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## RETURNING TO SOUTH FLORIDA JUNE 7, 2012 2ND ANNUAL THURGOOD MARSHALL COLLEGE FUND “DISTINGUISHED YOUNG LEADER” AWARDS

### 5 LOCAL LEADERS WILL RECEIVE THIS PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

**MIAMI, FL (May 15, 2012)** - The “Who’s-Who” in South Florida will fill the room on June 7, 2012 at the 2nd Annual Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) “*Distinguished Young Leader*” (DYL) Awards with Bacardi USA serving as the lead sponsor. This highly anticipated event will be held at the Westin Colonnade in Coral Gables, Florida and will feature a strolling supper and cocktail reception that will begin at 6:30 p.m., followed by an awards program at 7:45 p.m. Calvin Hughes of ABC Local Channel 10 will be the host for the evening and the event co-chairs are Shelia Dudley, Burger King’s Director of Inclusion & Community Engagement and Ira Hall, retired financial executive. The 2012 event committee is comprised of twelve very motivated and influential local individuals who are dedicated to ensuring another successful event. The DYL event in South Florida generates interest and financial support from influencers in the South Florida area, and showcases TMCF member school Florida A&M University and Florida A&M School of Law.

The 2nd Annual South Florida *Distinguished Young Leader Awards* (DYL) is part of a nationwide effort to inform the broader community about TMCF, its member schools/programs, and to raise funds to aid scholars who attend any of the TMCF institutions/law/medical schools. The DYL honorees are outstanding local individuals under 45 years old who are deserving of community recognition for their efforts in the South Florida area, as well as in their career fields. These DYL honorees are chosen by the local committee and TMCF consultants as individuals who exemplify Thurgood Marshall’s passion for justice and civil rights, by continuing his principles, promoting diversity initiatives, addressing civil rights issues across different disciplines, and serving as significant role models to the next generation. “These community leaders serve as role models for the nearly 300,000 young men and women who are matriculating on our 47-member school campuses,” said Johnny C. Taylor, Jr., TMCF’s President & CEO. “They not only exemplify what Justice Marshall stood for, but they understand our mission and are each committed to cultivating future generations of leaders.”

### 2012 Honorees

*Crystal M. Connor, Esq., The Connor Group & Kirk Wagar, Esq. WagarLaw, P.A.*

**Attorney Crystal M. Connor** is the president and founder of the Connor Group Miami. In this capacity, she advocates for companies seeking local government opportunities through her procedural resourcefulness of public procurement procedures. These procedures involve zoning, permits, budgets, and appropriation matters.

Ms. Connor has been an active and visible activist in Miami-Dade County. She provided over 500 hours of pro-bono legal service to St. Alban's Child Enrichment Center. During her service on its Board, she chaired the fundraising committee. Continuing such initiatives, Ms. Connor volunteers with the United Way's Center for Excellence in Early Education Diva Fundraising Committee.

An alumna of the Miami Fellows Initiative and the United States German Marshall Fellowship, Ms. Connor offers her expertise as a member of the Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee, the Florida East Coast Coalition Committee, and the South Florida National Parks Trust. She is Board Secretary of Camillus House and chairs the Board of Directors of the Good Government Initiative. Ms. Connor was recently named one of South Florida's 50 most powerful and influential black business leaders of 2012.

A graduate of Temple University in Philadelphia, PA, Ms. Connor received her law degree from William Mitchell College of Law in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

**Kirk W. B. Wagar, Esq.** is widely known in the field of insurance law, has had impressive international experiences/training, and has national renown as finance chair in Florida for President Barack Obama's 2008 campaign.

As managing and founding partner of Wagar Law, P.A., Mr. Wagar's firm only represents individuals and small business in insurance disputes where it believes the client is being treated less than fairly. Founded in 1998, Wagar Law focuses on those people who have been wrongfully denied benefits under their long-term disability or life insurance claims or ERISA claims, and Mr. Wagar was one of the first attorneys to handle chronic fatigue immune deficiency (CFIDS) and fibromyalgia cases to successful resolution.

Raised in the small town of Perth, Ontario, Canada, Mr. Wagar was raised by parents who instilled in him a true sense of equality for all people. He has a strong work ethic and community commitment that permeates his endeavors. In 1989, he attended Birckbeck College of the University of London on a political internship before completing his college degree at Roberts Wesleyan College in Rochester, NY. He obtained his law degree in 1993 at the University of Miami. Mr. Wagar played rugby throughout North America and participated in various major offices with the National Model United Nations from 1992 to 1997. He has been on the Board of Governors of the American Association for Justice since 2002.

***Saif Ishoof, Esq. – Executive Director, City Year Miami***

Saif Y. Ishoof, Esq. is the Executive Director of City Year Miami where he leads the organization's staff, oversees the operations and provides support to the Board of Advisors.

Earning his Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service from Georgetown University, Mr. Ishoof completed his Juris Doctorate from the University of Miami School of Law. A co-founder and trustee of EmergeUSA, Mr. Ishoof is an Advisory Board member of the Good Government Initiative and a graduate of America's Leaders of Change, a program of the National Urban Fellows. He has served as a member of the Public Health Trust, which is the oversight body for Jackson Memorial Hospital, is past Chairman of the Miami-Dade County Asian American Advisory Board, and is a graduate of Leadership Florida Class 28.

