Author, educator and veteran Democratic political strategist Donna Brazile will discuss her mission to integrate social and intellectual consciousness into daily life in a talk from 6:30 to 8:15 p.m. Monday, Sept. 21, in the auditorium of O'Shaughnessy Educational Center on the St. Paul campus of the University of St. Thomas.

Her address is the first of several fall semester lectures and programs that comprise the CommUNITY Series at St. Thomas this year. The series, which has "Building a Socially and Intellectually Conscious Community" as its theme, is an expanded version of the CommUNITY Week programs held in recent years.

A reception will be held from 5:30 to 6:15 p.m., prior to Brazile's lecture, in the foyer of O'Shaughnessy Educational Center. Both the reception and lecture are free and open to the public, but tickets are required. Tickets can be picked up at St. Thomas' Box Office located on the lower level of Murray-Herrick Campus Center. The public can request tickets by sending an e-mail to boxoffice@stthomas.edu.

The CommUNITY Series is organized by St. Thomas' Office of Institutional Diversity. Brazile's talk is sponsored by that office and the university's Luann Dummer Center for Women.

Brazile will discuss how embracing tolerance and diversity has helped her to build respect in difference environments including the academic, social and political arenas.

Brazile is the first African American to direct a major presidential campaign. She began her political career at the age of 9 when she worked to support the campaign of a city council candidate who promised to build a playground in her neighborhood. Over the past four decades she has served on many local, state and national campaigns, and in 2000 managed Al Gore’s campaign for president.

Brazile is an adjunct professor at Georgetown University and author of the best-selling autobiography, Cooking With Grease: Stirring the Pots in American Politics. In the media, she is a political contributor on CNN, consultant to ABC News, commentator on ABC's "This Week With George Stephanopoulos" and frequent contributor to NPR's "News and Notes." In print and online she is a columnist for Roll Call and Ms magazine.

Washingtonian named Brazile one of the "100-most-powerful women" and Essence named her one of the top-50 women in America. Her passion, she says, is encouraging young people to vote, work within the system to strengthen it, and run for public office.

Former Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco appointed Brazile, a New Orleans native, to the board of directors of the Louisiana Recovery Authority, the agency charged with leading the state's rebuilding process in the aftermath of two hurricanes.

Brazile is founder and managing director of Brazile & Associates LLC, a general consulting, grassroots advocacy, and training firm based in Washington, D.C.

Other programs in the 2009 CommUNITY Series are:

- A celebration for Hispanic Heritage Month will be held from 11:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 24, in Room 304 (third-floor lounge) of Murray-Herrick Campus Center, St. Paul campus.

- Documentary filmmaker Gerald Straub will show and discuss his film, "Poverty and Prayer," at 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 29, in Room 304 (third-floor lounge) Murray-Herrick Campus Center, St. Paul campus.

- A panel of judges will discuss "I Too Sing America: Justice Sotomayor's Influence on the Future of Diversity in Law and Higher Education" at 4 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 7, in the Frey Moot Court Room, School of Law Building, Minneapolis campus.

- Michael Patrick MacDonald, author of All Souls, the common text being read and studied at St. Thomas this semester, will speak at 11:45 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 15, in the auditorium of O'Shaughnessy Educational Center, St. Paul campus.

- A panel of experts will discuss "What's the Real Story? Racial Profiling in America" at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 20, in the auditorium of O'Shaughnessy Educational Center, St. Paul campus.

- Melisa Rivière, a Latina hip-hop scholar and doctoral candidate at the University of Minnesota, will discuss her research at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 5, in Room 100 of McNeely Hall, St. Paul campus.

- A panel will discuss the challenges of veterans coming home after military service at 1 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 10, in a location to be announced on the St. Paul campus.

- Mixed Blood Theater will stage "Theory of Mind," a play about a young man with Asperger's Syndrome, at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 10, in the auditorium of O'Shaughnessy Educational Center, St. Paul campus.

- A celebration for Native American Heritage Month will be held from 12:15 to 1:15 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 12, in the auditorium of O'Shaughnessy Educational Center, St. Paul campus.

More information about programs in the CommUNITY Series can be found at http://www.stthomas.edu/diversity/programs/commUNITY/2009CommUNITYSeriesEvents.html
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