Anthropologists Roundtable the 2012 Presidential Election

The American Anthropological Association (AAA) is pleased to announce that its 111th Annual Meeting will feature an inaugural plenary session with a roundtable discussion on the 2012 Presidential Election. The session, entitled Why We Can’t All Just Get Along: Race, Language and Meaning in the 2012 Presidential Election, anthropological experts Johnnetta Cole of the National Museum of African Art, H. Samy Alim of Stanford University and Rogers Smith of the University of Pennsylvania will discuss the divide of American values and changing facets of the Presidential election in modern America.

The 2012 presidential election highlighted the deep political and philosophical divisions within the United States. As the nation faced severe economic difficulties and increasing forms of inequality, once marginal anti-government advocacy has gained renewed prominence. In this political and economic climate, voters were faced with the starkest choices in a generation over the regulatory and redistributive powers and duties of the national government. Debates on social issues, including women's access to reproductive services, immigration, and LBGT rights, displayed similarly profound divides over basic American values. These divisions will be discussed along with a critical assessment of the powerful role of Super-PACs, new media, and ever-present polling in both shaping the elections and distracting the public from substantive issues. Using anthropological and political theory, this inaugural AAA Plenary Panel will explore these cleavages and their impacts on voter sentiment and the outcome of the 2012 elections.

“With the nation divided on such a close Presidential election, it is exciting to discuss the anthropological and political theories of the election with some of the country's greatest anthropologists,” said the event organizer Carolyn Rouse of Princeton University. “While there are many interesting sessions during this year’s Annual Meeting, this is one session not to miss.”

The plenary session will be held at the meeting’s headquarter hotel, San Francisco Hilton (Union Square) on Wednesday, November 14, 2012 from 6:00pm to 7:45pm in the Continental Rooms 4-6.

Roundtable speakers Cole and Smith are available for interview.

The 111th AAA Annual Meeting will be held from November 14-18, 2012 at the San Francisco Hilton (Union Square). Registration is available on site and open to the public. Details and program information is available at www.aaanet.org/meetings.

To register as a member of the press, please contact Joslyn Osten.

- - AAA - -

Founded in 1902, the American Anthropological Association is the world’s largest professional organization of anthropologists and others interested in anthropology, with an average annual membership of more than 11,000. The Arlington, VA – based association represents all specialties within anthropology – cultural anthropology, biological (or physical) anthropology, archaeology, linguistics and applied anthropology.