ARUN GANDHI DELIVERS MESSAGE OF PEACE, NON-VIOLENCE TO RAMAPO COLLEGE COMMUNITY

MAHWAH, NJ -- The message of global peace and non-violence was the main focus of Arun Gandhi’s keynote address during the ninth annual Diversity Convocation at Ramapo College on February 4. Gandhi, the grandson of peace activist Mohandas Gandhi, told a capacity crowd that the lessons he learned as a boy while living with his grandfather in India have carved his life’s mission.

“My grandfather used to tell me that the first thing you should do when you get up in the morning is tell yourself that you will be a better human being today than you were yesterday,” Gandhi said. “We are interconnected with all of creation. We must break down the prejudices so we can look at each other as human beings and live with each other as human beings.”

Noting that the culture of violence has “taken over every aspect of our lives,” Gandhi said he has established a “season for non-violence” from January 30 through April 4, marking the violent deaths of his grandfather and Martin Luther King Jr., respectively.

“We must build relationships based on four fundamentals: respect, understanding, acceptance and appreciation,” Gandhi said. “When we achieve that, it is possible to transform people... and channel the anger into constructive energy.”

In his introductory remarks, Ramapo College President Peter P. Mercer said the College’s diverse community of students, faculty and staff makes it a “stronger place to grow and learn.”

“It’s important that we focus on quality, not quantity of diversity,” President Mercer said. “We must learn from one another.”

Gandhi’s appearance at Ramapo College was sponsored by the Board of Trustees, the Diversity Action Committee and the Krame Center for Contemplative Studies and Mindful Living.

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Ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as sixth in the Best Regional Universities North category, 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 6,000 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 eight graduate programs as well as articulated programs with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, New York Chiropractic College, New York University College of Dentistry, SUNY State College of Optometry.