Judy Vredenburgh, president and CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, to speak at Philadelphia University Commencement on May 17

Moshe I. Meidar, ‘70, chair and CEO of MAG Industrial Automation Systems, will receive honorary Doctor of Engineering

PHILADELPHIA, April 13, 2009 – Judy Vredenburgh, president and CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, will speak at Philadelphia University’s 125th Commencement Sunday, May 17 at the Mann Center for the Performing Arts. Some 675 undergraduate and graduate students will receive diplomas during the ceremony.

At Commencement, Vredenburgh will be awarded the honorary degree Doctor of Humane Letters. Moshe I. Meidar, ’70, chairman and CEO of MAG Industrial Automation Systems, will receive the honorary degree Doctor of Engineering.

Since Vredenburgh become president in 1999, Big Brothers Big Sisters has more than doubled the number of children served to more than quarter of a million today. Under her leadership, the number of minority adults and children participating in the program has increased significantly, and an outreach program for children of prison inmates grew to 36,000 last year.

In addition, Vredenburgh recently was appointed to President Obama’s new Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships Advisory Council. Previously, Vredenburgh was CEO of apparel company Chess King.

“Judy Vredenburgh has extensive executive experience in both the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors, first as a successful fashion industry CEO and now as a national philanthropy leader,” said Philadelphia University President Stephen Spinelli Jr., Ph.D. “Her commitment and the commitment of Big Brothers Big Sisters to community service, mentoring and forging connections – often life-changing ones – with people in industry goes hand-in-hand with the values we respect and foster at Philadelphia University. She is a most-fitting speaker to send our 2009 graduates off to make their marks in the world.”

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Big Brothers Big Sisters, started more than a century ago, is the nation’s oldest and largest mentoring program, operating in 50 states and 12 countries worldwide. Through the organization, adults are paired with children ages six through 18 to help provide positive relationships, role models and experiences.

Research has shown that youths who participate in Big Brothers Big Sisters are 46 percent less likely to use illegal drugs, 27 percent less likely to use alcohol and 52 percent less likely to skip school than their peers.

Vredenburgh started her career in the retail industry, rising from buyer to top executive positions at Chess King and Sizes Unlimited. She also served as senior vice president at the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation. Vredenburgh received a B.S. from the University of Pennsylvania and an M.B.A. from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Meidar received his Bachelor of Science degree from Philadelphia University. MAG Industrial Automation Systems is a leading machine tool and systems company with manufacturing and sales operations throughout the world.

“Mr. Meidar is a wonderful example of the Power To Do spirit that we try to instill in every Philadelphia University graduate,” Spinelli said. “His success shows clearly what the value of an exceptional education coupled with drive and determination can accomplish.”

Philadelphia University’s Commencement will be held at the Mann Center for the Performing Arts in Philadelphia’s Fairmount Park at 11 a.m. on Sunday, May 17. For more information, go to http://www.philau.edu/commencement/.

Philadelphia University, founded in 1884, is a private university with 3,300 full- and part-time students enrolled in more than 50 undergraduate and graduate programs. As part of its core mission, the University focuses on professionally oriented programs that prepare students for successful careers, with a strong foundation in the liberal arts and an orientation toward interdisciplinary cooperation. Philadelphia University includes Schools of Architecture, Business Administration, Design and Media, Engineering and Textiles, Liberal Arts, and Science and Health.