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NEWS RELEASE

SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK TO APPEAR AT SCHUSTER CENTER FEB. 23, CLOSES OUT UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON'S DIVERSITY LECTURE SERIES

DAYTON, Ohio — The soulful Sweet Honey in the Rock, a Grammy Award-winning internationally renowned a cappella ensemble, rounds out the University of Dayton's 2008-2009 Diversity Lecture Series at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 23, at the Benjamin and Marian Schuster Performing Arts Center.

Described as "unrelenting troubadours for peace and social justice," the all-female vocal group raises their voices in "hope, love, justice, peace and resistance" through a wide range of music — from traditional gospel hymns to hip-hop. Sweet Honey in the Rock is presented by the University of Dayton in partnership with the Victoria Theatre Association. Tickets for the general public are \$15 and \$12. Call 937-228-3630 for ticket information.

The women of Sweet Honey in the Rock blends influences from blues, spirituals, traditional gospel hymns, rap, reggae, African chants, hip-hop, ancient lullabies and jazz improvisation. The combination of their voices and the occasional hand percussion instruments create their amazing soulful harmonies as well as rhythms.

Sweet Honey in the Rock was founded in 1973 by Bernice Johnson Reagon at the D.C. Black Repertory Theater Company. The name of the group comes from a Biblical parable from Psalm 81:16, which tells of a land so rich that when rocks were cracked open, honey flowed from them. The group's powerful music addresses a range of topics, including motherhood, spirituality, freedom, civil liberties, domestic violence and racism.

Within the past year Sweet Honey in the Rock celebrated two major events — its 35th anniversary as well as a Grammy Award nomination for its latest release, "Experience...101."

The University of Dayton's Diversity Lecture Series is part of a larger strategic plan to increase inclusion and diversity on campus and prepare students, faculty, staff and the Dayton community for success in a global society. Past speakers have included Andrew Young, Coretta Scott King, Spike Lee, Kirk Franklin, Clarence Page, Nikki Giovanni, Soledad O'Brien, Azar Nafisi and Johnnetta B. Cole.

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The University's commitment to diversity is founded in its Catholic heritage of social justice and the Marianist tradition of equality and being inclusive of people from all segments of society.

The Diversity Lecture Series is co-sponsored by the offices of the president and provost, with the generous support of such community partners as The National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ); Dayton Chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; United Way of the Greater Dayton Area; YWCA Dayton; Victoria Theatre Association; Markey's Audio Visual; Ross Buick-GMC-Hummer; RTA; UD's Media Production Group; *Dayton Daily News*; WDTN-TV; WDAO-1210 AM; and 92.1 WROU.

Sweet Honey in the Rock is part of Victoria Theatre Association's second African-American Arts Festival, which is sponsored by KeyBank.

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For media interviews, contact **Lynnette Heard**, executive director of the office of the president, at 937-229-4122. Photos are available.