



The Fifty-fifth Annual

Conference on World Affairs

“The Power of an Idea”

Opening Procession

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEWSBRIEF: *The Fifty-fifth Annual Conference on World Affairs* will begin with an opening procession and keynote address on Monday, April 7, 2003.

EDITORS: Reporters and photographers are welcome. The “participant march” will begin at a quarter to noon in Norlin Quad and cross from south to north along a walkway lined with international flags, into Macky Auditorium for the 12 noon keynote address. The keynote address, “The Great Brown World,” will be delivered by Richard Rodriguez. Contact Ramsay F. Thurber at (303) 492-2526 for more details.
(***Attached is Rodriguez’s Biography)

(Boulder) – April 5, 2003 – *The Fifty-fifth Conference on World Affairs* will commence with the annual “participant march” across Norlin Quadrangle into Macky Auditorium at a quarter to noon (11:45 a.m.) on Monday, April 8. The procession is a colorful CWA tradition which celebrates the gathering of people and ideas from all over the globe at the annual week-long event.

Leading the march through the flags of over 80 nations will be University President Elizabeth Hoffman, keynote speaker Richard Rodriguez, Conference Director James Palmer, CWA Co-Chair Jane Butcher, CWA Co-Chair Juli Steinhauer, Chancellor of UCB Richard Byyny, Arts and Sciences Dean Todd Gleeson, Senator Tim Wirth and Roger Ebert. Conference participants, students and CWA volunteers will join the procession.

At 12 noon in Macky Auditorium President Betsy Hoffman will make welcoming remarks and introduce keynote speaker Richard Rodriguez, who will then deliver his address, “The Great Brown World.” The keynote address, as with all Conference events, is free and open to the public.

There will be over 200 panels and performances addressing the overriding theme of ***The Power of an Idea***. The Tuesday evening jazz concert (April 8) and another perennial Conference favorite, Roger Ebert’s *Cinema Interruptus* (April 6-11), will highlight the schedule. This year Ebert will analyze *Floating Weeds* in Macky Auditorium from 4-6

p.m. daily. Ebert, who has made the annual trek to Boulder in April as a participant for 34 years, has dubbed the CWA the “Conference on Everything Conceivable.”

James Palmer, Director of the Conference on World Affairs, says, “If you like grappling with ideas, the CWA is your week-long wrestling match. Come and pin down some ideas, lose some misconceptions and join our imaginative participants and idea-mongers to get a grip on problems worth solving and a world worth saving.”

The University of Colorado’s Conference on World Affairs was founded in 1948, originally as a forum on international affairs. CWA expanded rapidly to encompass music, literature, environmental activism, science, journalism, visual arts, diplomacy, technology, spirituality, the film industry, politics, business, medicine, human rights and so on.

Every year in April approximately 100 participants representing a wide range of backgrounds gather in Boulder for what *The New York Times* calls “a week-long extravaganza of discussion and debate” on non-academic, cross-disciplinary panels, plenary sessions and performances.

The Conference challenges its participants to discuss a wide-range of issues on an impromptu basis—offering a refreshing alternative to the specialized gatherings of academia and the business world. According to columnist Molly Ivins, CWA panels offer “...astonishing, cross-disciplinary insights, whole new ways of looking at old questions and information that can transform the way you look at things.”

“It’s a mind camp. We put fascinating people together and let them think out loud in front of an audience. The Conference is a unique product of students, faculty and ‘townies,’” explains Jane Butcher, who began her involvement in the Conference as a student volunteer in the 1960’s and is now CWA Committee Co-chair. “We bring smart, interesting, introspective people, who are willing to share their thoughts and learn, network and solve problems.”

Past participants at the Conference have included Studs Terkel, Molly Ivins, Marianne Williamson, Simon Hoggart, Andy Ihnatko, Dave Grusin, Tim Wirth, Adam Fortunate Eagle, Andrei Codrescu, R.E. “Ted” Turner, Rita Klimova, Steve Allen, Paolo Soleri, Yitzhak Rabin, Kenneth Boulding, Ralph Nader, Norman Cousins, Henry Kissinger, Arthur Miller, Howard Nemerov, R. Buckminster Fuller and Eleanor Roosevelt.

For further information, feel free to contact Ramsay Thurber at 303.492.2526, or e-mail the Conference on World Affairs at cwa@colorado.edu. The full CWA schedule and a biographical listing of all our participants are now online at: www.colorado.edu/cwa

Richard Rodriguez

Richard Rodriguez writes about the intersection of his personal life with some of the great vexing issues of America. Rodriguez, the son of Mexican immigrant parents, grew up in Sacramento, California. He was an undergraduate at Stanford University, spent two years in a religious studies program at Columbia, studied English Renaissance literature at the Warburg Institute in London and was a doctoral candidate at the University of California in Berkeley.

In 1982, he published an intellectual autobiography, *Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez*. Widely celebrated and criticized, this book is today read in many American high schools and colleges. A memoir of a scholarship boy, *Hunger* remains controversial for its skepticism regarding bilingual education and affirmative action. In 1992, Rodriguez published *Days of Obligation: An Argument with My Mexican Father*, a philosophical travel book, concerned with the moral landscape separating Protestant America and Catholic Mexico. *Days of Obligation* was a runner-up for a Pulitzer Prize in nonfiction in 1993. In 2002, Rodriguez published *Brown: The Last Discovery of America*, a series of essays concerned with topics as varied as the cleaning of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, cubism and Broadway musicals. In *Brown*, Rodriguez undermines America's black and white notion of race and proposes the color brown for understanding the future (and past) of the Americas.

As a journalist, Rodriguez worked for more than two decades for the Pacific News Service in San Francisco. He has been a contributing editor for *Harper's Magazine* and the Sunday *Opinion* section of the *Los Angeles Times*.

For more than ten years, Rodriguez has appeared as an essayist on *The News Hour with Jim Lehrer*. His televised essays on American life were honored in 1997 with a George Peabody Award.

