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N E W S R E L E A S E

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Two E.N. Thompson lectures slated for March

The 2008-09 E.N. Thompson Lectures on World Issues will present two lectures in March at the Lied Center for Performing Arts in Lincoln. Sarah Chayes will appear March 4 and Michael Olivas and Vernon Briggs will speak March 25.

The lectures will be simulcast from remote sites in Scottsbluff, North Platte, Kearney, Columbus, Wayne and Omaha, with financial support from the Cooper Foundation.

Chayes' lecture is entitled "Notes from Afghanistan." Chayes has lived and worked in Afghanistan since 2001, when she covered the fall of the Taliban for National Public Radio. In 2002 she left journalism to help rebuild the shattered country, working first with Afghans for Civil Society, and currently with Arghand, a cooperative producing skin-care products from local fruits, nuts and botanicals. The Washington Post described her book, "The Punishment of Virtue: Inside Afghanistan After the Taliban," as "sharply observed, fearlessly told." Before her assignment in Afghanistan, Chayes reported for NPR in the Balkans, North Africa and the Middle East.

Olivas and Briggs will discuss "Illegal Immigrants: Path to Citizenship?" Most recommendations for immigration reform center on the issue of a path to citizenship for these illegal immigrants. Opponents say this is amnesty, a strategy which proved ineffective in previous immigration legislation. Supporters say legalization is both a necessity and a moral obligation. In the second annual Wilson Dialogue, Olivas, William B. Bates distinguished chair of law at the University of Houston, and Briggs, professor emeritus in the School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University, will discuss the issue of a path to citizenship.

The theme of this year's Thompson lecture series is "Democracy's Future," with speakers exploring diverse facets of a complex question by looking through the lenses of history, philosophy, religion, globalization, conflict, economics and citizenship to provide insights into the ideal and the reality, the promise and the challenge of democracy in the 21st century.

The final lecturer in the series is Colin G. Campbell, who will speak April 14 on "Citizenship in a Global Age."

All lectures are free and open to the public.

Remote sites include Room A113 of Harms Technology Center at Western Nebraska Community College in Scottsbluff, Mid-Plains Community College in North Platte, Room 101 in the Communications Center at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, Room 205 in the West Education Center at Central Community College in Columbus, and Connell Hall Auditorium at Wayne State College. At the University of Nebraska at Omaha, the sites are Milo Bail Student Center Ballroom on March 4 and Room 132 of the Collaborating Commons at the College of Public Affairs and Community Services on March 25.

All lectures begin at 7 p.m. (CT), except in Scottsbluff, where lectures air at 6 p.m. (MT).

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