

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
CONTACT INFORMATION:**

**DATED: April 9, 2004**

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## **Documentary about African American Midwives Coming to Albany**

*Bringin' in Da Spirit*, a documentary about African American midwives, will debut in Albany in Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at Huyck Auditorium of Albany Medical College. The Center for Black Women's Wellness, BirthNet, the New World African Film Forum, and New York Friends of Midwives have come together to present this extraordinary film.

Produced by Rhonda L. Haynes and narrated by Phylicia Rashad, *Bringin' in Da Spirit* details the history and heralds the accomplishments of African American midwives beginning in Africa, through three centuries in America, and into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Using first person narrative and rare archival images, *Bringin' in Da Spirit* provides a moving glimpse of the women who skillfully brought thousands of babies across the threshold of existence. This evocative and passionate film also chronicles efforts by contemporary midwives to preserve not merely a profession, but a traditional way of life amidst powerful misconceptions about the practice of midwifery.

Producer/director Rhonda L. Haynes will discuss the film and its production. Ms. Haynes has over 20 years of experience in the technical aspects of television and film production. *Bringin' in Da Spirit* is her first production.

Ms. Haynes and *Bringin' in Da Spirit* have won several awards since it's premier in June 2003 including:

- *Best Documentary and Spirit Awards*, 2004 Reel Sisters of the Diaspora Film Festival
- *Outstanding Leadership Award*, 2003 International Center for Traditional Childbearing
- *Recognition for Creative Excellence*, ABC Entertainment Television Group, Talent Development Program
- *International Agency for Minority Artist Affairs First Finalist Winner*, Harlem Art Council

*Details:* Saturday, April 24, 2004 from 4 to 6 pm  
Huyck Auditorium, Neil Hellman Building  
Albany Medical College, 47 New Scotland Ave, Albany, NY  
Tickets are \$5, \$3 for students and seniors.

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### **Center for Black Women's Wellness      Contact: Deborah Williams-Muhamid, 434-8856**

The Center for Black Women's Wellness of Northeastern New York (CBWW), is a self-help and health advocacy organization, committed to improving the health of black women. Organized and operated by the women it serves and those who directly benefit from its programming, we are committed to defining, promoting and maintaining the emotional and physical well being of all Black women. Our vision statement, "Health is not merely the absence of illness, but the active promotion of physical, spiritual, and mental and emotional wellness of this and future generations. Such wellness is impossible without the redefinition and reinterpretation of who black women were, are, and can become."

### **BirthNet**

**Contact: Carolyn Keefe, 482-2504**

BirthNet is a non-profit organization whose mission is to educate the public about maternity care in order to improve it. Childbirth is a normal, natural and profound event in a woman's life. BirthNet's goal is to encourage all women and families to learn about their rights and options. Our primary programs include education in the classroom (high school or college classes), community forums or workshops, and media outreach. BirthNet has endorsed the Mother Friendly Childbirth Initiative and supports the Midwives Model of Care.

**New World African Film Forum**

**Contact: Deborah Williams-Muhamid, 434-8856**

The New World African Film Forum is an Upstate New York-based nonprofit, organization supporting programs of artistic film. We support films that promote dialogue among activists, scholars and constituents on critical issues that impact the Black community, with an emphasis on films by women. Honoring the rich African history of struggle, embracing our collective power as a people, through art and film, we challenge a “new world” perspective to creating change.

**New York Friends of Midwives**

**Contact: Tisha Graham, 584-6619**

New York Friends of Midwives is a statewide consumer advocacy organization promoting access to the Midwives Model of Care. Midwives are specialists in normal birth and women's health. New York Friends of Midwives works to promote the availability of more midwives in more settings for more women at any stage of life.

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