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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## University of St. Thomas Receives \$4.5 Million for Mendenhall Achievement Center

HOUSTON (June 22, 2007) — A \$4.5 million gift to the University of St. Thomas from Trini Mendenhall Sosa, former owner of Fiesta Mart, Inc., will fund the Mendenhall Achievement Center and related programs to help close the gap for students desiring a University of St. Thomas education.

"We intend to encourage students, especially those from Hispanic families to apply and succeed at St. Thomas through a comprehensive three-part program," said UST President Robert Ivany.

The Mendenhall Achievement Center will provide integrated advising, counseling and tutoring services for the University's 3,000 campus-based students. The gift will also establish the Mendenhall Summer Institute, which will offer courses to prepare students for success in the fall. Grants based on family need and continued academic achievement will be available for students throughout their college careers.

"These programs will allow St. Thomas to establish a strong presence in Houston's rapidly expanding Hispanic community," said Ivany.

The multi-million dollar commitment is the largest gift ever given to the University of St. Thomas by an individual donor in the 60 year history of the University. Recently the University completed a successful \$67 million capital campaign that provided scholarships, endowments, facilities and transformed the neighborhood campus into an academic village in the heart of Houston.

"The University has propelled itself to a new level," said Mendenhall. "As an outgoing board member, this is a perfect opportunity to leave a legacy and help our future students and our wonderful community in Houston. As a woman investor, I'm invested in the future."

The University draws 95 percent of its undergraduates from Texas, and roughly 30 percent of the entire student population is Hispanic. UST is Houston's only private institution of higher education recognized by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities as an Hispanic-Serving Institution.

"We deeply appreciate Trini's vision, generosity and dedication to the Hispanic community and our University," said Ivany.

Mendenhall sits on the University of St. Thomas Board of Directors. She is president of Fulton Shopping Center, a real estate investment company located throughout Houston. She is vice-president of First Quality Fruit and Produce. Mendenhall's philanthropic dreams of supporting various causes became reality with the creation in 1997 of the Trini and O.C. Mendenhall Foundation.