



## *Memphis Speech*

Why Memphis? We may not be the biggest, but we are the best. The best at determination and persevering, at community building and giving back to the people and places that make this unstoppable city. And of course, the music, the food. Memphis is just plain good for your soul. The ideas, causes, and people born from this city have inspired hearts, pushed limits, and truly changed the world -and we're just getting started.

We're hard at work in Memphis, taking the charge to mix past and present to create a future unlike any other. Neighborhoods are being revitalized by Memphians who rethink existing spaces and investments are being made to improve our city. Take, for example, Crosstown Concourse: an abandoned Sears distribution center that sat dormant since 1993, reimagined into a vertical urban village of retailers, non-profits, a school, and restaurants all in a blighted neighborhood. Consider the \$9 billion expansion of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital into the Pinch District, or the rebirth of the Chisca Hotel and Tennessee Brewery for residential and commercial space, or the \$40 million invested in downtown Memphis to connect our citizens to the Soul of the City. That's the trend we're setting in this city - working together to build a better Memphis one person, place, and idea at a time and embracing every possibility to better our communities for everyone.

We recognize that not everyone in Memphis is born with the best opportunities to succeed, and we challenge and disrupt that fact with our philanthropic gestures and non-profits. Among the 50 largest regions in the U.S., Memphis is ranked #1 in the number of non-profit organizations per 10,000 population, and almost 60% of the are working to crack our hardest problems by serving low-income and disadvantaged populations. Memphians work year-round to support the people and programs within this city, lending their time, talent, money, innovation, and hearts. This commitment to generosity and spirit of community is what make Memphis, Memphis, so it's no surprise that Chronicle of Philanthropy named Memphis the most giving city in America.

Our culture in Memphis is unlike any other in the world, and a big part of that culture is our musical legacy. Musical geniuses have been flocking to Beale and recording studios in Memphis for decades, because Memphis is a city that was made for artists. From old school names like B.B. King, W.C. Handy, Otis Redding, and Elvis to the new school sounds of Valerie June, Justin Timberlake, and Bruno Mar's Grammy-winning hit "Uptown Funk," the sounds coming from Memphis have truly changed the way the world hears music.

But it's not just music; Memphis is bursting at the seams with talent that spans across many industries. We're home to the leading African American theatre in the county- Hattiloo (Theatre). Our museums are unlike anything else you'll find in the country- the National Ornamental Metal Museum is the only institution in the United States devoted to the advancement of the art and craft of fine metalwork, and Smithsonian Affiliate museum, the National Civil Rights Museum is noted as one of the nation's premier heritage and cultural museums. From street murals and theatre to museums and music, art is infused into every Memphian.

Yes, we've got great things in Memphis, but it isn't the physical attractions that makes Memphis a great place to be- it's the people. It takes a certain kind of person to be a Memphian: generous, welcoming, soulful, and enterprising. Memphians don't sit around waiting for things to happen, no, we roll up our sleeves and change the world around us. Some call it Grit and Grind, some call it Hustle, but I just call it soul. Welcome to the City of Soul, and don't forget to bring yours.