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KUPCHELLA KEYNOTES FREEDOM OF INFORMATION DAY EVENT

Rick Kupchella, anchor and award winning investigative reporter at KARE 11 News, will offer the keynote talk at the 20th annual Freedom of Information Day sponsored by the Minnesota Coalition on Government Information (MnCOGI). The event is scheduled for Monday, March 16, 2009, 1:00 p.m. in Pohlad Auditorium at Minneapolis Central Library, 300 Nicollet Mall.

A KARE 11 newsman for over 20 years Kupchella has a history of defending the public’s right to know. In 1997 he helped lead a group of journalists in persuading lawmakers to strengthen the state’s Shield Law. The law helps journalists shed light into dark corners by helping them to protect their confidential sources.

Recently Kupchella spearheaded an effort to get cameras into Minnesota courts. That effort succeeded when the Minnesota Supreme Court ordered a committee that has been studying the issue to work with the media and set up a pilot project. In an appearance on Minnesota Public Television’s [Almanac](http://tpt.org/aatc/person/rick_kupchella) news program, Kupchella explains the campaign and his commitment to the goal.

Outside the world of TV news Rick has authored children’s books, including a *Girls Can! Make it Happen*, written in collaboration with retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, astronaut Sally Ride, and Olympian Jackie Joyner Kersee. His journalism honors include the award as “Outstanding Professional Member” of the Minnesota Society of Professional Journalists.

The Minnesota Coalition on Government Information will also present the 2009 John R. Finnegan Freedom of Information Award at the Freedom of Information Day event.

Freedom of Information Day is commemorated each year on March 16, the birth date of James Madison, champion of access and transparency in government. The day is a highlight of Sunshine Week, a major national campaign to focus attention on open government as a fundamental tenet of a democracy.

MnCOGI is a coalition of individuals and organizations committed to the public’s right to know. Members of the Coalition include attorneys, government employees, librarians and public citizen advocates for open government.

For additional information contact:

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