



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Lisa Leslie Joins Los Angeles Sparks Ownership Group**

*Sparks Legend Becomes First Former Player To Invest in a WNBA Team*

**LOS ANGELES** – At halftime of Friday's game vs. the Tulsa Shock, the Los Angeles Sparks announced that Lisa Leslie has joined the team's ownership group.

Leslie becomes the first former Women's National Basketball Association player to invest in a team in the league's 15-year history. An Inglewood, Calif., native and All-American at the University of Southern California, she starred for the Sparks for 12 seasons beginning with their inaugural campaign of 1997. During that time, Leslie led Los Angeles to back-to-back WNBA titles in 2001 and 2002 and earned three league MVP awards. Internationally, she has won four Olympic gold medals while representing the United States.

"With my investment in the Sparks, my basketball career has truly come full-circle," Leslie said. "After spending over a decade playing with the Sparks, and then the last two seasons as both a fan and team broadcaster, I couldn't be happier to rejoin the organization formally as a business partner and team ambassador. I look forward to being an asset to the Sparks in the areas of marketing and community outreach."

With this announcement, Leslie joins an ownership group that also includes Chairperson Paula Madison and Board Members Kathy Goodman and Carla Christofferson.

"Lisa has always been a member of the Sparks Family, and we're elated to welcome her as a team investor," Madison said. "Beyond her accomplishments on the court, Lisa is a savvy businesswoman and the epitome of grace and class."

"Congratulations to Lisa Leslie on joining the Los Angeles Sparks ownership group," said WNBA President Laurel J. Richie. "She is a trailblazing ambassador with a long legacy of being a role model for the WNBA both on and off the court. She achieves another first by joining the ownership group of the LA Sparks and we know she will do great work in this role."

On June 23, 2006, the Sparks' home court at STAPLES Center was re-named "Lisa Leslie Court", while in an Aug. 10, 2010 ceremony Leslie's No. 9 jersey was formally retired. It now hangs from the STAPLES Center rafters.

Since retiring following the 2009 season as the WNBA's all-time leading scorer and rebounder, Leslie has remained active with personal business opportunities such as securing the WNBA's marketing and licensing partnership with CieAura. She also serves as a spokesperson for the WNBA's "Vaccine for Teens" campaign, among her involvement with other charitable initiatives.

### **ABOUT THE LOS ANGELES SPARKS**

The Los Angeles Sparks, an original Women's National Basketball team, enter their 15th season in 2011. The Sparks are one of six WNBA franchises that fall under the league's independent ownership model. Winner of back-to-back WNBA championships in 2001 and 2002, Los Angeles' roster of star athletes include 2008 WNBA MVP and Rookie of the Year Candace Parker, four-time WNBA champion and all-time leading scorer Tina Thompson, and two-time WNBA champion DeLisha Milton-Jones. The Sparks play their home games at STAPLES Center in the heart of downtown Los Angeles. For ticket information, call 877-44-SPARKS (772757) or visit [LASparks.com](http://LASparks.com).