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**AUTHOR AND NOBEL PRIZE WINNER TONI MORRISON IS RAMAPO
COLLEGE'S COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER**

(Mahwah) – Author, professor and Nobel Prize-winner Toni Morrison will deliver the commencement address at Ramapo College of New Jersey's 2005 ceremony Wednesday, May 25. She will receive an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree. The ceremony is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m.

Toni Morrison was appointed Robert F. Goheen Professor in the Council of the Humanities at Princeton University in 1989. She has held teaching posts at Yale, Bard College and Rutgers University and was a senior editor at Random House for 20 years. She earned degrees from Howard and Cornell Universities.

Her eight major novels, *The Bluest Eye*, *Song of Solomon*, *Sula*, *Tar Baby*, *Beloved*, *Jazz*, *Paradise* and *Love*, received extensive critical acclaim. She received the national Book Critics Award in 1978 for *Song of Solomon* and the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for *Beloved*. She also has co-authored children's books and published books of essays.

Morrison has received prestigious awards including: the 2000 National Humanities Medal, the 2000 Library of Congress Bicentennial Living Legend Award, the 1996 National Book Foundation Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, the Pearl Buck Award (1994), the Sara Lee Corporation Front Runner Award in the Arts (1989), the Anisfield Wolf Book Award in Race Relations (1988) and the

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Distinguished Writer Award of 1978 from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 1993, Morrison was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. She holds honorary degrees from a number of higher learning institutions including Georgetown, Harvard, Brown, Dartmouth and Ecole Normale Supérieure, Oberlin and Yale.

The College's President's Award of Merit will be awarded posthumously to Dan Cronin, who graduated from Ramapo College in 1984. While serving in the Navy in 1966, Cronin suffered a severe injury that left him paralyzed from the waist down. "Dan lived a good portion of his life in a wheelchair," remembers a friend, "but I never ceased to be amazed by how well he got around -- in snow, in every kind of weather, and in every sort of neighborhood -- nothing held him back." In 1980 Cronin enrolled at Ramapo College, received a degree in 1984, and continued his education at Seton Hall University where he earned a degree in law.

He then began a career in poverty and family law, serving as an attorney for Bergen County Legal Services. Among the many honors he received were the New Jersey Certificate of Appreciation for Meritorious Public Service for his work as a member of the Supreme Court's District Ethics Committee, a Certificate of Appreciation from Shelter Our Sisters, a home for victims of domestic violence, and the Outstanding Attorney of the Year award from Legal Services of New Jersey.

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