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## Ban honoured by US college fund as International Humanitarian of the Year



24 October 2011 –

A prestigious United States college fund tonight awarded its first International Humanitarian of the Year Award to [Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon](#) for “his steadfast commitment to confronting global challenges and his ability to effectively mobilize world leaders to do the same.”

“A true humanitarian endeavours to improve the human condition by serving as a change agent, working tirelessly to make a difference in the lives of those in need,” Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCf) President Johnny Taylor Jr. said of the award presented in New York at its 24th anniversary dinner in New York.

“As the TMCf International Humanitarian Award recognizes individuals who demonstrate exemplary global activism and service, we believe UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon exemplifies this mission through his work, providing the impoverished with broad access to

education, health care, food, and medicine. The paralleled efforts of the UN and TMCF are firmly rooted in the belief that education can drive economic and social progress.”

The fund, named after the US Supreme Court’s first African-American justice and established in 1987, provides scholarships to students attending historically black colleges and universities as well as leadership development and training and capacity-building support to its member schools.

In his speech of thanks Mr. Ban recalled the debt that the Republic of Korea (ROK) owes to African-American soldiers who did so much to help liberate his home during the Korean War 60 years ago and Mr. Marshall’s role in easing racial integration within the US armed forces.

“His fame was global – even to me as a young boy in faraway Korea,” he said. “Marshall himself came to Korea in 1951. His investigation of the treatment of African-American GIs [soldiers] there helped advance efforts to integrate the US Army. Perhaps some of your parents or grandparents served there.

“Perhaps they told you that the fighting had taken a terrible turn – until units of extremely disciplined and courageous African-American soldiers helped turn the tide. We Koreans are well aware of what many thousands of African-Americans did to help liberate our country. Many paid with their lives,” he added, stressing that as African-American soldiers liberated Korea they themselves gained more freedom.

“In that war, blacks and whites fought together in common cause. And that, in turn, shaped the similar struggle back home. Today, the United Nations fights prejudice and discrimination everywhere.”

Mr. Ban said he accepted the award “with both pride and humility” in the name of the UN and its staff. “Each day, every day, they work to save lives and help people rise from poverty, to rebuild from conflict, to recover from natural disaster,” he added, calling Justice Marshall a true humanitarian who transformed the law and the country with his pioneering work on the court and as a champion of equal rights and the rule of law for all.

“In other words, he embodied the values that we at the United Nations hold most dear,” he stressed. “As we see it, every man, woman and child has the right to grow up in peace, with enough to eat, with the health care, education and freedoms they need to realize their full potential.

“The anger we see on our streets today – on Main Street as well as Wall Street – grows from a loss of hope, a lack of faith in governments to do the right thing for their people. Thurgood Marshall would know this. He would know what to do, how to show leadership.”

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[Ban to receive award from Rotary International on visit to Birmingham](#)