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Alpha Kappa Alpha to Induct Outstanding Women into Sorority

Chicago, Illinois – May 27, 2008 - Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., will induct four exemplary women as Honorary Members during its Centennial Convention, July 11 through 18 in Washington, DC. The four women will officially join during a members-only ceremony on Tuesday, July 15.

The four members-to-be represent various disciplines but all are bound by their achievements and commitment to the service ideals of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. They are: Dr. Zoanne Clack, Deborah Stewart-Parker, C. Vivian Stringer and Carol H. Williams. Dr. Wangari Muta Maathai, environmental and political activist from Kenya and the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, will also be inducted, but is unable to attend the Centennial Convention.

Dr. Zoanne Clack, MD, is a physician and medical consultant for the hit TV show, *Grey's Anatomy*. Her journey to greatness began while growing up in Missouri City, TX. She briefly majored in radio/TV/film at Northwestern University, but later pursued a medical degree, which she earned from UT Southwestern in Dallas, TX. She went to Atlanta, GA for residency in emergency medicine at Emory University. Dr. Clack went on to spend a year with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) doing international emergency medicine. Throughout that year, she helped develop an emergency medicine program in response to the bombing of the American Embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, as well as assisted in the expansion of emergency medicine to the Pacific island paradise of Palau and other isolated South Pacific islands. She moved to Los Angeles and eventually landed a position as staff writer on the show *Presidio Med* in 2001. Dr. Clack then became a medical advisor on the long-running series *ER* before moving on to become a writer, consultant and producer on ABC's award-winning, critically acclaimed drama, *Grey's Anatomy*. She continues to work in the emergency department of a Los Angeles-based community hospital while delivering motivational speeches. She serves on the board of the Student National Medical Association, an organization that ensures culturally sensitive medical education and increases the number of students of color that enter and complete medical school.

Deborah Stewart-Parker, President and CEO/Consultant, International Business Solutions, Inc., launched her career at General Motors in 1977 as a member of an elite team of “non-technical graduates” assigned to learn the automotive business from the ground up. This training led to a position at General Motors where she served for ten years in key planning and supervisory roles before joining Ford Motor Company. Under her leadership at Ford's Dearborn

and Chicago plants, Ms. Stewart-Parker's production team garnered a number of *Best in Ford* awards in quality and cost savings because of key process capability improvements which she introduced. In 1994, Ms. Stewart-Parker became the first woman to head a major U.S. automotive assembly plant—the \$320 million, 3,700 employee Ohio Assembly Plant, site of a joint venture between Ford and Nissan Motor Company of Japan. She was later promoted to Director of International Quality, with full responsibility for design and process improvement strategies in North America, Europe, Australia, Taiwan and South America. Under Ms. Stewart-Parker's leadership, Ford won the 1998 quality awards for best plants, and three were vehicles selected as JD Power segment leaders in quality. Her success led to CEO positions with Auto Alliance International and Ford Southern Africa. She led a major turnaround of that region's business through her innovative ideas and management acumen and increased profit margins by as much as 13 percent. She was later appointed Vice President, Global Quality, becoming one of two African American women to achieve the level of Corporate Vice President in the company's history. Ms. Stewart-Parker has received numerous awards for her business and civic contributions and has served on a number of non-profit boards and advisories. In July 2007, Ms. Stewart-Parker was appointed to the position of Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the National Urban League, serving as the first woman to hold this office in the 97-year history of the organization. She left this historic position to head International Business Solutions.

C. Vivian Stringer, Rutgers University Women's Head Basketball coach, has conquered hurdles on and off the court. She began her coaching career at Cheyney State University, where she volunteered to coach the women's basketball team. She eventually put the women's basketball program there on the map, where it was dubbed the "marquee team." Ms. Stringer's record at Cheyney State, 251-51, includes the groundbreaking accomplishment of a finals appearance in the first-ever NCAA tournament for women. She was hired to be the coach at the University of Iowa while it was a struggling team. Over the next 11 years, the Hawkeyes compiled ten straight 20-win seasons, appeared in the NCAA tournament nine times and won six conference championships. Two of Ms. Stringer's three National Coach of the Year awards were won while at Iowa. Under her coaching, the Hawkeyes were prominently featured in the NCAA Final Four. With that Final Four appearance, she became the first women's basketball coach to advance to the Final Four with teams from two different colleges. Ms. Stringer won the National Coach of the Year title, as well as a host of other honors. She made sports history in 1995 when she signed a multi-year contract to coach women's basketball at Rutgers University—making her the highest-paid women's coach in the country. She says her resolve is to make sure her "girls" use athletics as a vehicle for their successes in life. Ms. Stringer has also served as an international coach for various American women's basketball teams. Her 1991 U.S. team won a bronze medal at the Pan American Games in Havana, Cuba. She helped to establish the Women's Basketball Coaches Association and currently sits on the board of the U.S. Amateur Basketball Association. Ms. Stringer's success is particularly admirable because she has faced personal hurdles. She is a single mother with three teenagers, one of whom is severely disabled. And, she was widowed after her husband's sudden death in 1992. The couple met when he was a coach at Cheyney and hired her as the women's basketball coach, thereby giving her a start on what has turned into an illustrious career. She is also author of the book, *Standing Tall: A Memoir of Tragedy and Triumph* (Crown Books).

Carol H. Williams, Founder, CEO, President and Chief Creative Officer of the Carol H. Williams Advertising Agency, aspired to be a doctor until she discovered her love of writing. She delighted in writing advertising copy and, eventually, interned in advertising. By the time she'd completed her internship, her reputation was well known within the industry, and mega-firms vied for her to join their companies. After graduating from college, she joined the prestigious Leo Burnett Company in Chicago, where she eventually became the first African American Creative Director and Vice President. Later, at Foote Cone & Belding, she crafted some of the most creative campaigns in advertising history. These included the timeless Secret Antiperspirant campaign, "Strong Enough for a Man, but Made for a Woman." The iconic Pillsbury Doughboy is also a product of her creative think tank. Carol moved to California's Bay area, where she married and began a family. At the same time, she recognized that there was a dire need to develop messages that appeal to African American and urban markets in a respectful manner. Started in Ms. Williams' living room, Carol H. Williams Advertising now has corporate offices in Oakland, CA, and Chicago, IL—and satellite offices in Atlanta, Dallas, Detroit and New York. A highly diverse and skilled staff of more than 155 employees produces award-winning advertising and marketing campaigns for Fortune 500 companies, including The Coca-Cola Company, General Motors, Pfizer, Procter & Gamble, the U.S. Army and the Walt Disney Company, among others. Carol's passion for crafting creative campaigns is matched by her commitment to serving the community. She has used her talents and resources for dozens of philanthropic endeavors over the years. In both roles, she is committed to bringing out the best of African American life and culture.

Dr. Maathai, who received the coveted Nobel Peace Prize for "her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace," will be sworn in when members of the Sorority journey to Kenya to perform the induction ceremony.

In making the announcement, Barbara A. McKinzie, international president, noted that each inductee brings her own impressive record of excellence to the Sorority. While each represents varying industries and disciplines, she noted, they are bound by a commitment to service. This, along with sisterhood, stressed McKinzie, represents the core foundation upon which Alpha Kappa Alpha was built and what makes our Sorority so enduring.

"We are filled with pride to have five outstanding women of such great stature join our great Sorority," said McKinzie. "They represent the best in their fields and the best in character. On the occasion of our Centennial Celebration, we look forward to embracing them as members of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority."

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