

## **Anna Deavere Smith, Award-winning Playwright and Actress, to Join AAPIP and ABFE for Special Performance and Conversation, April 29, 2012**

*Select Scenes from Tony-nominated **Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992**, featured as part of special mini-plenary session at the Council on Foundations 2012 Annual Conference*

In observance of the twentieth anniversary of the Los Angeles civil uprising following verdicts in the 1992 Rodney King case, award-winning actress and playwright Anna Deavere Smith will present a feature performance of scenes from *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*, the 1994 Tony Nominee for Best Play. The session, **Looking Back, Moving Forward: A Performance by Anna Deavere Smith**, will focus on a complex array of issues including racial division, healing and ultimately the human condition, and is both presented and designed by AAPIP (Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy) and ABFE (Association of Black Foundation Executives), in conjunction with the 2012 Council on Foundations Annual Conference.

The Los Angeles riots of 1992, the worst civil disturbance in America, exposed the deepening racial and class divisions in the U.S. While the riots were sparked by the acquittal of police officers charged with beating Rodney King, closer examination suggests it was declining income inequality, a long history of police brutality and the belief that the justice system only served and protected a few which fueled anger, resentment and hopelessness that has carried on to this day.

Racial tensions between African Americans and Korean Americans were on the rise even prior to the riots. Deep divisions rose in 1991 when a Korean grocer, Soon Ja Du, shot to death a black 15-year-old girl, Latasha Harlins, and was sentenced to five years' probation. The probation angered Blacks, again reaffirming that the justice system served some, but not African Americans – and exposed long-held frustration about conditions in African American communities. Moreover, at the time of the riots Korean merchants had come to own the majority of businesses in the South-Central Los Angeles, home to mainly Black and Hispanic communities. Not surprisingly, many of those businesses were targeted and one of the most devastated areas of the city was Korea-town.

Recognizing a shared experience and history, the session represents an opportunity for AAPIP and ABFE to better understand the racial dynamics between the African American and Asian American communities, and the structural conditions that led up to the civil uprising. For both AAPIP and ABFE the focus of this program comes out of a long-standing commitment and body of work to addresses systemic racism and the resulting issues and disparities within the philanthropic sector.

This performance will be on Sunday, April 29, 2012, 2:30 pm PT, at the JW Marriott, Gold Ballroom 3, First Floor, in downtown Los Angeles. For more information please contact Cynthia Choi, Senior Director, Philanthropic Advocacy, AAPIP, at [cynthia@aapip.org](mailto:cynthia@aapip.org) or (415) 273-2760 and/or Marcus Walton, Director of Programs, ABFE, at [mwalton@abfe.org](mailto:mwalton@abfe.org) or 646.230.0306