



News Release

Contact: Sandra Soliz
713-906-7912
solizs@stthom.edu

**University of St. Thomas presents
Morgan Tsvangirai and Roy Bennett
Walk with Me: ‘The Struggle for Freedom and Hope in Zimbabwe’**

WHAT: University of St. Thomas presents two of the most effective opposition leaders in Zimbabwe today, Morgan Tsvangirai and Roy Bennett, discussing the current political and social situation in Zimbabwe.

WHEN: 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 9

WHERE: Cullen Hall, 4001 Mt. Vernon
University of St. Thomas
Parking available in the Moran Center,
Graustark and West Alabama

BACKGROUND:

- Zimbabwe, 10 years ago the breadbasket of Africa, now faces mass starvation. Land seizures, slum “clearance” and price controls have left fields brown, stores empty and cities dark. People have no jobs, no transport, and no food.
- Life expectancy for men has fallen from 60 to 37, lowest in the world. For women, it is lower, 34. Twelve million people once lived in Zimbabwe; more than three million have fled.
- The Movement for Democratic Change, led by former union leader Morgan Tsvangirai, opposing these policies, won 58 of the 120 elected seats in Parliament in the last largely free elections of 2000. The Government of President Robert Mugabe closed newspapers, banned political meetings, arrested its opponents.
- Today Zimbabwe’s African neighbors, as well as the nations of Europe and America are calling for free and fair elections, but Mugabe stubbornly clings to power.

more

Tsvangirai emerged from a trade union background to become the most effective opposition leader in Zimbabwe since independence. In the June 2000 general election his young party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), inflicted a stunning blow on the ruling ZANU-PF party's usual iron grip on power. Tsvangirai's charisma helped to secure the MDC victory in a referendum to reject a fraudulent draft constitution put up by Mugabe, and inflicted Mugabe's first national electoral defeat.

Bennett is a Zimbabwean politician who is currently the treasurer of the Movement for Democratic Change. Bennett was sentenced by the Parliament of Zimbabwe to serve one-year in prison with labor for pushing Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa, after the minister insulted Bennett's family. This unprecedented sentence would normally attract a maximum \$15 (U.S. dollars) fine and a warning. Instead, because of Bennett's opposition to President Robert Mugabe's regime, Parliament used its own powers to get a biased committee dominated by ZANU-PF to investigate the incident and imprison and torture Bennett.

COST: Free and open to the public.

CONTACT: For more information contact Debbye Crofoot-Morley at 713-525-3109.

###

