ACTIVIST ARUN GANDHI TO SPEAK AT RAMAPO COLLEGE ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4

(MAHWAH, NJ) -- Activist Arun Gandhi, grandson of Mohandas Gandhi, is the featured speaker at Ramapo College’s Annual Diversity Convocation on Wednesday, February 4 at 3 p.m. in the Sharp Theater.

In his presentation, entitled Lessons Learned from Grandfather: Nonviolence in a Violent World, Arun Gandhi will share his riveting and unique reflections on the personal and historical legacy of his grandfather, Mohandas Gandhi. He will discuss a broad range of issues, including religious, political and ideological differences affecting today’s national and global citizens.

Arun Gandhi carries within himself the same guiding principles as his grandfather, the legendary peace-maker and spiritual leader, Mohandas K. Gandhi, also known as Mahatma Gandhi.

Growing up in apartheid South Africa as a person of Indian heritage meant racial confrontations with both blacks and whites. As a young boy, Gandhi was beaten up by black youths for not being black and by white youths because he was not white. Filled with rage and plotting to avenge his beatings, he subscribed to Charles Atlas bodybuilding magazines so he would have the strength to fight back. When his parents discovered the reason for their 12-year-old son’s sudden fascination with exercise, they decided that a visit to his grandfather in India was in order.

What followed was an 18-month stay with one of the world’s great leaders that would give him the keys to the powerful philosophy of nonviolence, and help shape the foundation for his life’s work. It was a dangerous and exciting time, as Mahatma Gandhi was leading the people of India in their revolutionary, nonviolent struggle for independence from British rule.

After leading successful projects for economic and social reform in India, Gandhi came to the United States in 1987 to complete research for a comparative study on racism in America. In 1991, Gandhi and his late wife, Sunanda, founded the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence, which is now headquartered at the University of Rochester, New York.

The Institute’s mission is to foster understanding of nonviolence and how to put that philosophy to practical use through workshops, lectures, and community outreach programs. In 2007, Arun started the Gandhi Worldwide Education Institute to build educational and training centers for
children living in extreme poverty and being exploited by society. In 2013, Arun was invited to serve on the Board of Legacy of Hope – Nelson Mandela's Children's Hospitals in Africa.

Admission is free but advance tickets are required. Seating is limited. Visit the Berrie Center Box Office or call 201-684-7844 to obtain advance tickets.

The Diversity Convocation is sponsored by the Ramapo College Board of Trustees, the Office of the President and the Diversity Action Committee. The event is co-sponsored by the Krame Center for Contemplative Studies and Mindful Living at Ramapo College.

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Ranked by U.S. News & World Report as sixth in the Best Regional Universities North category for public institutions, Ramapo College of New Jersey is sometimes mistaken for a private college. This is, in part, due to its unique interdisciplinary academic structure, its size of approximately 6,008 students and its pastoral setting in the foothills of the Ramapo Mountains on the New Jersey/New York border.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor’s degrees in the arts, business, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include nursing and social work. In addition, Ramapo College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels. The College also offers seven graduate programs as well as articulated programs with Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New York Chiropractic College, New York University College of Dentistry, SUNY State College of Optometry and New York College of Podiatric Medicine.