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PRESS RELEASE

Minnesota Businessman and Distinguished Philanthropist Mark Davis to Receive 2016 Horatio Alger Award

Horatio Alger Association names 13 exceptional corporate and civic leaders, each of whom has triumphed over adversity to achieve success, to its Member Class of 2016

WASHINGTON, D.C. (December 2, 2015) – Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, Inc., a nonprofit educational organization honoring the achievements of outstanding individuals and encouraging youth to pursue their dreams through higher education, today announced that Mark Davis, chairman, Davis Family Holdings, has been selected for membership in the prestigious organization. Mr. Davis joins 12 other accomplished business and civic leaders from across North America in receiving this honor in 2016. Since its establishment in 1947, the Horatio Alger Award is annually bestowed upon recognized leaders who have succeeded, despite facing adversity, and who are committed to both philanthropy and higher education.

Mr. Davis was born in Frost, MN, at the end of the Great Depression. His father, determined to provide for his wife and children, worked at several creameries, causing his family to move frequently. Ultimately, his father bought St. Peter Creamery, a small factory with two employees in rural Minnesota, which, among other things, made butter for the military during World War II. Mr. Davis grew up working for his father and drove a school bus, which helped him pay his way through Mankato State University (now Minnesota State). He earned a degree in business administration and economics in just two and a half years, and began working at St. Peter Creamery full-time to support his wife, Mary, and their young children. In the late 1960s, Mr. Davis left the butter business and began making cheese. In 1969, he and his father purchased Le Sueur Creamery, partnering with its owner, Mr. Allen Cords, and in 1971, founded the Le Sueur Cheese Company, which eventually merged with his father’s creamery. Slow to take off, Mr. Davis and his family lived modestly throughout most of the 1970s. After 10 years of challenging times, Le Sueur Cheese Company began to take off. In 1996, it merged with Jerome Cheese Company, which Mr. Davis founded with backing from Phillips Morris Inc, the parent company of Kraft Foods. The merger launched Davisco Foods International, which today is a $1.2 billion business that produces one million pounds of cheese per day. He led the business until 2012, at which point his son was appointed CEO and Mr. Davis became chairman. In addition to Davisco Foods International, the Davis family also owns Cambria, a manufacturer and retailer of quartz countertops, Cambria Mortgage, Davis Family Dairies, and Sun Country Airlines.

“The entrepreneurial spirit and determination that Mr. Davis displays are traits that all Members of Horatio Alger Association possess,” said Byron Trott, president and CEO, Horatio Alger Association and 2011 Horatio Alger Award recipient. “We recognize that those who demonstrate an unwavering will to succeed – despite facing seemingly insurmountable challenges – so often accomplish what seems to others to be impossible. Mr. Davis is living proof of this philosophy, and we are pleased to present him with this Award.”

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Passionate about his Minnesota roots, Mr. Davis is involved in a number of charitable initiatives in his home state. He is a board member of the Minnesota State University Mankato Foundation, which is dedicated to securing private gifts and grants that benefit the university, and also devotes time and resources to both the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation and the Minnesota FFA Foundation. Mr. Davis is a benefactor to Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Minnesota Historical Society and Camp Cambria, a camp for children with juvenile arthritis. He has also provided $5 million in scholarships to underprivileged, at-risk youth.

Regarding the Horatio Alger Award, Mr. Davis commented, "It is a great honor to be inducted into Horatio Alger Association and to be recognized for overcoming the various challenges that helped shape me both professionally and personally. I have always believed in the power of hard work, and I am proud to stand with such an outstanding group of individuals who have achieved success, despite having faced significant challenges. I look forward to working with the membership to instill these same principles in promising young Scholars."

Through its Members, Horatio Alger Association aims to educate young people about the limitless opportunities afforded to them by the free-enterprise system. To further this goal, the organization awards scholarships to outstanding high school students who are committed to pursuing higher education and giving back to their communities. Like Association Members, Horatio Alger Scholars have faced numerous challenges, but have also displayed unmatched resilience in overcoming them. Since the scholarship program was established in 1984, Horatio Alger Association has provided more than $110 million to students in need. Scholarships are funded solely through the generosity of Association Members, Life Partners and friends.

Mr. Davis and the Member Class of 2016 will be officially welcomed into the organization during the 69th Annual Horatio Alger Award Induction Ceremonies in Washington, D.C., from March 31-April 2, 2016. In addition to recognizing these tremendous leaders, Horatio Alger Association will also honor its 2016 National Scholarship recipients, affording both groups the opportunity to meet and learn from one another.

For more information about Horatio Alger Association and a full list of its Class of 2016, please visit www.horatioalger.org.

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About Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans:
Founded in 1947, the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, Inc. is dedicated to the simple but powerful belief that hard work, honesty and determination can conquer all obstacles. The Association honors the achievements of outstanding leaders who have accomplished remarkable successes in spite of adversity by bestowing upon them the Horatio Alger Award and inducting them as lifetime Members. Horatio Alger Members support promising young people with the resources and confidence needed to overcome adversity and pursue their dreams through higher education. Thanks to their generosity, the Association awards more than $11 million annually in undergraduate and graduate need-based scholarships across the United States and Canada and provides college support and mentoring services to its Scholars. Since 1984, the Association has awarded more than $110 million in college scholarships to more than 22,000 deserving young people. For more information, please visit www.horatioalger.org.