



## NEWS RELEASE

\*\*\* FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE \*\*\*

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Joyce R. Forchion

(305) 626-3624

[jforchio@fmuniv.edu](mailto:jforchio@fmuniv.edu)

**FLORIDA MEMORIAL BOARD CHAIRMAN, SPECIAL GUESTS PAY TRIBUTE TO  
DEDICATED ALUMNUS DURING FIRST ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET**

**MIAMI GARDENS, FL [MARCH 17, 2007]** – In an effort to increase the university’s scholarship endowment for deserving students, the Florida Memorial University National Alumni Association (FMUNAA) hosted its first annual James I. George Scholarship Banquet on Saturday, March 17, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. This year’s theme was “Committing Ourselves to the Generation of Leaders.” The Smith Conference Center served as the elaborate venue for the event named in honor of the late Mr. James I. George, Jr., a 1966 graduate of Florida Memorial who also served as President of the institution’s National Alumni Association for several years.

Not only was James I. George an influential alumnus of Florida Memorial; he was also the brother of Mr. Charles W. George, Chairman of Florida Memorial University’s Board of Trustees. During the banquet, which was attended by well over 200 guests, Chairman George expressed his optimism about the possibilities of this banquet spearheading a wave of enthusiasm and participation among the university’s alumni. After thanking the alumni for attending this event, he stated that the scholarship event will serve as a “significant step toward rallying alumni support.” He also remarked that hopefully, “the banquet will become a model, or a living example of alumni giving back to their alma mater. Alumni presence is essential during this time of transition because they display tremendous wisdom and school spirit, which will set an inspirational example for our students to emulate.” Dr. Karl S. Wright, President of Florida Memorial University, echoed Mr. George’s sentiments and saluted FMUNAA for coordinating “one of the most impressive alumni gatherings” that he has seen while employed at the institution. While dinner was being served, the Florida Memorial University Jazz Band offered an array of upbeat tempos for mingling guests while Ms. Adriane Jefferson and Ms. Nadege Cherubin, two enthusiastic Florida Memorial students, enacted two riveting theatrical performances. The highly-regarded keynote speaker for the evening was Colonel Lisa D. Weatherington, Deputy Chief of the Medical Service Corps and wife of Mr. Walter Weatherington, Vice President of the FMUNAA Executive Board.

During his lifetime, James I. George, Jr. was a staunch advocate for higher education. After graduating from Florida Memorial’s St. Augustine location in 1966, he went on to New York State University and earned a Master of Arts degree in 1975 and completed several hours of coursework towards a Ph.D. in Education Administration. Once he returned to Florida, he assisted his father in mobilizing a successful trucking business and later established his own companies with his brother, Charles: Modernized Trucking in 1984 and Optimistic Construction in 1991. Mr. George’s involvement with community organizations was as extensive as his dedication to his entrepreneurial career. He was a lifetime member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and a devoted member of Memorial Temple Baptist Church. He also volunteered his time with the Miami-Dade Chamber of Commerce and the local branch of the NAACP. One of his proudest achievements was founding and serving as Chapter President of the Black Business Association, which initiated countless community development strategies for Miami-Dade County and beyond.

All proceeds earned from the James I. George Scholarship Banquet benefited Florida Memorial students in need of scholarship assistance to complete their university education. For information on how you

can contribute to the scholarship fund or become active in future FMUNAA events, please contact Mr. E. Ray Smith, current President of the FMUNAA at (786) 295-9738.

*Located in the City of Miami Gardens, Florida Memorial University is a private, historically Black institution offering 41 undergraduate degree programs and 4 graduate degree programs to a culturally diverse student body. Since its inception in 1879, the university has upheld a commitment to providing a solid foundation for thousands of young people and opening doors to educational opportunities that may have otherwise been closed to them. As South Florida's ONLY Black university, it is widely recognized for being the birthplace of the Negro National Anthem, "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing." For more information, please contact the Office of Governmental and Public Affairs at (305) 626-3624.*

###