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Noted Researcher to Examine Post-Genocide Justice in Guatemala

(MAHWAH, NJ) - Dr. Victoria Sanford, Director of the Center for Human Rights & Peace Studies and Professor of Anthropology at Lehman College & the Graduate Center City University of New York, will speak at Ramapo College of New Jersey on Wednesday, October 24 from 1 to 2 p.m. in the Laurel Hall Screening Room about "The Guatemalan Genocide--Command Responsibility and Possibilities for Justice." The History Club, Human Rights Society and Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies will co-sponsor the talk.

Between the late 1970s and the late 1980s, Guatemala was torn by mass terror and extreme violence in a genocidal campaign against the Maya, which became known as "La Violencia." The Guatemalan truth commission documented 626 village massacres and 200,000 dead or disappeared in the Guatemalan genocide of the 1980s.

Drawing on two decades of research in Guatemala and a thorough review of declassified US government documents, Sanford explores the three phases of the Guatemalan genocide and points to command responsibility on the part of current and former members of the Guatemalan army. She will also discuss ongoing genocide cases in the national and international courts.

Sanford received her Ph.D. in Anthropology from Stanford University '00 where she also received training in International Human Rights Law and Immigration Law at Stanford Law School. Additionally, she received a certificate in Human Rights Law from the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights in Costa Rica.

Sanford joined the Lehman College and City University of New York anthropology faculty in Fall 2004. Previously, she was Senior Research Fellow at the Institute on Violence and Survival, at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities. She has also taught in the Department of Rural and Regional Development at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá, Colombia, Stanford University, and the University of Notre Dame where she was appointed Faculty Fellow at the Kroc Peace Studies Institute and the Kellogg Institute for International Studies.

She has worked with Central American refugees since 1986 when she founded and directed a non-profit refugee legal services project representing Central American asylum-seekers. As a human rights activist and scholar, she has conducted extensive field research with Maya communities in Guatemala, Afro-Colombian and indigenous peace communities in Colombia, and Colombian refugee communities in Ecuador. Her research focuses on collective memory, community reconstruction, human rights, and international humanitarian law during internal armed conflicts and in post-conflict countries in Latin

America and Africa. Sanford is an expert on post-conflict violence, drug-trafficking, and crime with a specific focus on forensic investigation and judicial reform.

She is the author of “Buried Secrets: Truth and Human Rights in Guatemala” (Palgrave Macmillan 2003), “Violencia y Genocidio en Guatemala” (FyG Editores 2003), “Guatemalan Non-Governmental Organizations: A Funder’s Directory to 145 Local,” “Regional and National NGOs” (Shaler Adams Foundation, 1996), and co-author of the “Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation's report to the Commission for Historical Clarification” (the Guatemalan truth commission). She is also the author of “Del Genocidio al Femicidio” (FyG Ediotres 2008), “La Masacre de Panzós: Etnicidad tierra y violencia en Guatemala” (FyG Editores 2009), and “Engaged Observer: Anthropology, Advocacy and Activism,” co-edited with Asale Angel-Ajani (Rutgers University Press 2006).

She is currently writing “The Land of Pale Hands: Femicide, Social Cleansing and Impunity in Guatemala.” Most recently, she testified as an expert witness before the Spanish National Court in the international genocide case against the Guatemalan generals.

The presentation is free and open to the public. For more information or to reserve a seat, please call 201.684.7409.

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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 five 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 and New York College of Podiatric Medicine.