

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Senator Mitchell Welcomes 2010 Mitchell Scholars at Brunch in Orono

August 15, 2010, Portland, ME: On Sunday, August 15, 2010, Senator George Mitchell hosted a brunch for the 2010 class of Mitchell Scholars and their families at the Wells Conference Center at the University of Maine in Orono. The brunch was sponsored this year by Hampden Home Builders.

Senator Mitchell was the keynote speaker for the event, having taken time away from his busy schedule as Special Envoy to the Middle East. Also in attendance were members of the Mitchell Institute Board of Directors, university and college leaders, and other supporters of the scholarship program.

Since 1995, the Mitchell Institute has awarded almost \$8 million in scholarships to nearly 1,800 Maine high school graduates. Each year, one graduating senior from every Maine public high school is chosen to receive a Mitchell Scholarship. These annual scholarships, which average \$5,000 each, are awarded on the basis of academic potential, community service, and financial need. Recipients must be residents of Maine who will be entering their first year of a two- or four-year accredited college or university. A list of the Class of 2010 scholarship recipients is available on the Mitchell Institute website at www.mitchellinstitute.org.

"I am often asked what element of my career has been the most personally fulfilling," said the Senator. "Many expect me to answer that it is a certain piece of legislation from my time in the Senate, or perhaps some work internationally. But in truth, what is most meaningful to me is the creation of this scholarship program. Besides my family, it is the most important thing in my life. This annual brunch with the Mitchell Scholars is one of the highlights of my summer. I always look forward to the opportunity to meet these commendable young men and women, and to congratulate them and express my pride in their achievements."

65% of Mitchell Scholars are from non-college tradition families (neither parent holds a four-year degree) and over one-third (36%) are first in their family to go to college. Nearly 70% are from families whose household income is below the state median. Since 2003, KeyBank has provided funding for sixteen Mitchell Scholarships (one for each county in Maine) in the amount of \$6,000 each. These awards are targeted to first-generation college students. Unum also underwrites five Mitchell Scholarships annually, which are given as Unum - Stephen B. Center Diversity Leadership Awards. These awards encourage those who inspire others to value differences and end discrimination.

Bangor businesswoman and owner of Hampden Home Builders Tricia Quirk said, "This program is so inspiring, both for the ways in which it supports individual students as well as the impact it is having on the state as a whole. We're proud to support the Mitchell Institute!"

In addition to scholarship help, Mitchell Scholars gain access to Mitchell Institute support programs, which include community service projects, leadership and professional development, mentoring opportunities, and summer employment stipends. Mitchell Scholars demonstrate a remarkable college persistence rate of 95%, and a six-year college graduation rate that is 45% higher than the Maine average. The Mitchell Institute believes that these statistics are due in large part to its support programs. More than 90% of Mitchell Scholars plan to live and work in Maine after college.

The work of the Mitchell Institute also includes an ongoing research component. A long-term study of the Mitchell Scholars began in 2000 to gauge the effectiveness of the scholarship and support programs, and to learn more about the Scholars' college and career experiences.

For more information about the Mitchell Institute, please visit www.mitchellinstitute.org.