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**NEWARK MAYOR, HONORABLE CORY BOOKER, IS
RAMAPO COLLEGE'S COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER**

(Mahwah) – The Honorable Cory A. Booker, Mayor of Newark, New Jersey, will deliver the commencement address at Ramapo College of New Jersey's 2008 ceremony Friday, May 16 beginning at 10 a.m. at the Bandshell. John A. Donofrio, Ramapo class of 1981, will receive the President's Award of Merit. A total of 1,358 students who completed their studies in January and May, or are expected to finish in August, are eligible to participate.

Booker took the oath of office as mayor of New Jersey's largest city on July 1, 2006 following a sweeping electoral victory. Enacting his vision for change, the mayor has embarked on an ambitious agenda that is mission-driver and results-oriented. His goal is for Newark to be America's leading urban city and set a national standard for urban transformation by marshalling its resources to achieve security, economic abundance and an environment that empowers individuals and families.

The mayor's political career began in 1998, after serving as Staff Attorney for the Urban Justice Center and as a Program Coordinator of the Newark Youth Project. He rose to prominence by upsetting a four-term incumbent to become Newark's Central Ward Councilman, where he served for four years. He is also the founder of Newark Now, a grassroots leadership nonprofit organization and a member of several boards including Integrity Inc.'s Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee of Yale Law School, Columbia University Teachers' College Board of Trustees, the Black Alliance

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for Educational Options, among others. He earned his B.A. and M.A. from Stanford University, a B.A. at Oxford University as a Rhodes scholar, and completed his law degree at Yale University.

The College's President's Award of Merit will be awarded to John A. Donofrio, Class of 1981. Along with his late wife, Martine Redman, he founded Briarpatch Inc. in 1992. Headquartered in Millburn, New Jersey, the privately-held company has created more than 100 educational games and puzzles that have won more than 275 "best toy" awards. Many of the products are games based on licensed book characters such as "Goodnight Moon" or the "I Spy" books. The couple became respected leaders within the toy industry, serving on the boards of the National School Supply and Equipment Association (NSSEA) and the American Specialty Toy Retailing Association (ASTRA) and were active in the Toy Industry Association and the Licensing Industry Merchandisers Association. Briarpatch Inc. was listed on *Inc.*'s 1998 Fastest Growing Private Companies in America. Previously, Donofrio ran North Mountain Press, a printing company based in Saddle Brook, New Jersey.

While at Ramapo, Donofrio majored in Environmental Studies, co-founded the college's *Environmental Studies Newsletter*, and was active at the Alternate Energy Center. An active environmentalist, he is a Trustee of both the Rahway River Association and the Morris Land Conservancy, where he is on the Executive Committee and Chair of the Partner for Greener Communities Committee. Donofrio is past president of the Rutherford Kiwanis Club. He lives in Short Hills.

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