In the international realm, Mr. Ishoof participated in a US State Department exchange with Turkey of Young American/Young Turkey leaders as part of a public diplomacy initiative. He was named a "20 Under 40" Leader by the Miami Herald in 2010, and as a "2010 Diversity Leader" by the American Jewish Committee (Miami).

Mr. Ishoof and his wife Amira are the proud parents of two children, Rania and Nabeel. He believes that his personal and professional career have been defined by a commitment to developing young people, building civic institutions, international dialogue, and social entrepreneurship.

***Sze Lee – CEO, Social Capital Management, L.L.C.***

Entrepreneur Sze Lee is a digital strategist and founder of Social Capital Management in Coral Gables, FL. Her company's mission is to utilize social connectivity to bring about positive social change. Social Capital Management is a full service technology firm that specializes in social media, search engine, web design, and mobile solutions. These services include digital marketing strategy, online marketing, social media optimization content generation/management, email marketing, mobile marketing, logo design, blog marketing, graphic design, and online reputation building/management. CEO Lee and her enthusiastic staff enjoy developing "outside-the-box" solutions for businesses, non profit organizations and political campaigns.

Ms. Lee has completed leadership and entrepreneurial development programs through her selection over numerous candidates by the Miami Foundation and by the New Leaders Council of Miami where she is a current Fellow. Ms. Lee also served on the Miami-Dade County Commission for Women from 2007 through 2010. Her formal Bachelor of Arts degree was completed at Florida International University in 2007.

Presently, Ms. Lee is a member of the Miami-Dade Broadband Coalition's Board of Directors and is involved with numerous other professional organizations. She has consulted/instructed for college-level business curriculum and seminars and is considered an expert on new media. She chaired the Young People's Forum at the 1st Annual Miami Beach Women's Conference and was formerly the alumni advisor for the Florida International University's Women's Studies Board of Advisors.

***Germaine Smith-Baugh, Ed.D. – President & CEO, Urban League of Broward County***

Dr. Germaine Smith-Baugh is President and Chief Executive Officer of the Urban League of Broward County, a position she has held since 2006. Known for her tenacity, visionary leadership and 'can-do-it' attitude, Dr. Smith-Baugh's goal is to be a leading change-agent and problem-solver in helping Broward County fulfill its potential. She is highly respected for her diligent approach to organizational and program development and her high performance. Her attributes include a passion for making a difference, dedication to excellence, and the ability to

inspire others. Dr. Smith-Baugh supports the Urban League in developing and implementing new ideas, cultivating and leveraging strategic relationships, and expanding funding sources.

Throughout her Urban League career, Dr. Smith-Baugh has been outspoken in making the case for quality programming to unlock the true potential of each member in the community. To bolster her efforts, she launched a multi-million dollar campaign to construct a Community Empowerment Center—designed to expand the programs and services offered by the Urban League and further advance its mission of assisting African Americans achieve social and economic equality.

Dr. Smith-Baugh currently serves on numerous boards in South Florida, is an active member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and was recently honored with its Distinguished Service Award. In 2008, she was inducted into the Broward County Women's Hall of Fame. Dr. Smith-Baugh has received numerous accolades for her work including United Way's Human Services Professional Award in 2008 and the Broward Black Elected Officials Community Award in 2010. She was recently recognized by the Boys and Girls Club of Broward County and by the Susan B. Anthony Recovery Center as one of Broward County's 100 Outstanding Women. The South Florida Business Journal honored her as a Diamond Award recipient in 2009, an honor designated to Broward County CEOs that excel in community, civic and charitable leadership.

A native of St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands, Dr. Smith-Baugh completed her undergraduate degree in Business Communication and a Master of Social Work in Administration from Florida State University. Her Doctorate is from Nova Southeastern University in Organizational Leadership with a concentration in Non-Profit Leadership and Management.

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The second Annual "*Distinguished Young Leader*" Awards is the second of five regional events that will take place in 2012. The New Jersey "*Awards of Excellence*" event took place in Newark in March and future events include: Charlotte, Los Angeles, and Chicago. **For sponsorship opportunities and ticket information, please contact: Mary V. Jones: [mary.jones@tmcfund.org](mailto:mary.jones@tmcfund.org) or call 201-227-8427 and for media inquiries please contact: Tiffany L. Jones: [tiffany.jones@tmcfund.org](mailto:tiffany.jones@tmcfund.org) or 212-573-8493.**

#### **ABOUT THURGOOD MARSHALL COLLEGE FUND**

The Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCf) is named for the U.S. Supreme Court's first African-American Justice. Established in 1987, TMCf supports and represents nearly 300,000 students attending its 47 member-schools that include *public* Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), medical schools and law schools. TMCf helps students with a clear intention and the motivation to succeed and acquire a high-quality college education at an affordable cost. TMCf also efficiently connects high performing, world-ready students with top tier employment opportunities—access that students or employers might not have on their own. Through its scholarships and programs, TMCf plays a key role in preparing the leaders of tomorrow. TMCf is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, charitable organization and has a "Four Star" rating by C Navigator. For more information about TMCf and its initiatives, visit: [www.ThurgoodMarshallCollegeFund.org](http://www.ThurgoodMarshallCollegeFund.org).