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## **Dallas Urban Debate Alliance Honored at Belo Mansion for Dedication to Minority & At-Risk Students**

DALLAS, TX – Oct. 29, 2014 – The Dallas Urban Debate Alliance, a non-profit organization that empowers students through competitive debate, received the Jack Lowe Sr. Award for Community Leadership during the Dallas Bar Association’s 12<sup>th</sup> annual Education Symposium luncheon held on Oct. 29. The half-day symposium took place at the Belo Mansion and focused on improving public education.

The Jack Lowe Sr. Award for Community Leadership, started in 2003 by the Dallas Bar Association, is named after the man who founded TDIndustries (formally known as Texas Distributors Inc.) and led the Dallas Alliance Education Task Force that created DISD’s initial desegregation plan in 1976. The award recognizes outstanding leadership in improving education for low-income people in Dallas. Lowe Sr.’s son, also named Jack Lowe, succeeded him as CEO of TDIndustries and is currently active in many civic and industry organizations.

“This award has special significance for our organization. The Dallas Bar Association, the Dallas Bar Foundation, the Texas Bar Foundation, and numerous law firms have been critical partners in the success of Dallas Urban Debate. Without their support, we would not have the reach we have today,” said Craig Budner, Chairman of the Board for the Dallas Urban Debate Alliance and head of the Dallas and Houston offices of K&L Gates. “Additionally, at the time of our formation in 2007, Jack Lowe, Jr. helped introduce us to key leaders in the Dallas ISD and allowed us to present our value proposition to the district. Without his support, we may never have gotten off the ground. To receive an award named in honor of the Lowe family is particularly meaningful.”

The Dallas Urban Debate Alliance builds reading, research, communication and critical thinking skills among DISD high school and middle school students. The Debate Alliance targets low-income and ethnically diverse populations of DISD students who are at risk of not graduating from high school. Additionally, competitive debate is available in suburban schools and is less common in urban schools due to financial constraints.

This is where Dallas Urban Debate steps in. It levels the playing field, providing urban students with access to the same academically rigorous debate programs available to their suburban peers. Peer reviewed studies indicate that debate leads to increased attendance rates, higher GPAs, higher graduation rates, better college-readiness and increases the likelihood of attending a 4-year college.

“None of this would be possible without the support of the Dallas Independent School District,” said Adam Powell, Executive Director of the Dallas Urban Debate Alliance. “The district’s commitment to student success has been a critical element in the growth and success of Dallas Urban Debate.”

Past recipients of the Jack Lowe Sr. Award are:

- Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship of Greater Dallas (2013)
- Vickery Meadow Learning Center (2012)

- Jubilee Park (2011)
- Charles “C.J.” Johnson (2010)
- Former DISD Superintendent Linus Wright (2009)
- Honorable Florence Shapiro, Former Senator, R-Plano (2008)
- State Senator Royce West, D-Dallas (2007)
- Dallas lawyer Mike Boone (2006)
- Lead DISD desegregation plaintiff Sam Tasby (2005)
- Lawyer and education innovator Tom Luce (2004)
- Former Trammell Crow executive J. McDonald Williams (2003)

**About Dallas Urban Debate Alliance:** A non-profit organization, launched in 2007, works to expand the access of competitive academic debate to high schools throughout the Dallas area. Dallas Urban Debate Alliance operates in about 50 DISD high schools and middle schools and serves about 1,000 Dallas high school students. In 2012, the National Urban Debate League gave the Dallas Urban Debate Alliance the National League of the Year award. To learn more about the organization, visit [www.dallasurbandebate.org](http://www.dallasurbandebate.org).

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