



EMERSON News COLLEGE Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Emerson College and Color of Film Collaborative to host Boston premiere of documentary film, *The Souls of Black Girls* on May 29

NOTE TO MEDIA: WE INVITE COVERAGE OF THIS EVENT AND WELCOME REQUESTS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH THE FILMMAKER.

BOSTON, MA—MAY 22, 2007—*The Souls of Black Girls*, a provocative news documentary written, edited and produced by **Daphne S. Valerius**, will have its Boston premiere on **Tuesday, May 29th at Emerson College**. The screening will begin at 1 p.m. in the **Bill Bordy Theater at 217 Tremont Street**. A Q&A session will follow.

Valerius produced the documentary as part of the Journalism master's program she completed at Emerson in 2006. It builds upon her undergraduate research project at St. John's University titled *Self-Esteem and Self-Confidence: The Effects of Mass Media on Women of Color...Forgotten*.

While the film was made prior to the infamous **Don Imus** incident last month, *The Souls of Black Girls* addresses many of the issues being raised in the current national discussion of racism and sexism in the media arising from the inflammatory, on-air remarks by the former talk-jock concerning the young women of the Rutgers University basketball team.

The title of the documentary derives from the seminal **W.E.B. Dubois** book *The Souls of Black Folks*. It examines how media images are established and controlled and features candid interviews with young women discussing their self-image, including actresses **Regina King** and **Jada Pinkett Smith**, PBS *Washington Week* Moderator **Gwen Ifill**, rapper/political activist **Chuck D**, and cultural critic **Michaela Angela Davis**, among others.

The film also examines the relationship between historical and current media images of women of color and explores the possibility that Black women today are suffering from a self-image disorder as a result of trying to attain the beauty standards that are celebrated in media images.

The Boston premiere is sponsored by the **Center for Diversity in the Communication Industries (CDIC)** at **Emerson College** in association with **The Color of Film Collaborative of Boston**.

“Emerson is extremely proud of the outstanding contribution of its graduate, **Daphne S. Valerius**,” said **William Smith**, executive director of the CDIC. “*The Souls of Black Girls* is a very important piece and adds to the discussion of how we support young Black women. It is truly gratifying to have a student’s work have such significant social impact so quickly.”

Valerius said growing up as a young Black girl, she felt “very much like an ugly duckling compared to my peers as a result of not looking a certain way, much like Pecola Breedlove of Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*. Putting together this documentary allowed me to uncover and examine why I, along with many other women of color, feel the need to manipulate our physical appearances.”

The Souls of Black Girls, has premiered at the 2007 Pan African Film & Arts Festival in Los Angeles, been showcased on AOL Black Voices, and featured exclusively at the Apollo Theater’s “HealthTime at the Apollo” event commemorating Women’s History Month.

Valerius explains the historical significance and meaning, behind the documentary’s title deriving from the book, *The Souls of Black Folks*, published in 1903 by Scholar W.E.B Dubois. “W.E.B Dubois introduced in his writing the idea of the Negro suffering from a double-consciousness condition within the United States. I decided to take this concept a step further by illustrating how Black women suffer from a triple consciousness condition, having to be a Negro, an American and a woman and having to define their own standard of beauty,” stated Valerius.

For more information about *The Souls of Black Girls* and screening updates, please visit the official website at www.soulsofblackgirls.com or www.myspace.com/soulsofblackgirls.

ABOUT CENTER FOR DIVERSITY IN THE COMMUNICATION INDUSTRIES AT EMERSON COLLEGE:

The mission for the Center for Diversity in the Communication Industries at Emerson College is twofold: To establish diversity as a core value at Emerson College. Realization of this mission will be evidenced by the students who attend, the faculty that teach, and the content of courses and programs that constitute curriculum and learning modalities, and association with businesses in the communication industries; To seek out professional communities in the communication industries that reflects diversity as a core value in their business operations and work in colleague with them.

ABOUT THE COLOR OF FILM COLLABORATIVE (TCOF):

The mission of the TCOF is to support and create new and diverse images of people of color by providing an environment in which filmmakers, actors, performing artists and their supporters can share and develop their ideas and creations

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