



Equal
Rights
Advocates

Since 1974, Fighting for Women's Equality

CALENDAR EDITORS:

Thursday, June 16, 2011: 37th ANNIVERSARY LUNCHEON for Equal Rights Advocates, 11:00 am VIP Reception, 11:30 am General Registration, San Francisco Marriott Marquis, 55 Fourth St. Keynote speaker: Anna Deavere Smith, playwright, actor and professor, on Women and Empowerment. Tickets: \$350/\$150 (\$75 for nonprofits/students). <http://events.equalrights.org/>
Phone: 415.621.0672

FOR RELEASE

Contact: Laurie Kretchmar, laurie [at] lauriekretchmar [dot] com 650.274.8497

**Anna Deavere Smith, Renowned Playwright, Actor and Professor,
Will Be Keynote Speaker at June 16
Equal Rights Advocates' Luncheon**

SAN FRANCISCO, April 19, 2011 – Renowned actor Anna Deavere Smith will be the keynote speaker at the 37th Anniversary Luncheon hosted by Equal Rights Advocates (ERA) on Thursday, June 16, 2011 at the San Francisco Marriott Marquis.

Ms. Smith, who is also a playwright and professor, will share her comments and experiences on women and empowerment, the theme of this year's event. Hailed by *Newsweek* as "the most exciting individual in American theatre," Ms. Smith brings a new production *Let Me Down Easy* to the San Francisco Bay Area this spring. Special guests will have an opportunity to meet Ms. Smith at ERA's VIP Reception prior to the start of the Luncheon.

ERA, the national civil rights organization, welcomes back Emmy-Award winning KRON 4 News journalist Pam Moore as emcee for the event. A San Francisco tradition, the annual lunch typically draws more than 800 attendees, including prominent ERA supporters, attorneys, business leaders, civil and women's rights advocates and elected officials.

Empowerment is this year's theme, embodying the work ERA has been doing for more than 37 years to uphold equality and justice for women and girls in the workplace and educational realm. "We look forward to experiencing Anna Deavere Smith's singular perspective on women and empowerment," says ERA Executive Director Arcelia Hurtado. "In our work, we are tireless and fearless in empowering women and girls via education and outreach, legislative advocacy, and impact litigation."

ERA's attorneys are part of the original team representing plaintiffs in *Dukes v. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.*, the largest sex discrimination lawsuit in U.S. history. The U.S. Supreme Court is expected to make a decision about class certification by the end of June.

Sponsorships and tickets for the June 16 Luncheon are available now – visit www.equalrights.org for details.

Past keynote speakers at the annual event include Arianna Huffington, publisher; Donna Brazile; political analyst; and journalist Liza Featherstone, author of "Selling Women Short: The Landmark Battle for Workers' Rights At Wal-Mart."

About ERA

Equal Rights Advocates (ERA) is a national civil rights organization, founded in 1974, dedicated to protecting and expanding economic and educational access and opportunities for women and girls. Through its campaign approach—incorporating public education, legislative advocacy and litigation—ERA seeks to assist women and girls throughout a life-long continuum: from their first encounters with an educational system or athletic opportunity through their first experiences in the labor workforce and as they seek to reconcile work and family responsibilities. For more information, visit equalrights.org.

###