



Contact: Jamie Vidich
EARTH University Foundation
(404) 995-1271
jvidich@earth-usa.org

Atlanta Resident, Mrs. Jane Cocke Black, Awarded Honorary Doctorate from EARTH University in Costa Rica

ATLANTA & COSTA RICA; December 11, 2009—In recognition of her distinguished years of service, EARTH University awarded Mrs. Jane Cocke Black, Atlanta resident, a Doctorate in Humanities Honoris Causa. The honor was conferred this morning during EARTH University’s commencement ceremony, held on its campus in the Limón province of Costa Rica.

Jane Cocke Black has been involved with EARTH University since 1994. In early 1996, she joined the President’s Advisory Board, on which she continues to serve.

In 1997 Mrs. Black became the first Chairperson of the EARTH University Foundation, leading the establishment of its office and operations in Atlanta, Georgia. Mrs. Black stepped down as Foundation Board Chair in mid-2009, but continues to serve as a member of the Board.

“I am deeply honored by this recognition. From the moment I visited EARTH more than 15 years ago, I knew that this was an organization I had to be a part of. I am a true believer in the power of EARTH’s work to empower individuals to address the urgent environmental and social problems that impact us all,” commented Jane Black.

During the ceremony, 98 degrees were awarded to Class of 2009 graduates, who join another 1,368 EARTH University alumni representing 25 countries in the Americas, the Caribbean, Africa, Europe and Asia. In addition to the more than 1,400 guests in attendance at the ceremony, Mrs. Black’s husband, Dameron Black, and children, Jim and Mandy Black and Dameron IV and Nancy Black, were also present at the ceremony.

“Mrs. Black has been one of EARTH’s greatest champions and contributors. Her numerous financial and in-kind contributions and her commitment and energy on behalf of EARTH University are an inspiration to her colleagues, friends, donors and EARTH’s Institutional community at-large. EARTH University is a better organization because of her involvement,” commented Dr. Pedro León, President of the EARTH University Board of Directors.

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Celebrating its 20th Anniversary in 2010, EARTH University (www.earth.ac.cr) was founded with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Government of Costa Rica to prepare young people from economically-depressed communities in Latin America, the Caribbean and other regions, including Africa and Asia, to become agents for change in their communities. EARTH offers a four-year undergraduate program in agricultural sciences and natural resources management, providing a world-class scientific and technological education that emphasizes values, ethical entrepreneurship and environmental and social commitment. Through the generous support of donors and an endowment, EARTH University provides opportunities to young people who want to make a difference in the world but lack the financial resources for a higher education.

EARTH University Foundation (www.earth-usa.org) was formed to support the educational vision of EARTH University through generous gifts from the global community and other programs and initiatives. The Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) public charity headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia.

The graduation ceremony is being transmitted online for all of those who cannot attend in-person. The link is <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/graduacion-earth-2009> and the broadcast is set to begin Friday, December 11 at 11 a.m. Eastern Time (-05:00 GMT).

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