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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO MAKES AN ANNOUNCEMENT AT MEDGAR
EVERS COLLEGE PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Everybody, if you are celebrating anything, anywhere bring Laurie Cumbo with you –

[Laughter]

You will be really glad you did. I'm going to speak about this really good day very much from the heart and very briefly because I want to note, there's a little bit of a tale of two cities happening right there. The people in the sun are feeling a little bit better. Having been here on the shade side, I'm going to keep it brief to defend everyone in the shade. Dr. Wiltshire, congratulations – a profound congratulations to you. This has been your life's work. It has been a work of passion.

[Applause]

And sometimes, my friends, things actually work. So, Dr. Wiltshire, taking this dream and with a name attached that is a sacred name, Medgar Evers, and turned it into something great for generation after generation of our children, that is profoundly important work, and he has achieved it and it is our obligation to support him in that. So, doctor, thank you. Thank you so much.

[Applause]

I'm going to be very quick in saying this also. I want to thank everyone, every elected official, community leader, everyone from CUNY, everyone from City government. So, I've covered all those bases but now let me tell you about the people who made very clear to me that this is something that demanded focus and that was the right thing to do. And you think, a lot of times, that's outside voices but I also want to give credit where credit is due. Yes, Lorraine Grillo took up the baton from that town hall meeting, Dr. Wiltshire, and then once she looked at the details and worked with you on the plan, she became convinced it was the right thing to do. So, I heard Lorraine's strong voice. I want to thank you for leading the way, Lorraine Grillo.

[Applause]

And then I got consistent encouragement, shall we say, from my dear, dear friend Congress Member Yvette Clarke and I want to thank you for being a good conscious on this issue.

[Applause]

Also, because she is in the sun, you can see her incredibly stylish shoes which –

[Laughter]

Really, I just can't take my eyes off them. Those are wonderful. Those are wonderful.

[Laughter]

It goes without saying that not only does Laurie Cumbo cheer for what she believes in, but she fights for what she believes in. She talked to me and pushed me and reminded me and cajoled me. And Laurie, you were right all along, so I thank you.

[Applause]

A special thanks – two more special thanks to my Brooklyn member of the CUNY board who has done such great work for this community here, all of Brooklyn, now all of New York City. Una Clarke, thank you.

[Applause]

And finally, finally – a little bias there, that's okay –

[Laughter]

Finally, she's momma to us all, Yvette. Finally, someone who has done so much great work here but I also want to flag today – I'm going to leaving shortly because there is a Zoom gathering of mayors around the country with the president-elect and the vice president-elect and we're going to be talking about a lot of things but the number one thing we're going to be talking about is stimulus. And someone who has been leading the charge in the House of Representatives, we will need him again, Hakeem Jeffries, thank you.

[Applause]

So, I will say a few things and then I'll be able to stay just a little bit to hear a few of my colleagues and I'll be moving on but with joy because, again, we've done something that lives up to the sacred name of Medgar Evers. And right now we're in a moment of transformation in our city, in our country, and a moment of awakening. But let's not for a moment forget those who came before and were awake and willing to risk so much in their time. And Medgar Evers deserves to be in that pantheon of the great American heroes who gave their all to change us, to make us better. And so when we name something after him, it takes on a very, very special meaning. Our vision throughout these last seven years has been to address inequality but not just in words but in deeds. And that particularly comes to the area of education.

When we created Pre-K for All, that was something that Medgar Evers would have done too. When we said that – and Dr. Wiltshire mentioned Advanced Placement – when we said Advanced Placement courses are for children of every race, of every economic neighborhood, not just some but all, that’s the kind of thing Medgar Evers would have wanted too. When we say that the facilities in each community should be just as beautiful, just as modern, just as conducive to the greatness of our children, that’s what Medgar Evers would have done too. So, we’re going to do everything we can to live up to his example.

