



THE EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL
The Power of Inclusive Leadership

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**The Executive Leadership Foundation Hosts 2015 Recognition Gala
Celebrating Black Executive Leadership and Achievement**

-- Record Number of Attendees at Annual Event Marks Largest Celebration in Its 27 Year History --

Alexandria, VA (October 13, 2015) – Nearly 2,200 people gathered Thursday night at the Gaylord National Hotel in National Harbor, MD for **The Executive Leadership Foundation's (ELF) 2015 Recognition Gala**. The annual event pays tribute to individuals and corporations for their support of diversity, inclusion and achievement in business. **The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr.**, 82nd Attorney General of the United States, **Merck Chairman & CEO Kenneth C. Frazier** and **Caterpillar Inc.** were among the night's honorees.

The ELF is the charitable arm of The Executive Leadership Council (ELC), the pre-eminent membership organization comprised of C-Suite and senior level black executives and board directors of Fortune 1000 and Global 500 companies, and entrepreneurs from top-tier firms, committed to increasing the number of global black executives in C-Suites, on corporate boards and in global enterprises.

"Since 1989, The ELF has hosted this annual event celebrating black executive leadership and achievement on a global stage and demonstrating the impact and value of diversity and inclusion in corporate America today," said Ronald C. Parker, President and CEO, The Executive Leadership Council and Foundation. "This year's record turnout and tremendous support from our sponsors is a strong indication of what lies ahead as we commemorate the 30th Anniversary of The ELC next year."

The highlight of the evening included the presentation of the Global Game Changer Award to The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr. for his remarkable career in public service. The award is presented to a global leader who embodies transformational leadership and impact. Mr. Holder is the third longest serving attorney general in U.S. history and the first African American to hold the office.

"The existence of an organization like The Executive Leadership Council is proof of an important truth, that our nation is stronger and our constituent parts better when all in our nation are included," said Mr. Holder during his acceptance speech. "This is a country in the midst of the most sweeping demographic change in perhaps its history...If America embraces this change we are about to experience and make available opportunities to all people of talent, and eradicate barriers rooted in the darkest parts of our history, then the coming century can be another era of American dominance."

Merck's Kenneth C. Frazier received the Achievement Award that honors his accomplishments as head of one of the largest biopharmaceutical companies in the world. He is one of only six black CEOs currently heading the nation's largest corporations (Fortune 500) out of only 15 total who have ever held that position. Caterpillar Inc. received the Corporate Award given to a corporation that has made significant contributions to the advancement of black corporate executives, which was accepted by Chairman and CEO Douglas R. Oberhelman.

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As one of the most highly coveted invites in Washington, D.C., the Gala brought together many of corporate America's leading CEOs and senior executives, thought leaders and politicians to celebrate "The Power of One" theme of this year's event. Notables in attendance included Kaiser Permanente Chairman and CEO **Bernard J. Tyson**, Carnival Corporation President and CEO **Arnold W. Donald**, Former U.S. Trade Secretary **Ron Kirk**, Mayor of Sacramento and former NBA star **Kevin Johnson**, NFL Hall of Famer **Jerome Bettis**, Civil Rights Leader **Dr. Bernice A. King**, among many others. Entertainment Tonight's **Kevin Frazier** co-hosted the black-tie affair alongside actress **Nicole Ari Parker**. Hip Hop legends **Doug E. Fresh** and **MC Lyte** provided the night's musical entertainment. Monies raised from the Gala each year are used to fund The ELF's scholarships, community investment grants, leadership development programs and educational initiatives.

Possibly the most heartwarming moment of the night came when Lead Sponsor Cisco Systems, Inc. spontaneously offered one of The ELF's scholarship recipients a job on the spot. The announcement ignited thunderous applause and cheers of support from the crowd as the Howard University student raced from his seat to the front of the ballroom to thank the Cisco executives for the opportunity. The 30 students in attendance were all winners of The ELF's four collegiate scholarship programs designed to improve the educational outcomes of black students, thereby developing a pipeline of future black business leaders.

Sponsors of The ELF's 2015 Recognition Gala included: Lead Sponsor, Cisco Systems, Inc.; Supporting Sponsors, Prudential and Shell Oil; Contributing Sponsors, AARP and Nationwide; and Partner Sponsor, Morgan Stanley.

About The Executive Leadership Council:

The Executive Leadership Council, an independent non-profit 501(c)(6) corporation founded in 1986, is the pre-eminent membership organization committed to increasing the number of global black executives in C-Suites, on corporate boards and in global enterprises. Comprised of more than 600 current and former black CEOs, board members and senior executives at Fortune 1000 and Global 500 companies, and entrepreneurs at top-tier firms, its members work to build an inclusive business leadership pipeline that empowers global black leaders to make impactful contributions to the marketplace and the global communities they serve. For more information, please visit www.elcinfo.com.

About The Executive Leadership Foundation:

The Executive Leadership Foundation (ELF), the 501(c)(3) related charitable organization of The Executive Leadership Council (ELC), focuses on improving local communities and helping disadvantaged groups within the broader society through its support for education programs, and provides scholarships to deserving students interested in business and corporate careers. For more information about The ELC and ELF, please visit www.elcinfo.com.

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To download photos from the event, please use the following link:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/vifvh6am58y8k9f/AAAI_3CLBqxTUBEN-60W2AaDa?dl=0

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