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125th Anniversary Dinner Celebrates National Louis University's History as Education Pioneer

National Louis presents inaugural Pioneer Awards to Andrew Mason and Martin J. (Mike) and Patricia Koldyke and announces \$1.75 million in major gifts

January 20, 2012 (Chicago, IL) – National Louis University held its 125th Anniversary Dinner yesterday in celebration of the institution's history of providing educational access to individuals who otherwise might not have had the opportunity, including adult, immigrant and minority populations. At the event, chaired by Elizabeth and Jeff Louis and Diana and Bruce Rauner, and held at a private club in Chicago, the first Pioneer Awards were presented to Andrew Mason, and Martin J. (Mike) and Patricia Koldyke. The university also announced three major gifts of nearly \$1.75 million, recognizing the university's history of educational excellence.

Urban education pioneer and community activist Elizabeth Harrison, founded National Louis based on the then-revolutionary idea to create a college to train women to teach very young children and thus improve prospects for entire families and neighborhoods. She believed in the value of education as "preparation for life."

In this spirit, Dr. Nivine Megahed, president of National Louis University, awarded the first annual Pioneer Awards to Mr. Mason and Mr. and Mrs. Koldyke because they have exhibited exceptional character and a sense of higher purpose in their lives and work; thereby increasing opportunity and quality of life for others. These reflect the core values of Harrison, as well as the university.

At the 125th anniversary celebration, National Louis also announced three major gifts from the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, the Michael W. Louis Charitable Trust and The Rauner Family Foundation.

The E2 Initiative, funded through a \$749,599 grant from **the Robert R. McCormick Foundation**, aims to increase the percentage of students within at-risk groups such as active duty, veteran and Hispanic populations – who complete their college education and are career-ready upon graduation. The E2 Initiative will fund support services for two programs, The Veterans Program and The Harrison Fellowship, both focusing on traditionally underserved populations. The program will begin in fall 2012 and will run through 2014.

The Michael W. Louis Charitable Trust provided National Louis with a gift of \$500,000. This gift is primarily designated to support the *Gateway Scholarship Fund* to provide greater financial support for underserved and minority students. This gift was announced by National Louis Trustee Margaret Moreland and demonstrates the Louis Family's continued commitment to the University.

The Rauner Family Foundation is committing \$500,000 over 4 years in support of a leadership position to head National Louis' new research agenda. The Rauner Family Foundation gift is in direct alignment with the institution's *Fund for National Distinction* initiative for innovation which is to launch a *Research & Innovation Fund* to support applied research in communities and dynamic approaches that leverage technology in education. This pledge demonstrates the Rauner family's ongoing commitment to supporting community resources.

"Tonight's Anniversary Dinner is a celebration of the rich traditions and values that the university has sustained for more than 125 years and an opportunity to recognize individuals who have demonstrated innovation, persistence, and a tremendous commitment to the collective social good with transformative results," said Dr.



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Nivine Megahed, president, National Louis University. “National Louis looks forward to remaining committed to the values of founder Elizabeth Harrison’s vision and, through the generous gifts of three major donors, driving forward our role as leaders advancing knowledge with respect to education and improving communities.”

Phil Ponce, host of WTTW’s *Chicago Tonight*, was the master of ceremonies.

About Andrew Mason

Andrew Mason is the founder of Groupon as well as The Point, the collective action platform from which Groupon was born. Andrew’s mostly unremarkable existence began in Pittsburgh, PA; he moved to Chicago in 1999 to attend Northwestern University, where he lives today with his wife and over 20 cats. Andrew graduated with a degree in music, the uselessness of which served as a chief inspiration to not be useless. Out of college, Andrew became a software developer by no ambition of his own, but via a series of acquaintances offering to give him money to do incrementally harder stuff on computers. Excited by the power of technology to change the world, Andrew developed Policy Tree, a policy debate visualization tool, and won a scholarship to attend the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy in 2006. In school for only 3 months, the flighty Andrew dropped out after receiving an unexpected offer to fund the idea that would become The Point. The Point, a ground-breaking approach to online collective action and fundraising, launched in November 2007. One year later, Andrew founded Groupon, leveraging the collective buying technology of The Point to make it easier (and cheaper) to experience all the great stuff in Chicago. At various points in his life, Andrew has also started businesses to deliver bagels as if they were newspapers, and sell muffins with cranberries that he found in his backyard to people living on his street. When he isn’t working, Andrew spends most of his time writing his life coach training book, *Unleash the Power Within the Power Within: Self Help For Self Helpers*.

About Martin J. and Patricia Koldyke

Martin J. (Mike) Koldyke is the retired chairman of Frontenac Company, Chicago, a venture capital firm that he founded in 1971. He was raised in Northville, Michigan, and graduated from Purdue University, after which he served as a First Lieutenant in the U. S. Army Counter Intelligence Corps. Prior to forming Frontenac Company in 1971, he was a Vice President and voting stockholder of Dean Witter & Company, Inc. Mike is the Founder and Chairman Emeritus of the Academy for Urban School Leadership and Founder and Chairman Emeritus of the Golden Apple Foundation for Excellence in Teaching in Chicago. He currently serves on the boards of After School Matters, Golden Apple Foundation of New Mexico, the Chicago News Cooperative, and the New Mexico Highlands University Foundation.

A graduate of Vassar College, Patricia Blunt Koldyke began her career at Harper’s Bazaar Magazine in New York before moving to Chicago with her husband in 1961. She is co-founder of The Committee for Handgun Control (now the Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence) and her past activities include the Women’s Board of Children’s Memorial Medical Center; the League of Women Voters; the Vassar Club; and the presidencies of the Kenilworth Citizens Advisory Committee and the Kenilworth Public Library District Board of Trustees. Currently she serves on the Board of the Golden Apple Foundation, the Brain Research Foundation, and the Persons with Disabilities Fund at the Chicago Community Trust.

Mike and Patricia Koldyke currently reside in Chicago and have four children and eight grandchildren.

About National Louis University

In 1886, founder Elizabeth Harrison took the idea of early childhood education and built around it one of the first four-year colleges for teachers. Today, in the process of educating students, faculty in the National College of Education, College of Arts and Sciences and College of Management and Business continue to act on some of the most urgent problems of our time and our society. They are innovators, animated by an intense dedication to their students and a commitment to building more effective and more caring schools, communities and societies. For more information, visit www.nl.edu or www.nl.edu/125.

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