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1,300 to “Celebrate Education” at annual Lilly Endowment dinner

When Marsha Johnson Evans, president and chief executive officer of the American Red Cross, delivers an address to more than 1,300 people Saturday night (June 28) at the Indianapolis Marriott Downtown Hotel, most of her audience will be quite familiar with the idea of voluntary service.

The listeners will be the 2003-04 class of Lilly Endowment Community Scholars – 363 strong, along with their parents/guardians, representatives from their local community foundations, “special people” in their lives, and representatives from Indiana colleges and universities. They will all be together for the annual Endowment event, “Celebrate Education.”

Evans came to the helm of the American Red Cross last year, a year in which the organization helped the victims of more than 70,000 national disasters, collected and processed 7.2 million blood donations, trained almost 12 million people in lifesaving skills, and responded to international natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies.

Her Red Cross post followed four years as president and chief executive officer of the Girl Scouts of the USA, where she spearheaded many efforts, including one to make Girl Scouting available to every girl by reaching out to minority populations.

(more)

Community Scholars
Add 1

“Marty,” as she is known, spent most of her working life in the United States Navy, retiring as a rear admiral in 1997. She held a variety of command positions and oversaw multimillion-dollar budgets and thousands of employees. She has received many awards, including the prestigious 2002 John W. Gardner Legacy of Leadership Award by the White House Fellows Association. (She was a White House Fellow in 1979-80.)

The daughter of a Navy chief petty officer, Evans grew up in Springfield, Ill. She entered the Navy after graduating from Occidental College in Los Angeles with a bachelor’s degree in law and diplomacy. She also studied at Tufts University, the National War College in Washington and the Naval War College in Newport, R.I. She has traveled the world and lived in cities like Tokyo and London.

Her audience of college freshmen-to-be is a talented lot – academic all-stars, drum majors, dancers, poets, photographers, ornithologists, Eagle Scouts, 4-H winners, award-winning musicians. Members of this class – the sixth in the Endowment’s Community Scholarship Program – are attracted by careers in medicine, veterinary medicine, engineering, pharmacy, law, K-12 teaching, business, accounting and nursing. Several look forward to service in the U.S. government and the foreign service, a few want to be politicians, others are interested in forensic pathology and “profiling.” Other careers noted are acting, physical and psychological therapy, architecture, marketing and public relations, writing, missionary work, the priesthood, youth ministry, dentistry, broadcast journalism and archaeology.

The scholars, nominated through processes in their own counties conducted by the local community foundation, have a wealth of volunteer service behind them already. They have gone all over the country and world on church mission trips, they have worked in soup kitchens, built houses with Habitat for Humanity, cleaned up highways, helped in hospitals, volunteered for youth groups and Special Olympics, visited nursing homes,

(more)

Community Scholars
Add 2

planned elaborate fund-raising events, packed box lunches for the homeless and trained therapy dogs.

Some have overcome major obstacles such as physical disabilities and challenging home lives to achieve the distinction of becoming Lilly Endowment Community Scholars. They have worked hard – in school and out – to become outstanding young adults with bright futures awaiting them.

“Every year, we are amazed anew at the accomplishments of these young people,” said Sara B. Cobb, Endowment vice president for education. “This class will join the more than 1,300 Lilly Endowment Community Scholars who have preceded them to more than 30 Indiana colleges and universities. Invariably, their accomplishments continue through their college years. We are very proud of them.”

For example, two scholars from the Class of 1999 have just graduated from Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in Terre Haute. Rashad Gold, an Evansville native, was valedictorian and recipient of the John Tuller Royse Award which recognizes leadership, academic achievement and outstanding participation in extracurricular activities. He was also the co-winner of the Heminway Medal for having earned the highest grade point average for his four years at Rose-Hulman. And Ben Giant from Shelbyville was awarded the Herman Munch Award, which is the faculty and staff commendation for the distinguished senior who has the highest chances of professional success.

Meanwhile in Bloomington, 1999 scholar Summer Johnson from Wheatfield in Jasper County received the Herman B Wells Senior Recognition Award, given to one Indiana University senior for distinguished work in academics and campus service.

Earlier in the day, before they gather for the dinner, the scholars and their guests, as part of the celebration, may use passes to enjoy the sights in White River State Park, the Indianapolis Zoo, White River Gardens, the Indiana State Museum, the NCAA Hall

(more)

Community Scholars
Add 3

of Champions, the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, plus the Colonel Eli Lilly Civil War Museum at the Soldiers' & Sailors' Monument.

With this class of 199 women and 164 men, the number of scholarships awarded has climbed to nearly 1,700. This fall they will head for the following campuses:

Anderson University	6
Ball State University	18
Bethel College	1
Butler University	36
DePauw University	18
Earlham College	3
Franklin College	8
Goshen College	2
Grace College	2
Hanover College	9
Huntington College	3
Indiana Institute of Technology	1
Indiana State University	4
Indiana University	55
Indiana University Southeast	1
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis	3
Indiana Wesleyan University	5
Manchester College	3
Marian College	2
Purdue University	69
Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology	35
St. Mary-of-the-Woods College	2
St. Mary's College	4
Taylor University	8
Tri-State University	3

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Community Scholars
Add 4

University of Evansville	8
University of Indianapolis	9
University of Notre Dame	25
University of St. Francis	2
University of Southern Indiana	3
Valparaiso University	9
Wabash College	6

The scholarships provide full tuition for four years to any person attending an accredited Indiana college or university to obtain a baccalaureate degree. The scholarship winners also receive \$800 for supplies and educational expenditures. Each county's community foundation recommends the scholarship nomination criteria for its county and conducts the nomination process. Final scholarship selections are made by the Indianapolis-based Independent Colleges of Indiana, which also administers the program.

The program began in 1998 as one of the Endowment's responses to the alarming educational attainment figures for Indiana: The state ranks near the bottom in the percentage of persons over 25 who have earned a baccalaureate degree.

"Since 1996 the Endowment has invested more than \$1 billion in programs to strengthen higher education institutions in Indiana, to make "connections" between high school and college, to prepare young people to succeed in college and to encourage communities to examine their own educational needs and how best to address them," Cobb said. "We understand that this issue is a long-standing one and that it will take time for improvement. But more and more we are seeing an awareness around the state that the future of Indiana rests upon its citizens being educated to thrive in the world's fast-changing economy."

The Endowment's latest effort, announced last week, is the Initiative to Promote Opportunity through Educational Collaborations. The Endowment will consider

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Community Scholars
Add 5

proposals from Indiana colleges and universities to develop programs to provide educational experiences that will lead to the identification and development of meaningful economic opportunities in Indiana for college graduates. A total of \$40 million has been allotted for this initiative. Representatives from the colleges will meet in Indianapolis next month for an informational meeting.

“There is a good chance that the 2003 Lilly Endowment Community Scholars entering college this fall will be the beneficiaries of many of these new initiatives and programs,” Cobb said. “We hope that the opportunities for them to have productive and rich lives in Indiana will only increase.”

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Note to reporters and editors: A complete list of the 2003 scholarship recipients is included with this release. You are cordially invited to come hear Evans speak (her address should begin about 7 p.m. in the Marriott Ballroom) or, if you wish an interview, please contact me at the Endowment by Friday at 3 p.m., 916-7304. The scholars and their families start gathering at the Marriott about 5 p.m. We would be glad to have you come; it's a delightful evening.

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