



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **BIRGIT KLOHS TO RECEIVE 2016 PETER C. COOK EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS AWARD**

*Journalist Anderson Cooper to speak at gala, Davenport's annual scholarship fundraiser*

**GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., Dec. 17, 2015** – Birgit Klohs, President and CEO of The Right Place, Inc., will be honored with the 2016 Peter C. Cook Excellence in Business Award at Davenport University's 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Excellence in Business Gala, benefitting student scholarships. The featured guest speaker at the event, to be held at DeVos Place on May 6, will be Anderson Cooper, anchor of CNN's *Anderson Cooper 360°* and host of *AC 360° Later*.

**19<sup>th</sup> Annual Excellence in Business Award Gala**  
**DeVos Place**  
**6 p.m., May 6, 2016**

"Davenport's Excellence in Business Gala is a celebration of business excellence as exemplified by Birgit Klohs, who has made an indelible mark on Grand Rapids in her 28 years of leading The Right Place," said Dr. Richard J. Pappas, President of Davenport University. "Birgit's expertise as a leader in economic development and her success in bringing many outstanding companies to this market make her an outstanding selection as recipient of the Peter C. Cook Excellence in Business Award."

"The Excellence in Business Award Gala is the University's largest annual fundraising event where every dollar raised directly benefits students," said Peg Luy, Executive Vice President for Alumni & Development. "We are so grateful for the support of our generous contributors and business community who help DU students find success in the classroom and in their career."

**Table reservations and purchase of individual tickets can be made by calling 616-233-3412 or by visiting [www.davenport.edu/EIB](http://www.davenport.edu/EIB).**

#### **About Birgit Klohs**

Birgit Klohs is the President and CEO of The Right Place, Inc., located in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Under her 28-years of leadership, the organization has spurred the creation of over 40,000 new jobs and \$4 billion in capital investment. More importantly, Klohs has set in place an economic development framework for long-term, sustained economic growth to position west Michigan for the future.

Klohs serves as West Michigan's leading economic development strategist, collaborating with local and county municipalities as well as Midwest regional groups like the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. Her efforts to reach

out and collaborate have resulted in the creation of a 13-county economic region in West Michigan representing a labor force of nearly 800,000 people.

A native of Germany and leading authority on international business and economic development, Klohs also leads The Right Place's international business development strategy. She conducts numerous trade missions to Europe, Asia and the Middle East each year, both independently and in collaboration with state and national dignitaries. She is a frequent speaker on national and international economic development, having addressed audiences in France, England, Germany, Sweden, China, Australia, and Israel.

Most recently, Klohs was appointed by Governor Snyder to the International Crossing Authority set up to oversee the construction of the new North American International Trade Crossing.

In her role at The Right Place, Klohs is not only an economic development leader, but has also become a community leader. She believes that a community's quality of life is just as important as its quality of commerce. To support this, Klohs serves on several other regional efforts to improve West Michigan's quality of life, including: the region's aeronautics board, convention and arena authority. She also serves on several other Boards' of Directors.

Klohs' economic development career began as an Industrial Consultant with the Economic Development Corporation of Berrien County, Michigan. She later served with the Michigan Department of Commerce and then Grand Valley State University, where she was the Assistant Director of the Office for Economic Expansion. Prior to her position at GVSU, she was affiliated with Prince Corporation.

She is a graduate of Western Michigan University; as well as a graduate of the Economic Development Institute; and completed the economic development finance program through the National Development Council. She also attended Harvard University's program on negotiation.

She is the recipient of numerous awards and honors, including:

- The Life Time Achievement Award for Best Managed Non-Profit
- Newsmaker of the Year Award
- Western Michigan University – Distinguished Alumni Award
- 50 Most Influential Woman in West Michigan
- The Athena Award

Klohs is married to her husband Greg Northrup. She enjoys gourmet cooking, gardening, historical reading and traveling.

### **About Anderson Cooper**

Anderson Cooper is the anchor of CNN's *Anderson Cooper 360°*, a nightly newscast that goes beyond the headlines—keeping politicians and policy makers honest with in-depth reporting and investigations. The show airs weeknights at 8:00pm ET on CNN. Cooper also hosts *AC360° Later*, a provocative and informed panel discussion program, focusing on the day's news and events. *AC 360° Later* airs Mondays through Thursdays on CNN/U.S. and CNN International at 10:00pm ET.

Since the start of his career in 1992, Cooper has covered nearly all-major news events around the world, often reporting from the scene. Most recently, he has extensively covered the conflicts in Syria and Egypt, the NSA surveillance programs, the Boston Marathon bombing and the Sandy Hook shootings.

Cooper has also played a pivotal role in CNN's political and election coverage and has anchored from conventions and moderated several presidential debates. In October 2015, Cooper moderated CNN's Republican debate from Las Vegas.

In addition to his shows on CNN, Cooper is a regular correspondent for CBS's *60 Minutes*.

At CNN and *60 Minutes*, Cooper has won numerous major journalism awards. Cooper helped lead CNN's "Peabody Award"-winning coverage of Hurricane Katrina and "DuPont Award"-winning coverage of the 2004 tsunami. Additionally, he has been awarded eight "Emmy Awards", including two for his coverage of the earthquake in Haiti, and an "Edward R Murrow Award".

*Dispatches from the Edge*, Cooper's memoirs about covering wars and disasters, topped *The New York Times'* best seller list and other best seller charts.

Before joining CNN, Cooper was an ABC News correspondent and host of the network's reality program *The Mole*. Cooper anchored ABC's off-beat overnight newscast *World News Now*, and was a correspondent for *World News Tonight* as well as *20/20*.

Cooper joined ABC from Channel One News, where he served as chief international correspondent. During that time, he reported and produced stories, often on his own, from conflicts in Bosnia, Cambodia, Haiti, Israel, Myanmar, Russia, Rwanda, Somalia and South Africa. Channel One News was a school television network seen daily in more than 12,000 classrooms nationwide.

Cooper graduated from Yale University in 1989 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science. He also studied Vietnamese at the University of Hanoi. Cooper is based in New York City.

### **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, Blake Krueger and Ralph Hauenstein.

### **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](http://www.davenport.edu).

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