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To Whom It May Concern:

This letter comes in strong support of the nomination of Dr. Willie E. May for the position of President-Elect of the American Chemical Society.

I have known Dr. May for about three decades in several capacities. First, we are both natives of Birmingham, Alabama and have had many conversations over the years about the challenges we faced as black children in Birmingham during the 50s and 60s. I know firsthand how strong he has had to be to overcome all of the obstacles placed in his path to success. Most important, he is one of the hardest working, honorable and most disciplined professionals I know. I am including an [article](#) I wrote several years ago for our local paper, *The Birmingham News*, about Dr. May.

I have also had the experience of working with him in his leadership roles at both the National Institutes of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers (NOBCChE). As a leader of NIST, he was very instrumental in helping my campus build partnerships involving both research collaboration and technical training of our students. In fact, he inspired us to identify large numbers of students of all races who could first work at NIST as undergraduates in labs, and later to be employed there as postdocs and eventually research scientists. In his work with NOBCChE he was especially known as one of this nation's thought leaders in producing minority chemists.

I had the privilege of speaking at Dr. May's retirement celebration from NIST this past year. The theme of the celebration was that he had touched so many men and women from different racial and ethnic groups and different parts of this country and beyond. Whether a former student, or a fellow scientist or colleague, each talked about his ability to inspire us to be our best. He is an excellent thinker and communicator who can help the public appreciate the importance of chemistry, and STEM generally, to our society.

This is that time in our country when we need leaders whose values and behavior reflect all that we want to see in our children. It is no hyperbole to say that Dr. May is someone we should all thrive to emulate. He would be exemplary as the President of the American Chemical Society.

Sincerely,



Freeman A. Hrabowski, III
President of UMBC