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Courage Under Fire: Jailed Journalist Roxana Saberi Kicks Off Diversity Lecture Series

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Sept. 27, 2010
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NEWS RELEASE

(Editor's Note: Roxana Saberi will be available for media interviews at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 13, in the sixth-floor event space at the College Park Center, corner of Brown and Stewart streets. She will meet informally with University of Dayton and Dayton Early College Academy students at 4:15 p.m. in the same location. Media are invited to attend. To request an advance telephone interview, contact the University of Dayton's media relations staff at 937-229-3241.)

COURAGE UNDER FIRE: JAILED JOURNALIST ROXANA SABERI KICKS OFF DIVERSITY LECTURE SERIES

DAYTON, Ohio — Journalist Roxana Saberi, who sparked international attention last year when she was falsely imprisoned in Iran on charges of espionage, will kick off the University of Dayton's 2010-2011 Diversity Lecture Series.

Saberi will speak about "Courage Under Fire: Matters of Conscience and Faith in Iran" at **7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 13, in the RecPlex** on campus, followed by a booksigning. The talk is free and open to the public.

Saberi, an American journalist of Iranian and Japanese descent, spent 100 days in prison before the charges were overturned. Her trial made headlines around the world. Since her release, Saberi has joined others in bringing attention to human rights in Iran. She's written a book about her experiences, *Between Two Worlds: My Life and Captivity in Iran*.

"I prayed a lot — I prayed more than I ever have in my whole life," she told NPR of her days in captivity. "I learned that other people can hurt my body, maybe they can imprison me, but I did not need to fear...because they could not hurt my soul, unless I let them."

Human rights violations in Iran continue to make headlines around the globe. Earlier this month, Iran freed one of three jailed American hikers who had been detained in Iran for more than a year without a trial.

Saberi moved to Iran in 2003 to work as the Iran correspondent for the U.S.-based Feature Story News. She has filed reports for NPR, BBC, ABC Radio and Fox News and was working on a book about Iranian society when she was arrested on January 31, 2009. Saberi

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was later sentenced to eight years in prison on a trumped-up charge of espionage. In May 2009, an Iranian court overturned the sentence, and she was released.

She has co-written *No One Knows About Persian Cats*, a documentary about underground music in Iran, and received the Medill Medal of Courage, the Ilaria Alpi Freedom of the Press Award, the NCAA Award of Valor and a POMED (Project for Middle East Democracy) Award. She graduated from Concordia College with degrees in communications and French. She holds a master's degree in journalism from Northwestern University and a master's degree in international relations from the University of Cambridge.

This year's Diversity Lecture Series also will feature Geoffey Canada, president and CEO of the Harlem Children's Zone in New York City, and basketball legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

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, Elie Wiesel, Kevin Powell, Reza Aslan, Clarence Page, Nikki Giovanni, Soledad O'Brien, Azar Nafisi, Roland Martin and Johnnetta B. Cole.

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); United Way of the Greater Dayton Area; YWCA Dayton; Victoria Theatre Association; Markey's Rental and Staging; Ross Buick-GMC-Hummer; RTA; NewPage; University of Dayton's Media Production Group; *Dayton Daily News*; WDTN-TV; WDAO-1210 AM; and 92.1 WROU.

For more information, see http://president.udayton.edu/Diversity_and_Inclusion.

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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.