Marca Bristo founded Access Living in 1980 and served as President and CEO until shortly before her death on September 8, 2019. Marca and the team she led of generous philanthropic donors, volunteers and staff worked together to build America’s leading center of service, advocacy, and social change for people with disabilities led and run by people with disabilities.

While Marca did not live to see Access Living observe its 40th Anniversary in 2020, this milestone was extremely important to her for many reasons - including what it signals about permanence and long-term financial stability. In her wisdom, she knew that the successes of one era could not simply be assumed for the next and that the many clients it serves depends on Access Living being very well managed and financially strong in the decades ahead.

Although her illness progressed quickly in the end, she was able to articulate very specific wishes. Marca’s priority was to significantly increase the permanent endowment through a Legacy Campaign - with the primary objective being the establishment of a $6.5 million endowed chair for the President & CEO position. In her memory, this is now called The Marca Bristo Legacy Chair. The goal of this fund will allow Access Living to be assured of proper funding, in perpetuity, for all future successors - a President & CEO with the necessary credentials to sustain our work at the highest level (as she did).