

Newsroom

February 2, 1999

"The Vagina Monologues" to be Performed at Middlebury College on Valentines Day, Feb. 14

Performance is Part of V-Day 1999: The College Initiative, a National Campaign to End Sexual Violence Against Women

All Proceeds to Benefit Addison County Women in Crisis

A movement to make the world safe for women, V-Day 1998 took place a year ago in New York City and featured a performance of 1975 Middlebury graduate Eve Ensler's "The Vagina Monologues" by such notable women of stage and screen as Glenn Close and Susan Sarandon.

This year, the ground-breaking, Obie Award-winning play will be performed at Middlebury College's McCullough Student Center as part of V-Day 1999: The College Initiative, on Sunday, Feb. 14 at 8 p.m. McCullough is on Old Chapel Road off South Main Street (Route 30). The performance is sponsored by Middlebury's student organization Feminist Action and the College's May Belle Chellis Women's Resource Center.

What is V-Day?

V-Day is a campaign to end sexual violence, proclaiming Valentine's Day to be a day to celebrate women and demand the end of abuse. Inspired by the world premiere of "The Vagina Monologues" at HERE, an off-Broadway theatre in New York City, the first V-Day observance in 1998 was marked with a performance of the play by some of our country's biggest stars--including Whoopi Goldberg, Winona Ryder, Lily Tomlin, and Calista Flockhart--who sought to raise awareness and money toward resolving a situation that has become epidemic. V-Day 1999 recognizes the full arrival of the issue of violence against women to mainstream America:

- Somewhere in America, a woman is raped every two minutes (National Crime Victimization Survey. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1996).
- In 1995, over 354,600 women were the victims of a rape or sexual assault (National Crime Victimization Survey. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1996).
- Approximately 28 percent of victims of sexual violence are raped by their husbands or boyfriends, 35 percent by acquaintances, and five percent by other

relatives (Violence Against Women, Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1994).

Since its initiation in 1998, the observance of V-Day has spread beyond New York City limits through the efforts of The College Initiative, which invites colleges and universities nationally and internationally to stage performances of "The Vagina Monologues" on Valentines Day 1999. Bennington, Brown, Syracuse, Mount Holyoke and Middlebury--Enslers alma mater--are among the many schools that have already signed on with The College Initiative.

What are "The Vagina Monologues?"

Hailed by The New York Times as funny and poignant and by the Daily News as intelligent and courageous, "The Vagina Monologues" dives into the mystery, humor, pain, power, wisdom, outrage and excitement buried in women's experiences. Based on interviews of hundreds of women--from a Long Island antiques dealer to a Bosnian refugee--"The Vagina Monologues" brazenly explores questions often pondered, but seldom asked: Do women like their vaginas? What do women call their vaginas? What can you tell about a woman by the way she moans when she is aroused?

Enslers has performed the play to great acclaim throughout the world from Zagreb to Santa Barbara, from London to Seattle, from Jerusalem to Oklahoma City. Last February, Villard Books/Random House published "The Vagina Monologues," which includes a foreword by Gloria Steinem.

Tickets are \$1.00. For more information on the performance, or to buy or reserve tickets, contact Mary Duffy, women's studies administrator, at 802-443-5937. All proceeds will be donated to Addison County Women in Crisis.

For information about the organization V-Day, contact national press representative Don Summa (212) 944-9444 or visit the website at <http://www.feminist.com/vday>.