



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas Receives Honorary Degree From Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science**

Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science will confer an honorary degree on Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas at its 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Commencement Ceremony at the StubHub Center in Carson.

“It is an honor to be recognized by an institution founded on the principles of equity and social justice to provide high quality instruction for aspiring healthcare professionals who will serve our most vulnerable communities,” said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas, a longtime supporter of CDU, and a member of its Board of Directors from 1986-1991.

CDU confers honorary degrees to distinguished individuals who have demonstrated intellectual and humane values consistent with its mission. Also receiving an honorary degree is Dr. Loretta Jones, founder and CEO of Healthy African American Families, Phase II (HAAF-II).

With US Rep. Nanette Barragán delivering the commencement address, CDU will award 365 graduates with certificates, diplomas, associates, bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the College of Science and Health, College of Medicine, and the Mervyn M. Dymally School of Nursing.

“This year’s group of honorary degree recipients, as well as our commencement speaker, offers our graduates yet another example of the tremendous impact that

dedicated service and activism have on the communities in which we live and work,” said CDU President/CEO Dr. David Carlisle. “We look forward to welcoming and honoring these individuals, as well as the accomplishments of the Class of 2018.”

Supervisor Ridley-Thomas has been a member of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors since 2008, championing efforts to address the crisis of homelessness, criminal justice reform, healthcare for all, living wage, economic and workforce development, transit improvements, affordable quality education, voting rights, and a host of other critical issues. He is widely regarded as the foremost advocate of neighborhood participation in government decision-making by virtue of his founding of the Empowerment Congress.

First elected to public office in 1991, he previously served at the Los Angeles City Council, California State Assembly, and California State Senate. His political career was preceded by a decade as the executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Greater Los Angeles.

Supervisor Ridley-Thoms earned BA and MA degrees, along with secondary and adult education credentials, from Immaculate Heart College. He holds a Ph.D. in Social Ethics from the University of Southern California, with a focus on Social Criticism and Social Change.

CDU also conferred an honorary degree on Dr. Jones, who has dedicated her life to instilling hope and healing in communities and society at large with a career as a civil rights activist, health policy advocate and social architect spanning more than four decades. In an effort to level the playing field for all people, Dr. Jones continues her unyielding commitment as a change agent, working to eliminate disparities in community and individual health, and to improve community development and opportunity.

Located in the Watts-Willowbrook area of South Los Angeles, CDU is a private, nonprofit, student-centered minority-serving medical and health sciences university that is committed to cultivating diverse health professional leaders who are dedicated to social justice and health equity for underserved populations through outstanding education, research, clinical service, and community engagement.

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