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Media Advisory

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March 5, 2001

Contact: Michelle J. Balch, 309/556-3181

Media Advisory

Event: Speaker: Sarah Weddington, winning attorney for Roe v. Wade

Date: March 8 (Thursday)

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: Main Lounge, Memorial Student Center, 104 E. University St., Bloomington

Admission: Free, open to the public

Background: Sarah Weddington, long-time advocate of women's rights, is most known for her role as the winning attorney in the monumental Roe v. Wade Supreme Court case, a large class-action lawsuit against state abortion laws.

Norma McCorvey, pseudonym Jane Roe, was a single mother living in the Dallas area who sought an abortion but was denied due to Texas state law. Weddington argued that several amendments to the U.S. Constitution protected women's reproductive rights. The U.S. Supreme Court sided with Weddington with a 7-2 decision on Jan. 22, 1973 that legalized abortion in all 50 states. The decision allowed abortion within the first trimester and with some restrictions during the second trimester.

In 1972 Weddington was the first woman from Austin, Texas to be elected to the Texas House of Representatives, where she worked to reform rape statutes, pass an equal credit bill for women, maintain Texas' ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and prevent the passage of anti-abortion legislation.

After three terms as a state representative, the U.S. Senate confirmed Weddington General Counsel for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 1977.

During her time as an assistant to President Carter from 1978 to 1981, Weddington led White House efforts to extend the ratification time of the ERA; assisted in the selection of women for federal judiciary appointments; championed funding for the first domestic violence shelter; and implemented programs encouraging equal treatment of women in the military, in securing business loans and in social programs.

Weddington also co-chaired the U.S. Delegation to the United Nations Mid-Decade Conference on Women in Copenhagen. She later served as the director of the Texas Office of State-Federal Relations in Washington, D.C.

For her dedication to women's rights, Weddington has won the following awards: the Sigma Kappa sorority's Colby Award for Public Service in 1996, the National Council of Jewish

Women's "Woman Who Dares" award in 1993, the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders' Woman of Distinction award also in 1993 and the "Speaker of the Year" from the National Association for Campus Activities in 1992. Named by Time magazine as an "Outstanding Young American Leader," Weddington also has won the Margaret Sanger award, the Planned Parenthood Foundation of America's highest honor in 1980.

Weddington has appeared on "The Today Show," the "CBS Morning News," and "Good Morning America." She also has been published in Good Housekeeping magazine, Ladies Home Journal, Working Woman magazine, People magazine and was a columnist for Glamour magazine for many years. Weddington serves on the Board of the Foundation for Women's Resources, which started the Leadership Texas and Leadership America programs.

Currently, Weddington is an adjunct professor and senior lecturer for the University of Texas at Austin in the American studies and government departments. She also is writing a book encouraging leadership, tentatively titled The Power of One. Her 1992 book, A Question of Choice, chronicling the Roe v. Wade decision, was a best-seller.

This event is sponsored by the Student Welfare and Human Relations Committee of the IWU Student Senate.

For additional information contact John Rapp, the student welfare and human relations commissioner at 309/556-2663