

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Souls of Black Girls NEWS

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University of Rhode Island Center for Student Leadership Development & Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated Host the South County debut of documentary, *The Souls of Black Girls* for 20th Annual Women of Color Conference

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

SOUTH COUNTY, RI—FEBRUARY 11, 2008—*The Souls of Black Girls*, a provocative news documentary written, edited and produced by **Daphne S. Valerius**, will have its South County premiere at an exclusive screening on Tuesday February 26, 2008. The film will make its South County Premiere **open to the public** on **Wednesday February 27, 2008** at the Memorial Union, Ballroom of the University of Rhode Island. The public screening will begin at **7 p.m.**

The presentation of the film is part of the 20th Annual Women of Color Conference, a program of the Rose Butler Browne Leadership and mentoring program, offered through partnership with the Center for Student Leadership Development, and the Women's Center. This presentation is also co-sponsored in part by the President's Office, the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, and the College of Human Sciences and Services. Ms. Valerius' appearance is sponsored by the Theta Psi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated.

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 Souls of Black Girls 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 name of the documentary film derives from the seminal **W.E.B. Dubois** book *The Souls of Black Folk*

“The film addresses a critical issue in the black community and recognizes a significant contribution by an emerging black female producer and documentarian. We are particularly proud that she is a product of Rhode Island schools and a resident of Rhode Island,” said **Beverly E. Ledbetter**, President of Theta Psi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated & Vice President and Legal Counsel at Brown University.

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 been showcased on **AOL Black Voices** and featured exclusively at the Apollo Theater’s “HealthTime at the Apollo” event commemorating Women’s History Month. *The Souls of Black Girls* has been overwhelmingly well-received by audiences at film festivals and private screenings throughout the country and has gone on to win numerous awards, most recent being honored with the **Audience Choice Award for Best Documentary** at the Martha’s Vineyard African-American Film Festival.

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 ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA SORORITY INCORPORATED:

Founded on the campus of Howard University in Washington, DC in 1908, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority is the oldest Greek-letter organization established by African American college-trained women. To trace its history is to tell a story of changing patterns of human relations in America in the 20th century. Since its inception, the sisterhood of Alpha Kappa Alpha has responded to the world’s increasing complexity. It continues to empower communities through exemplary service initiatives and progressive programs.

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