharon Elliott-Bynum – Co-Founder and Clinical Director of CAARE, Inc. and the Jeanne Hopkins Lucas Education and Wellness Center, Durham's first free clinic for the uninsured. She has dedicated her life to helping the under served – setting a standard for service, responsibility and unconditional love for humankind. She has hosted a number of community events about issues that impact the lives of women on a regular basis such as Celebration on Life, a breast cancer awareness program. She also holds a bi-monthly support group for women with HIV/AIDS and a monthly support group for breast cancer patients and survivors. She has encouraged a number of women to continue their education and has even provided the resources for women to become certified nurse's assistants, graduating 30 women through her CNA program. For those women that did not gain employment after the program, she provided further assistance to them through the Home Health Care Agency-an organization she developed. She has served on a number of community organizations and currently serves as chair of Partnership for a Healthy Durham. Her accolades are many and her boundless energy and enthusiasm inspire those around her.

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