

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Bonnie Franklin: bfrankli@ramapo.edu or Rosa Diaz-Mulryan: rmulryan@ramapo.edu

August 9, 2004

LANI GUINIER, HARVARD LAW PROFESSOR, TO SPEAK AT RAMAPO COLLEGE OPENING CONVOCATION

(Mahwah) – Lani Guinier, the Bennett Boskey Professor of Law at Harvard Law School, will be the guest speaker at Ramapo College of New Jersey’s Opening Convocation, scheduled Wednesday, September 22 at 2 p.m. in the Bill Bradley Sports and Recreation Center located on campus. The topic of her presentation is “How Do We Measure a Commitment to Diversity?” The event is free and the public is welcome to attend.

Guinier became the first black woman tenured professor at Harvard Law School when she joined the faculty there in 1998. She was on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania Law School for 10 years before joining the faculty at Harvard. She first came to public attention in 1993 when then President Clinton nominated her to head the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice and then withdrew the nomination without a confirmation hearing.

The professor is “an idea woman” who does not shrink from controversy and “a prophetic voice” for issues of racial justice, gender equity and democratic transformation. She has used her public platform to write five books, including her most recent, *The Miner's Canary* (co-authored with Gerald Torres). Her fourth book, *Who’s Qualified* (with Susan Sturm) discussed new ways of addressing issues of diversity and excellence to open up opportunity not just for people of color and women, but for everyone. She also coauthored *Becoming Gentlemen: Women, Law School and Institutional Change* and published a personal and political memoir, *Lift Every Voice*. Her primary teaching and writing interests

(more)

include voting rights, democratic theory, law and social change, and the legal profession and

the responsibilities of public lawyers. In a recent piece in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Guinier argues that colleges should practice “confirmative action,” meaning that all students should be evaluated and educated to confirm the sacred, democratic mission of higher learning.

She co-founded the Racetalks Initiative, a research and public education project that seeks to develop new interdisciplinary paradigms for linking racial and gender justice to the project of building more inclusive institutions.

Guinier was Assistant Counsel and Head of the Voting Rights Project for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund in the 1980s and worked in the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Justice Department in the late 1970s. She received her B.A. from Radcliffe College of Harvard University and her J.D. from Yale Law School. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including the 2002 Sacks-Freund Teaching Award, the Rosa Parks Award, the 1995 Margaret Brent Woman Lawyers of Achievement Award, the Champion of Democracy Award, and eight honorary degrees.

###