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## **DC COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM NAMES TED LEONSIS CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**, January 27, 2015 – Today, the DC College Access Program (DC-CAP), a private nonprofit organization that helps DC students prepare for, enroll in and graduate from college, announced that Ted Leonsis, founder, chairman, majority owner and CEO of Monumental Sports & Entertainment, has been elected as the organization's new chairman of the board. Leonsis succeeds DC-CAP's founding chairman, Don Graham. Graham, who is CEO and chairman of the board of Graham Holdings Company, will remain an active member of the DC-CAP board.

"I can't think of a better person to build on DC-CAP's solid 15-year foundation of supporting every DC public and public charter high school student as they pursue their dream of a college education," said Graham. "As someone who grew up in an urban community, Ted personally experienced some of the barriers our students face in being first in their family to attend and graduate college. He understands what it takes to beat the odds. I'm confident his business acumen, philanthropic spirit and determination will be critical factors as he takes DC-CAP to the next level."

[Leonsis](#) joined the DC-CAP board in 2010 and has since served in numerous leadership positions, most notably serving as event co-chair for three years (2012-2014) for one of DC-CAP's largest fundraisers, The Michael Wilbon/James Brown Celebrity Roast and Golf Classic. He is and continues to be a leader and active participant in the Washington region business and philanthropic communities, providing tremendous support to dozens of DC area organizations through the Leonsis Foundation.

"I am honored to follow Don as chair to support all the high school students in the Washington, D.C. community which I've called home since 1977," Leonsis said. "Our students can be anything they want to be. With DC-CAP's support – from college counseling in high school to guidance through college, and through the scholarships we offer – DC-CAP plays a powerful role in helping earn a college degree. Looking to DC-CAP's future, we may also be able to play a role beyond college graduation to help them prepare for employment."

DC-CAP was born in 1999 out of the vision of Graham and several other business leaders who were determined to help more DC public high school students enroll in and graduate from college. At that time, available data suggested that less than one-third of DC high school graduates enrolled in college or pursued a post-secondary education, which was less than half the national average. Of those who enrolled, it was estimated that no more than 15 percent would graduate.

Initially, Graham and others worked with local and federal officials to draft and gain approval for the DC College Access Act. This important piece of legislation, which established the DC Tuition Assistance Grant (DC-TAG) program, was signed into law in 1999 and reauthorized in 2007. More specifically, DC-TAG authorized the federal government to appropriate funds for tuition subsidies of up to \$10,000 per year or \$50,000 per student for young people residing in the District, providing thousands of DC students with greater opportunity and choice for attending college.

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Then Graham and local business leaders forged public/private partnerships with the DC Public School System and other local businesses and civic organizations, to support the creation of DC-CAP. The privately funded organization provides college counseling throughout the high school years – with a DC-CAP advisor now housed in every DC public and public charter high school – as well as scholarships and support and guidance throughout the college years.

Since it's founding, DC-CAP has been instrumental in helping to more than double the number of DC public and public charter high school students enrolling in college and tripling the number who graduate. Today, as a result of DC-CAP, more than 62 percent of DC high school seniors are enrolling in college (which is on par with the national average) and approximately 44 percent are graduating in six years.

“Don was the champion DC needed to create the college going culture we now see in the city,” said Argelia Rodriguez, President and CEO, DC-CAP. “His legacy lives on in the 6,500 DC-CAP college graduates, the majority of whom are first in their family to go to college. Because of Don’s vision and persistence, DC-CAP has helped break the cycle of poverty in these families that stems from a lack of educational opportunity. These graduates and future generations of graduates will ultimately contribute to the economic prosperity of the city. We know Ted will continue to inspire the students and families we serve today and help DC-CAP expand the possibilities for our students well into the future.”

#### **About DC-CAP**

DC-College Access Program (DC-CAP) is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to helping *all* DC students prepare for, enroll in, and graduate from college as the cornerstone of a successful future. Since 1999, DC-CAP has worked with parents and educational partners, inspiring, counseling and providing fundamental support to help low income DC students believe that college is possible, find the path to get there and complete their education. By building long-term relationships and connections, DC-CAP is with students every step of the way, helping them to navigate the complex waters of the college application and financial aid process as well as providing integral support while they are in college. DC-CAP has helped more than 23,000 students enroll in college, supports more than 7,000 currently in college through its retention division, has awarded more than \$33 million in scholarships, and has celebrated the success of more than 6,500 college graduates who otherwise never would have had the opportunity for higher education. For more information, visit [www.dccap.org](http://www.dccap.org).

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