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Urban College of Boston Transforms Lives

More than 1,000 family members and friends crowded into the Park Plaza Hotel in Boston on June 3 to applaud their wives, husbands, daughters, sons, significant others and even some grandparents who were honored with the presentation of degrees and credentials for higher education achievements most had never expected to accomplish.

Many were the first in their families to graduate from college.

"I never thought I would see college in my future," said Chenetha Smith, age 27, of Brighton. "I had "been out of school for five years, working in child care with little hope for advancement. My grandmother knew I needed credentials to move up and said "...check out the Urban College." So I gave it a try. Everyone was so welcoming... and all of a sudden I realized... I can do this!"

Chenetha did so well that she was awarded the coveted Robert M. Coard Endicott College Scholarship to complete her bachelor's degree at renowned Endicott College in Beverly, Massachusetts. The scholarship covers tuition, fees, room and board for two years. Coard, who died in 2009, was the long-time President/CEO of Action for **Boston Community Development** (ABCD) and founded the Urban College of Boston.

Dr. Richard Wylie, President,

Endicott College, said, "We are thrilled to welcome Chenetha to Endicott. She is one more example of the outstanding talent and commitment that Urban College graduates bring to the world. We created this scholarship to honor UCB Founder Bob Coard and his commitment to providing low-income, inner-city residents with access to higher education. We all benefit from providing pathways to success for these amazing students. I am so proud to be connected with Urban College!"

Another graduate, Tyra Anderson of Brighton, age 55; received the Jill Alexander Award for Excellence. Tyra has run her own family child care center, STAJYZ Child Care in Roslindale. The name incorporates the first two letters of her own three children's names! When she spoke at graduation, the three – now young adults – stood and applauded long and loud.

"Urban College changed my life for the better," Trya told the crowd. "The experience here has been transformational!"

Now, she says, she is equipped with the knowledge and skills to make a positive difference for all the young children and their families who she interfaces with in her child care center. "I'm passing on teaching-learning knowledge I gleaned here, I'm putting them on a better path in life," she stated.

