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STORYTELLER'S MESSAGE BRINGS HOPE FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

EVANSTON, IL, October 13, 2004—Taking a journey, whether across the globe or just across town, suddenly takes on new meaning with Susan O'Halloran's new story compact disc, *Journeys of the Heart*.

O'Halloran, a professional storyteller on the subject of diversity, wrote and performed *Journeys of the Heart* based upon her experiences as a young Irish girl growing up in Chicago. "The two stories on my CD are pulled from my own childhood and young adult life," states O'Halloran.

In the first story, *Grandma's Story*, O'Halloran becomes aware of her Irish grandmother's journey to America. "A picture hung in Grandma's living room of a beautiful young girl dressed in expensive clothing. It was hard to imagine that the same young girl later became my grandmother. When I knew her, she had worked long, hard hours to make her way as an Irish immigrant. Her family had sent her to America for a chance at a better life, and she never saw them again."

O'Halloran later traveled to Ireland to explore her own Irish roots, and became enlightened as to the hardships and sacrifices that her ancestors had endured in order for her grandmother to come to America. "Everyone can relate to this kind of story—a family wanting to have its children have a better life," remarked O'Halloran.

The second story on the CD, *City Girls*, depicts O'Halloran's experiences as a young girl suddenly realizing that our country's history is filled with inaccuracies. "Even as an adult, I still ask myself 'How can we change the world if we can't tell ourselves the truth about our past?'" said O'Halloran. "The purpose of both of the stories in *Journeys of the Heart* is to personalize history and to start the thinking process to lead to change."

O'Halloran, who doesn't consider herself a diversity consultant, has been writing and producing stories about the subject of diversity for over twenty years. She says, "I want my audiences to hear the message in my stories—that no matter our heritage, we need to embrace our differences. It's not about them vs. us. It's about finding peace by recognizing the problems in history and taking action to make the world a better place now and in the future."

"It's up to us," she adds, "to change the world by creating possibilities for future generations. I hope that in some way, bringing history to life will guide future generations to ask the questions that we're afraid to ask."

O'Halloran's stories use humor and drama to explore the complex issues of family, race, politics and social justice. She is author of four books, producer of the videotape *Tribes & Bridges at the Steppenwolf Theatre*, creator of the diversity curriculum, *Kaleidoscope: Valuing Differences* and *Creating Inclusion* and recipient of national and international video/film honors including awards of excellence from the CINDY competition, the U.S. Industrial Film Festival and the Los Angeles Film Advisory Board.

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