

September 11, 2008

To the Campus Community,

I am thrilled to announce that Martha Nussbaum, the Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago, will be the keynote speaker at the 2009 Commencement in May. As an activist and critic, Nussbaum has long advocated for the importance of an education in the liberal arts. She is a fearless American philosopher, feminist and a master of intellectual debate.

In 2005 Nussbaum was listed among the world's top 100 intellectuals by Foreign Policy and Prospect magazines and has earned 32 honorary degrees from colleges and university in North America, Europe and Asia. Her current position at the University of Chicago includes appointments in the Philosophy Department, the Law School and the Divinity School.

Nussbaum is committed to global justice and improving the status of women in the politics of international development. To that end, she has served as a research adviser for the United Nation's World Institute for Developing Economics Research for many years and has also served as president of the Human Development and Capability Association, which promotes research on poverty, justice, well being, and economics.

Nussbaum taught at Harvard, Brown and Oxford Universities and received a bachelor of arts from New York University and a master's and doctorate from Harvard. Among the many articles and books she has published, her most recent is "Liberty of Conscience: In Defense of America's Tradition of Religious Equality." In that book, Nussbaum – who converted to Judaism in the '70s – argues that while a respect for religious difference helped to form our democracy, today that legacy is misunderstood.

Nussbaum has proven to be a compelling speaker, and I look forward to joining the College community this May to hear her thoughts and philosophies regarding this very important transition.

Sincerely,
Lee Higdon