



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CELEBRATING DIVERSITY: THE ATHENIAN SCHOOL'S PILLAR SPEAKER  
SERIES BRINGS WRITER/DIRECTOR EMIKO OMORI TO DANVILLE**

The philosophy of The Athenian School, a distinctive independent school located at the base of Mount Diablo in Danville, is guided by a strong belief in the promise of young people to shape a better world. By educating the whole student — intellectually, creatively, personally and socially — Athenian is preparing its students to become leaders as global citizens. Thus, educating students about cultures and customs different from their own is a fundamental element of an Athenian education. Athenian's mission statement includes the following — "We instill an appreciation of the reciprocal relationship between the individual and cultures, society and the natural world. We value the power and beauty of multiculturalism within our diverse community. We embrace the principles of democratic governance, stewardship of the environment, respect for human dignity and service as a way of life."

Diversity and inclusion are much more than social principles at Athenian; they are educational imperatives. Embracing diversity and creating an inclusive environment is at the core of Athenian's educational philosophy, as first articulated by founder Dyke Brown. His original vision for the School, as a community welcoming diversity of thought, economic backgrounds, races and cultures, continues to serve Athenian as powerfully today as it did at the School's founding in 1965. In this way, Athenian's curriculum is rich in offerings that seek to reflect the multi-faceted world where our students live. Athenian challenges students to engage in understanding diverse views of different races, cultures, religions, sexual orientations, socioeconomic groups and genders.

Lizette Ortega Dolan, Dean of Diversity and Inclusion at The Athenian School, recently developed the Pillar Speaker Series, a new program that will address events and topics pertinent to the mission of the School as a whole and to one of the five Athenian pillars. Three to four

times a year, lecturers, authors, filmmakers and experts in various fields will come to campus to share their expertise, thoughts, and works of literature and/or film with the community, focusing on specific issues within the context of diversity and inclusion. Presentations will be during the evening and are open to local citizens, fellow educators and all members of The Athenian School community. The Pillar Speaker Series is an on-going effort to strengthen the awareness of the School's mission and the commitment of individual students, faculty and staff members, administrators, board members and parents to the principles at the heart of The Athenian School.

Athenian's first Pillar Speaker Series of the 2007-08 academic year will host Emiko Omori and her film, *Rabbit in the Moon*, on Thursday, October 18, from 7-9 pm in the Main Hall. *Rabbit in the Moon* is an 85-minute documentary/memoir about the lingering effects of the World War II internment on the Japanese American community. It is also the story of two sisters — both former internees — producer/director Emiko Omori and co-producer Chizu Omori, who revisited the absence of this vital history in their lives while searching for the memory of their mother. Visually stunning and emotionally compelling, *Rabbit in the Moon* uses eye-witness accounts to examine issues that ultimately created deep rifts within the community and reveals the racist subtext of the loyalty questionnaire and the absurdity of the military draft within the camps. These testimonies are linked by the filmmakers own experiences in the camps and placed in a larger historical context by the voice of director Omori. For more information on *Rabbit in the Moon*, please visit <http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov1999/rabbitinthemoon/index.html>.

After the film is shown, Emiko Omori will be available for discussion and to answer questions. This event is open to all parents, students, teachers, staff, community members and the general public. Light refreshments will be served. Please RSVP to Lizette Dolan at 925-362-7286 or [ldolan@athenian.org](mailto:ldolan@athenian.org) if you plan to attend.

Other Pillar Speaker Series events for the 2007-08 academic year are scheduled for Friday, January 11, 2008, and Thursday, April 17, 2008. Both are evening events from 7 to 9 pm at The Athenian School.

***ABOUT THE ATHENIAN SCHOOL:*** A distinctive San Francisco Bay Area college preparatory school, Athenian has been recognized since its founding in 1965 for its exceptional integration of strong college preparatory academics with an innovative, challenging curriculum. The School's diverse and international community of 455 day and boarding students in grades 6 through 12 benefits from small classes which average 15 students. Athenian's 75-acre campus of rolling oak-covered hills lies at the base of Mt. Diablo in Danville, 32 miles east of San Francisco. In Athenian's idyllic setting, students celebrate learning through relationships, exploration, hands-on projects, service and adventure — in addition to their work in the classroom. The Athenian School is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and the California Association of Independent Schools.

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*Pillar Speaker Series featuring Rabbit in the Moon by Emiko Omori*

*Thursday, October 18, 2007, 7-9 pm*

*The Athenian School — Main Hall*

*2100 Mount Diablo Scenic Boulevard*

*Danville, CA 94506*

*925-362-7212*