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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UDC ANNOUNCES HARRY E. JOHNSON, SR., AS COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER

Documentary Filmmaker Aviva Kempner to receive Honorary Degree



Washington, DC — The University of the District of Columbia has selected Harry E. Johnson, Sr., Chief Executive Officer of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Foundation, Inc., as the keynote speaker for its the 42nd Commencement Convocation. Johnson and acclaimed documentary filmmaker Aviva Kempner will both be presented Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters degrees at that time.

Johnson led the Washington, D.C., Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Foundation as President and CEO from 2002-2011 when the Memorial was dedicated by President Barack Obama. Under Johnson's leadership, the MLK Memorial Foundation successfully raised \$127 million dollars to complete the memorial. Once the Memorial was erected, Johnson created The Memorial Foundation to promote the tenets of democracy and justice, and to support programs that inspire the spirit and work of Dr. King's living memorial.

"During this commemorative season that marks 50 years since the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we are moved by Mr. Johnson's commitment to public service and his outstanding leadership of the MLK Memorial Foundation," said UDC President Ronald Mason, Jr.

The University also will honor the life's work of documentarian and activist Aviva Kempner, whose groundbreaking films have shed light on the lesser-known stories of Jewish American heroes. Her latest film, *Rosenwald*, tells the story of Julius Rosenwald, who together with Booker T. Washington, built more than 5,300 schools for African American students across the Jim Crow South during the early 20th century.

"Like UDC founder Myrtilla Miner, philanthropist Julius Rosenwald was a strong advocate for the education of African Americans. By telling his story, Aviva Kempner has chronicled an important chapter of American history," Mason said.



More than 800 graduates are expected to participate in the Commencement Convocation that will be held on Saturday, May 12th, beginning at 10:00 a.m. at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, located at 801 Mount Vernon Place, N.W., Washington, D.C.

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