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Survivalist Aron Ralston to Address 2009 CPCU Class in Denver

MALVERN, Pa.—Aron Ralston, mountaineer, author, and survivalist, will be the keynote speaker at the American Institute for CPCU's 2009 conferment ceremony. This year's conferment of the Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter (CPCU®) designation will be held in Ralston's home state of Colorado at the Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel on August 29. Ralston will share his harrowing survival story and the leadership lessons he learned from his experience of beating unbeatable odds.

It was 2:41 p.m. Eight miles from his truck, in a deep and narrow slot canyon, Ralston was climbing down off a wedged boulder when the massive rock suddenly, and terrifyingly, came loose. Before he could get out of the way, the falling rock pinned his right hand and wrist against the canyon wall. For six long, grueling, and painful days, he found himself facing a lingering death – trapped by an 800-pound boulder 100 feet down in the bottom of the canyon. His situation seemed dire, but the knowledge of his family and friends' love kept Ralston alive, until what he calls "a divine inspiration" solved the riddle of the boulder.

Speaking to members of the 2009 CPCU class and industry guests, Ralston will recount the story of his ordeal, one that led him to commit the most extreme act imaginable—he amputated his own arm to save himself. But Ralston's message is more than a gripping survival tale; it is one of inspiration, love, faith, and perseverance in the face of the impossible.

The American Institute for CPCU will honor new graduates of the CPCU program at this conferment ceremony. Designees must pass a series of eight rigorous exams, agree to be bound by a strict code of ethics, and meet an industry experience requirement. More than 65,000 insurance professionals have earned the CPCU designation since the program's inception in 1942.

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A photo of Aron Ralston is available for download at http://www.aicpcu.org/images/people/RalstonAronActionShot_2.jpg.

Note to Editors: The American Institute for CPCU/Insurance Institute of America are independent, not-for-profit organizations offering knowledge solutions and professional development services to the risk management and property-casualty insurance community. The Institutes offer the CPCU designation program; associate designation programs in areas such as claims, risk management, underwriting, and reinsurance; introductory and foundation programs; and online courses, all of which help drive better decision making to propel business success.