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**DEREK R. B. DOUGLAS TAKES THE HELM OF THE CIVIC COMMITTEE
AND COMMERCIAL CLUB OF CHICAGO**

Douglas brings decades of experience in policy, higher education, and civic engagement

Chicago, IL - The Civic Committee and Commercial Club of Chicago announced today that Derek R. B. Douglas will become their next President. Douglas joins the organizations after 10 years at the University of Chicago, most recently serving as Vice President for Civic Engagement and External Affairs. Douglas will replace Kelly R. Welsh and will assume the role on August 1st.

“I am honored to be selected to lead the Civic Committee and the Commercial Club of Chicago,” Douglas said. “The organizations have a tremendous history of addressing critical issues facing the Chicago region from transportation and infrastructure, education, fiscal policy, public safety, and economic development, including driving inclusive expansion of Chicago’s tech economy. I am eager to continue this important work in my new role.”

Derek brings decades of valuable experience in academia, law, policy development, and he has worked at the highest levels of federal and state government. Over his 10 years at the University of Chicago, Douglas led a number of key administrative units such as the Office of Civic Engagement, Office of Business Diversity, Commercial Real Estate Operations, and the Offices of Federal, State and Local Government Relations. He also partnered closely with the Polsky Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Douglas helped craft an expansive approach to critical issues such as economic and community development, business diversity, violence prevention, inclusive innovation and entrepreneurship, college readiness and access, civic leadership, and nonprofit capacity building. His higher education work will be especially valuable given the important role higher education plays in our region’s economy.

Douglas, 51, will become the first African American President of the Civic Committee and the Commercial Club of Chicago. Previously, he served on the White House Domestic Policy Council as Special Assistant to President Barack Obama and Director of its Urban Policy Office, where he advised President Obama on urban and metropolitan policy issues. Douglas graduated from the University of Michigan with highest honors in Economics and from Yale Law School.

In announcing the new appointment, Civic Committee Chair E. Scott Santi said, “It’s a privilege to have a leader of Derek’s caliber to guide the Civic Committee and Commercial Club into the future. His expertise and relationships across the academic, business, and civic community make him uniquely qualified to lead our organization and create a lasting impact on the world-class Chicago region.”

Commercial Club Chair Jennifer F. Scanlon said, “Derek’s deep policy expertise, strong record of leadership, and bold vision for Chicago’s future will undoubtedly further our mission of making the region a better place for everyone to live, work, and conduct business.”

“Derek has left an indelible mark on the University of Chicago throughout his 10-year tenure — advancing critical local initiatives, elevating the role of civic engagement across the University, and strengthening trust and mutually beneficial relationships between members of our campus and shared South Side communities,” said Paul Alivisatos, President of the University of Chicago. “I am confident he will bring that same drive to his new role, and the University and I look forward to continue partnering with Derek.”

Douglas replaces Kelly Welsh, who is stepping down after five years of leadership at the Civic Committee and Commercial Club.

“Over the past five years, Kelly has overseen a slate of truly transformative initiatives — from promoting technological innovation, to investing in our youth, to improving transportation,” said former President Barack Obama. “I am also deeply grateful for his steadfast support of our work to make the Obama Presidential Center a community hub for the South Side. It’s clear that Chicago will reap the benefits of his leadership for generations to come.”

“Derek’s broad experience in the academic and public sectors will be especially valuable as the Civic Committee and Commercial Club, and their affiliates, work to improve our region. He is an ideal choice to take our work forward,” stated Welsh, who will continue to serve as an active member of the Civic Committee and Commercial Club.

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