And the last thing I want to say is we are in a moment not only of transformation but a moment where we have to be poised for a great recovery and this city has done some things this year that really added to that history of greatness in New York City. When people said we could not come back from disease, we proved time and time again we could. We’ve done remarkable things but we’re going to have to do even more remarkable things ahead.

So, we are here today to celebrate something great for this neighborhood, for this borough, for the children at Medgar Evers, but also to celebrate that this is another part of our recovery, that we’re continuing to build things, that we’re continuing to make things better. We are far, far from done in New York City. I truly believe we put our shoulders and our backs to it. We do what New Yorkers do. We show the strength and resilience. The best is yet to come. Thank you. God bless you all.

[Applause]

President and CEO Lorraine Grillo, School Construction Authority: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Hello, my name is Lorraine Grillo and I’m the President and CEO of the New York City School Construction Authority. I am so delighted to be here today. This has been a long, long journey. We’ve worked really, really hard together to get to this point and I just want to say to the parents who fought so hard to get to here, thank you, thank you, thank you.

[Applause]

Of course, I have to say a special thank you to Mayor de Blasio because this would never have happened if it weren’t for his commitment to the children of the City of New York. You know, I’ve lived through a bunch of mayors and no one has taken an interest and worked so hard for our kids. So, thank you, Mayor.

[Applause]

And of course, all of our elected officials that are here, I’m so proud to be on the same stage as the rest of you. It’s an honor for me. But two special thank yous – first to Dr. Una Clarke who has been a partner in this with me and has worked so, so hard.

[Applause]

Una is a chair on our diversity board at the SCA. So, we work very, very closely and it’s an honor. Second special thank you goes to our partners at CUNY, Hector Batista and I, since the

day they took over CUNY, we have worked hand-in-hand to work to get this done and I want to say thank you to him.

[Applause]

So, let me start – I have the honor and privilege to represent to you Representative Congresswoman Clarke, who will say a few words to you. Thank you.

[Applause]

[...]

Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza: How can anyone follow our City Councilwoman. Wow. Just a history lesson, but more than that, a real lesson in tenacity and doing the right thing for the right reasons for a community that is rich with talent. So, I want to add my thank you to all of our elected officials that are here and everyone that has fought to make this day possible. You know, some people talk about the expense of education, it costs too much or there is not enough funding. And what this community has shown is that education is never an expense, it's an investment. And nowhere have we seen that investment bear the fruit of young people than at this incredible school, at Medgar Evers College Preparatory School.

So, this interagency partnership that we are celebrating today will have a huge impact and magnitude that we cannot even start to imagine for generations of students that will be educated here. This new space is going to include all the amenities that one would expect in a world class learning environment and I am thrilled that future students have access to a gymnasium, auditorium, classrooms that our students are so deserving of, and may I say, that are just expected in certain communities across the city. So, I am incredibly proud of that and this – these last nine months have been difficult for everyone but I can't even begin to describe how difficult it's been for our principals and I want to give a shoutout to the critical role that Dr. Michael Wiltshire played in this entire conversation.

[Applause]

Not only has he been the principal for almost two decades, and he's literally put thousands of students on a path to successful futures, but he never stops advocating for the community and he deserves a special thank you for all that he has done especially during these very, very difficult circumstances. I also want to give a shoutout to our superintendent, Fred Walsh, who is here as well, who always –

New York City Councilwoman, do you think – you think you didn't stop talking about this, every time I'd see Fred, he's say, hey, remember that little project we're talking about as well. And then also a huge shoutout to Commissioner and President Lorraine Grillo. She has an equity lens that is unlike anything I've ever seen from somebody and she very humbly will say, "I just fix and build buildings." And she does much, much more than that because she recognizes that a child's learning conditions are a child's future conditions. So, I want to thank you, Lorraine, for

all of your hard work. And I just have this last thing to say. You think today's a celebration. Wait until we cut that ribbon.

[Applause]

We'll see you back when we cut that ribbon. God bless you, stay safe, and today's a day of celebration.

[Applause]

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