



NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Lyndsie Post
616-732-1084
lyndsie.post@davenport.edu

HAUENSTEIN TO RECEIVE 2015 PETER C. COOK EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS AWARD

Author Mitch Albom to speak at gala, Davenport's annual scholarship fundraiser

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., Feb. 16, 2015 – Ralph Hauenstein, a former journalist, war hero, entrepreneur and philanthropist, will be honored with the 2015 Peter C. Cook Excellence in Business Award at Davenport University's annual Excellence in Business Gala, benefitting student scholarships. The featured guest speaker at the event, to be held at DeVos Place on May 8, is Mitch Albom, a bestselling author, nationally acclaimed newspaper columnist for the *Detroit Free Press*, host of two popular radio shows, and a television commentator.

**Excellence in Business Award Gala
DeVos Place
6 p.m., May 8, 2014**

"Davenport's Excellence in Business Gala will be a memorable celebration of business excellence as exemplified by Ralph Hauenstein, who at 102 years of age has lived an extraordinary life that epitomizes service, dedication and leadership," said Dr. Richard J. Pappas, President of Davenport University. "Ralph is a magnificent selection as recipient of the Peter C. Cook Excellence in Business Award."

"We are looking forward to Mitch Albom joining us for this celebration," said Pappas. "His national bestselling books like *Tuesdays with Morrie* and *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* pose tough lessons about life and death and the importance of giving back to others."

"The Excellence in Business Award Gala is the university's largest annual fundraising event," said Peg Luy, Executive Vice President for Alumni & Development. "This event directly benefits student scholarships, allowing many Davenport students to achieve academic success that might not have been otherwise possible. We are thankful for sponsors and attendees who make this one of the most anticipated events in West Michigan each year."

Table reservations and purchase of individual tickets can be made by calling 616-233-3412 or by visiting www.davenport.edu/EIB.

About Mitch Albom

Mitch Albom is a bestselling author, nationally acclaimed newspaper columnist for the *Detroit Free Press*, host of two popular radio shows and a television commentator who regularly appears on ESPN's Sports Reporters and ABC. His ten books include *Tuesdays with Morrie*, *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* and *For One More Day*.

Albom has been featured on national television programs including the Oprah Winfrey Show, NBC's Today Show, the CBS Early Show, Larry King Live, Charlie Rose, Nightline and Good Morning America. A 2013 inductee of the Sportswriters Hall of Fame, he has been named the #1 Sports Columnist in the nation 13 times in the past 15 years by the Associated Press Sports Editors (APSE). During his storied career, Albom has received more than 100 writing awards from AP, UPI, Headliners Club, National Sportswriters and Broadcasters Associations and others.

Albom has founded seven charities, all in the metropolitan Detroit area, including: S.A.Y. Detroit, which operates a family health clinic; A Time to Help, volunteer organization; and A Hole in the Roof Foundation, which repairs faith-based homeless shelters. He also runs the Have Faith Haiti Mission in Port Au Prince, which helps impoverished children and orphans.

About Ralph Hauenstein

He has been a journalist, war hero, entrepreneur and philanthropist, and he's not finished yet. At 102 years of age, Ralph Hauenstein has lived an extraordinary life that exemplifies service and leadership. Born in Fort Wayne, Indiana, in 1912, Hauenstein moved to Grand Rapids at the age of 12. He attended Central High School, where he ran track and played football. It was on the gridiron that he ran into the future 38th president of the United States, Gerald R. Ford, who played for Grand Rapids South. They would become lifelong friends.

Hauenstein's formal service to our nation began in 1935. At the age of 23, he saw the "gathering storm" over Europe and sensed the U.S. would become embroiled in a future conflict with totalitarian regimes, so he underwent officer training in the U.S. Army. The following year, Hauenstein was commissioned as a second lieutenant and was assigned to command an all-African-American Civilian Conservation Corps camp near Cadillac. As a young commander, he demonstrated a far-sighted commitment to civil rights by expanding the opportunities of the African Americans with whom he served.

At the age of 27, Hauenstein returned to civilian life as a journalist and shortly became city editor of the *Grand Rapids Herald*. In December 1940, however, just a year before Pearl Harbor, he returned to active duty. For most of the Second World War he was based in Iceland and London, rapidly rising to the rank of colonel. As chief of the Intelligence Branch in the U.S. Army's European theater of operations, he worked directly under Gen. Dwight Eisenhower. In 1944-45, traveling to the Continent on a mission to find Hitler and other Nazi leaders, he was among the first Americans into liberated Paris, war-torn Germany, and Nazi concentration camps. It was in Paris that he now-famously advised General de Gaulle to close the brothels, where American soldiers might be prone to let military secrets slip. Col. Hauenstein was subsequently awarded the French *Croix de Guerre* with Palm and Legion of Honor, as well as the U.K.'s Order of the British Empire.

After the war, Hauenstein saw opportunities to build bridges between the U.S. and a Europe devastated by war. He established Tri-Continental Trading Company in New York, partnering with European enterprises to provide goods and services to consumers in Europe, the Middle East, South America, the Caribbean, and elsewhere. He also owned Werner Lehara, a food equipment manufacturing company based in Grand Rapids.

During the Eisenhower administration in the 1950s, Hauenstein served his former boss again as a consultant on the President's Advisory Commission. In the mid-'60s he served as an auditor at the Second Vatican Council in Rome. In 1996, he was part of the team that supervised the first free elections in Russia.

A philanthropist and a risk-taker, Hauenstein underwrote a modern bakery in Haiti, providing jobs for hundreds of workers and thousands of distributors at a difficult time in that nation's history. He set up a school in Florida that taught people from developing countries how to run a fully-automated bakery and provide good jobs in their local economies. His generosity also has benefited a variety of organizations devoted to education and medical research in West Michigan. He served on the board that founded the Van Andel Institute and helped establish the neurological center at St. Mary's Hospital in Grand Rapids.

By his own admission, Hauenstein has never really retired. At the age of 102, he works almost every day and is active in numerous causes. When U2's Bono came to Grand Rapids in 2006 and learned the scope of Hauenstein's charitable and educational endeavors, he called Ralph Hauenstein "a cool cat."

About the Peter C. Cook Excellence in Business Award

The Peter C. Cook Excellence in Business Award was established in 1998 in honor of alumnus Peter C. Cook. The award recognizes business and community leaders who exemplify the entrepreneurial spirit, success and generosity to community that are hallmarks of the Davenport University mission, vision and values. More than \$2.1 million has been raised to benefit Davenport University Foundation scholarships through the annual award galas over the past 18 years.

Previous award recipients include Peter C. Cook, Frederik Meijer, Richard M. DeVos, Wilbur A. Lettinga, David G. Frey, John Spoelhof, Robert L. Hooker, Betsy DeVos, Donald W. Maine, John C. Canepa, Fred P. Keller, Ambassador Peter F. Secchia, Doug DeVos, Steve Van Andel, James Hackett, David and Carol Van Andel, Michael Jandernoa, and Blake Krueger.

About Davenport University

Founded in 1866, Davenport is a private, non-profit university serving nearly 9,000 students at campuses across Michigan and online. With tuition among the lowest of all private universities in the state, Davenport provides high academic quality, small class sizes, conveniently located campuses, faculty with real-world experience, and more than 50 dynamic undergraduate and graduate programs addressing in-demand careers in business, technology, health professions and urban education. More information is available at www.davenport.edu.

###