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The University of Montana

NEWS RELEASE

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Feb. 18, 1994

BELLA ABZUG TO LECTURE AT UM

MISSOULA --

Bella Abzug, considered one of the world's most influential women activists, will discuss "Women and Global Initiatives for Sustainable Development" Monday, Feb. 28, at The University of Montana.

Abzug's free public lecture, bringing together her experience as an activist for women and the health of our planet, will begin at 8 p.m. in the Urey Lecture Hall.

A lawyer since 1944 specializing in civil liberties and labor law, Abzug came to public attention in the 1960s as a rousing speaker and leader against the Vietnam War. In 1970 she campaigned for the U.S. House of Representatives and won in an upset, making her the first woman elected to Congress on a women's rights/peace platform. During her three terms as congresswoman from New York she championed women's rights and reproductive freedom and initiated what became the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues.

She also helped pass the Privacy Act, protecting individual privacy from government intrusion, and the Government in the Sunshine Act, which opened government agencies to public scrutiny. She conducted headline-making inquiries into covert and illegal activities of the CIA, FBI and other government agencies and was the first to call for President Nixon's impeachment in the Watergate scandal. In her last term her peers ranked her the third most influential member of the house. A Gallup poll in 1977 put her in the top 20 most influential women in the world.

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Since then she's continued to play a significant role in world events, turning her energies toward the environmental movement and the United Nations, particularly during the U.N.'s Decade of Women, 1975-85. She helped organize Women USA Fund Inc., from which sprang the Women's Environment and Development Organization. As WEDO co-chair, Abzug presided over the World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet in Miami in 1991. Under her leadership WEDO has just launched "Women, Cancer and the Environment: Action for Prevention," a national campaign in partnership with Greenpeace and grassroots women's cancer groups.

Although still a practicing lawyer, Abzug lectures frequently at colleges, churches and synagogues, women's meetings and conventions. She was a news commentator on Cable News Network for three years, has appeared on hundreds of television and radio programs and has written several books.

Her UM lecture is sponsored by the Women's Studies and Environmental Studies programs, the Associated Students of the University of Montana, the Montana Committee for the Humanities, the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Center, the Mansfield Center for Pacific Affairs, the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Business Administration, the School of Law and the Women's Law Caucus, and the Excellence Fund of The University of Montana Foundation.

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