Media Advisory

Date: March 29, 2010

Rutgers Institute for Women’s Leadership presents
2010 Susan and Michael J. Angelides Lecture

Playwright • Actor • Professor
Anna Deavere Smith
“Look for Leadership, Discover Grace”

WHO: Playwright, actor and Professor Anna Deavere Smith, hailed by Newsweek as “the most exciting individual in American Theatre,” uses her singular brand of theatre to explore issues of community, character and diversity in America. She was awarded the prestigious MacArthur Foundation “genius” Fellowship for creating “a new form of theatre – a blend of theatrical art, social commentary, journalism and intimate reverie.” Her most recent play, Let Me Down Easy, which explores the resilience and vulnerability of the human body, was an Off-Broadway hit in the Fall 2009.

WHAT: “Look for Leadership, Discover Grace” – Lecture and presentation by Anna Deavere Smith, free and open to the public

WHEN: Monday, May 3rd, 2010  7:30 pm

WHERE: Nicholas Music Center, 85 George St, New Brunswick, NJ 08901

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Visit http://iwl.rutgers.edu
To RSVP call 732-932-1463, ext. 675 or email Gail Kubicke at gkubicke@rci.rutgers.edu

BACKGROUND: We live in a winner take all society. And yet, part of our potential as humans is our capacity for compassion and our resilience in the face of adversity. While doing research for her one-woman play Let Me Down Easy, Anna Deavere Smith interviewed people in the US and abroad, who were able to have grace in the face of dramatic adversities. The play explored the limits of the body and the struggle to cope with those limits via the health care system.

Smith is a professor of performance studies at New York University. She is well known for her role of hospital administrator in the Showtime drama “Nurse Jackie” and her performance as security advisor Nancy McNally on “The West Wing.” As playwright and performer, she has created a series of theatrical works over the past nineteen years which she calls On the Road: A Search for American Character. Among those works are Fires in the Mirror: Crown Heights, Brooklyn, and Other Identities, which explored the 1991 clash between Jews and Blacks in that community. The play was a runner up for the 1993 Pulitzer Prize and earned Ms. Smith an Obie. At her presentation as the 2010 Angelides Lecturer, Ms. Smith will speak about her current innovative work as well as perform selections from Let Me Down Easy.

The annual Susan and Michael J. Angelides Lecture at the Institute for Women’s Leadership at Rutgers is an endowed series featuring pathbreaking women leaders from many areas of achievement.
The Institute for Women’s Leadership consortium members are: Douglass Residential College, Department of Women’s and Gender Studies, the Center for American Women and Politics at the Eagleton Institute of Politics, the Institute for Research on Women, the Center for Women’s Global Leadership, the Center for Women and Work at the School of Management and Labor Relations at Rutgers, the Institute for Women and Art, and the Office for the Promotion of Women in Science, Engineering and Mathematics.