FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Joint Anniversary Celebration
HoCoPoLitSo and Columbia Film Society

Join in saluting the founding of the Columbia Film Society and HoCoPoLitSo during the Columbia Festival of the Arts with an afternoon that celebrates the education of girls, the beauty of story, and the power of collective action. This joint anniversary event features a talk by one of the writers of *Girl Rising* and a showing of the documentary film that inspired global awareness about the importance of education for girls. This year’s Columbia Festival of the Arts will end in a joint celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Columbia Film Society and the 45th anniversary of the Howard County Poetry and Literature Society (HoCoPoLitSo) on June 30, 2019, at 2:30 p.m. Admission tickets are $15 each (students $10) available on-line at https://www.showclix.com/event/joint-reception-/listing.

Novelist Aminatta Forna wrote the portion of the film *Girl Rising* about a girl from her home country, Sierra Leone, and her dreams of education and independence. Forna will discuss that work and read from one of her novels that pertains to social justice around the world. *The Washington Post* raved about her latest novel, *Happiness*: “An exquisite novel about how chance and love connect us.” After the author talk, there will be an intermission, refreshments, and a book signing, followed by a screening of the film.

The documentary *Girl Rising*, featuring the voices of actresses including Anne Hathaway, Cate Blanchett, Kerry Washington, Selena Gomez and Salma Hayek, focuses on the power of education for nine girls from Haiti, Nepal, Ethiopia, India, Egypt, Peru, Cambodia, Sierra Leone, and Afghanistan, telling their stories through writers from their home countries. *The Boston Globe* noted, “The idea behind *Girl Rising* is strikingly simple and even more strikingly imaginative.” The Women’s Giving Circle of Howard County is a sponsor of this program.

The Columbia Film Society was founded in 1968 by Helen Ruther and Marcia Gorrie. Showing nine films a year, the film society’s season ticket subscriptions typically sell out in a matter of days. HoCoPoLitSo was founded in 1974 by National Book Award winner Ellen Conroy Kennedy, supported by Jean Moon and Prudence Barry. A community-based literary organization, HoCoPoLitSo offers programs such as a writer-in-residence for the county’s high schools, an award-winning writer-to-writer talk show, *The Writing Life* (available on YouTube) and three major annual events: the Lucille Clifton Reading Series; the Evening of Irish Music and Poetry; and the Blackbird Poetry Festival. HoCoPoLitSo participated in the first Columbia Festival of the Arts, staging the play, “The Belle of Amherst,” about Emily Dickinson. Over the years, Columbia Film Society and HoCoPoLitSo have partnered on many occasions to provide thoughtful and enriching activities in Howard County, Maryland.

HoCoPoLitSo receives funding from the Maryland State Arts Council, an agency funded by the state of Maryland and the National Endowment for the Arts; Howard County Arts Council through a grant from Howard County government; Columbia Film Society; Community Foundation of Howard County; and individual contributors.