

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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BASKETBALL GREAT CHRISTOPHER HERREN TO SPEAK ABOUT RESILIENCE AT NEW ENGLAND TECH COMMENCEMENT

INFLUENTIAL RHODE ISLAND LEADER DONALD R. SWEITZER TO BE HONORED

Former Boston Celtics and Fall River basketball superstar Chris Herren will deliver this year's commencement address to New England Institute of Technology graduates on Sunday, May 5, 2019, at the Dunkin Donuts Center in Providence, Rhode Island. His message will be one of resilience and the critical necessity to rebound from adversity.

Herren was a celebrated basketball star at Durfee High School in Fall River, MA. He scored a record 2,073 points as the community rallied around his success and cheered him on. He played two seasons in the NBA, one with his hometown team the Boston Celtics. But behind the success was a growing drug addiction. What started as drinking and smoking with high school friends morphed into an addiction to cocaine, painkillers and heroin. He went on to play in five countries overseas before losing everything to the disease of addiction.

With the help of family and the support of others in recovery, Herren worked his way to sobriety in 2008 and, one day at a time, has stayed there. He shares his story nationwide through Herren Talks giving hundreds of presentations to students, community groups and corporations each year. In 2011 he established Herren Project, a nonprofit foundation, that provides scholarships to navigate treatment and recovery housing, along with recovery coaching and online support for families. Most recently he founded Herren Wellness a residential health and wellness program that helps guests lead healthy, substance-free lives. His message and organizations have helped thousands of people.

New England Tech will present Christopher Herren with an honorary doctor of humane letters in recognition of his achievements and work to help others.

New England Tech will also honor Rhode Island business, community and political leader Donald R. Sweitzer with a doctor of humane letters degree. Sweitzer is the former chairman of International Game Technology (IGT) and has served in prominent roles in state and federal government. He served as senior vice president of global business development and public affairs for GTECH, the predecessor of IGT. He oversaw worldwide business development, public relations and government relations and is known for his integrity, leadership, and insight into complex geopolitical situations. All contributed to the growth and success of GTECH and IGT.

Sweitzer spent the first decades of his working life in politics and has had a lifelong devotion to working for the public good. He worked on Senator Ted Kennedy's presidential campaign, became finance director for the Democratic Party, then worked on the presidential

campaigns of Walter Mondale and Bill Clinton. He served as political director of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) during Clinton's first term.

Sweitzer was recently appointed treasurer of the Democratic Governors Association (DGA) by DGA chair, Governor Gina Raimondo. He is also co-chairman of the board of directors of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) a nongovernmental organization that supports citizens' rights to vote and helps emerging democracies run free and fair elections.

He has been a champion for Rhode Island citizens, working to improve the state's education funding and to create corporate career opportunities for underserved young adults. He has also shared his time and talent to advance the work of Phoenix House and the American Heart Association.

This year marks New England Tech's 78th commencement. The ceremony begins at 11 a.m. at the Dunkin' Donuts Center, located at 1 La Salle Square, Providence, Rhode Island.

Editors please note: We will have photos and video excerpts from Chris Herren's speech available. Please contact Susan Groh at (401) 952-0885.