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Press Release

For Immediate Release

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**2009 Shannon Weatherly Memorial Lecture Presents: The Challenge of
Religious Pluralism and the Promise of Women's Leadership**

By Dr. Diana L. Eck

The MSU Women's Center presents the twenty-first annual Shannon Weatherly Memorial Lecture. **Join us on Thursday, October 22nd in SUB Ballroom B at 7:30 p.m.** for an evening with Dr. Diana L. Eck. Eck is Professor of Comparative Religion and Indian Studies at Harvard University where she is chair of the Committee on the Study of Religion. Her academic work has a dual focus-India and America- and in both cases she is interested in the challenges of religious pluralism in a multi-religious society. Her work on India includes *Banaras: City of Light* and *Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*. Since 1991, she has headed the Pluralism Project (www.pluralism.org), a student and faculty think-tank that explores and interprets the religious dimensions of the U.S.'s new immigration. The Pluralism Project looks especially at the growth of Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh, and Jain communities in the United States and the new issues of religious pluralism and American civil society. The Project's award-winning CD-ROM, *On Common Ground: World Religions in America*, was published in 1997.

Dr. Eck is an eloquent speaker in the struggle for religious diversity, tolerance, and understanding in the U.S. and around the world. She received the National Humanities Medal from President Clinton in 1998 for her ground-breaking work on the U.S.'s fast changing religious landscape, and, as a Montana native, a Montana Governor's Humanities Award in 2003. Her most recent book, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* was published in 2001, and addresses the challenges for the U.S. of the more complex religious landscape. Eck is also the author/editor of several other highly acclaimed books including: *Speaking of Faith: Global Perspectives on Women, Religion, and Social Change*.

This annual lecture series honors the memory of Shannon Weatherly who was tragically killed by a hunter as she lay sleeping in her tent in Gardiner, MT in 1982. Shannon's friends and family funded an endowment with the purpose of bringing in feminist scholars or activists who, through their strong and purposeful lives, reflect the life of Shannon Weatherly.

Do not miss the opportunity to learn from this dynamic speaker who encourages openness, dialogue, and a common understanding between people of different faiths. For further information, please contact the Women's Center @ 994-3836.