

The Souls of Black Girls News Release

CONTACT:

Ronnie Young, 401-829-0528
ryoung@greaterelmwood.org

Camila Crews, 401-439-4102
camila_crews@yahoo.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Award winning documentary *The Souls of Black Girls* to host Providence premiere with special guest Rapper Chuck D at Providence Black Repertory Theater, Feb 24th

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

PROVIDENCE, RI—FEBRUARY 12, 2008— *The Souls of Black Girls*, a provocative news documentary written, edited and produced by **Daphne S. Valerius**, will have its Providence premiere on **Sunday February 24th** at **The Providence Black Repertory Theater Company** (276 Westminster Street). The premiere screening of the award-winning documentary will take begin at 8pm with a special appearance by **Rapper & Political Activist Chuck D** who is also featured in the piece. A Q&A session with Ms. Valerius and Chuck D will follow.

The name of the documentary film derives from the seminal **W.E.B. Dubois** book *The Souls of Black Folks* and examines the relationship between historical and current media images of women of color. The film explores the possibility of whether or not Black women today are suffering from a self-image disorder and features candid interviews with young women discussing their self-image. The documentary also features commentary from actresses **Regina King** and **Jada Pinkett Smith**, PBS *Washington Week* Moderator **Gwen Ifill** and cultural critic **Michaela Angela Davis**, among others.

Valerius produced the documentary as a fulfillment of the broadcast journalism graduate program she completed at Emerson College in 2006. It builds upon her undergraduate research as a Ronald McNair Scholar 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, *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 Providence premiere is being sponsored by the **Neighborhood Health Plan of RI & SoulMade Ice Cream** in association with the **Providence Black Repertory Theater Company**, **Blue Cross Blue Shield of RI** and **Rhode Island Young Professionals**.

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 recently garnered the support of the “Godmother of the Women’s Movement” and Social Activist **Dr. Dorothy Height**. “Too often our girls do not rise to their full potential because they are so affected by the image that others project of them. It’s good to have something that helps us understand what’s happening to our girls,” says Dr. Dorothy Height, Chair of the National Council of Negro Women. “This film was the answer to a prayer”.

For advance tickets to the premiere, please contact Ronnie Young at 401 829-0528. 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 THE SOULS OF BLACK GIRLS:

The Souls of Black Girls is a provocative news documentary that raises the question of whether or not women of color may be suffering from a self-image disorder as a result of trying to attain the standards of beauty celebrated in images of the mass media. The documentary features candid interviews with young women discussing their self-image *and* social commentary from Rapper **Chuck D**, Actresses **Regina King** and **Jada Pinkett Smith**, *Washington Week* Moderator (PBS) **Gwen Ifill** and Cultural Critic **Michaela Angela Davis**, among others. *The Souls of Black Girls* is a piece that attempts to provoke honest dialogue and critical thinking among women of color about media images and our present condition—internally and externally.

#####