



Ford's Theatre Media Contact:  
Lauren Beyea  
Associate Director of Communications and Marketing  
(202) 434-9543/ [lbeyea@fords.org](mailto:lbeyea@fords.org)

Ford's Theatre  
511 Tenth Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20004  
[www.fords.org](http://www.fords.org)

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**FORD'S THEATRE SOCIETY PRESENTS  
SPECIAL EXHIBITION**

***SEARCHING FOR TRUTH IN THE GARDEN:  
GONZAGA COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL'S HISTORY WITH SLAVERY***

**MARCH 2-AUGUST 2020**

Washington, D.C.— Ford's Theatre presents the exhibition ***Searching for Truth in the Garden: Gonzaga's History with Slavery*** on the second floor of the Center for Education and Leadership (514 Tenth Street NW) from **March 2 through August 2020**. The installation is the culmination of extensive research completed by six students from Gonzaga College High School, a Jesuit high school in Washington, D.C. Their research, which took place during the summers of 2017 and 2018 at the Georgetown University Library, showed that profits from slave plantations went into the building and construction of Georgetown's Washington Seminary, which was founded in 1821 and later renamed Gonzaga College. They also found reference to the names of five enslaved individuals in Washington Seminary accounting books.

*Searching for Truth in the Garden* features photographs, accounting ledgers and other primary sources that reference the five enslaved individuals who tended to the property and gardens at the Gonzaga College High School, as well as student poetry reflecting on the research findings.

"The process of recognizing this truth and facing it has been challenging as a community," said **Gonzaga College High School history teacher Ed Donnellan**. "Great care and countless hours were spent in both trying to tell the stories of these five enslaved persons, and processing our thoughts and feelings about the history. The exhibit is a testimony to the power of students and what they can accomplish when given the opportunity."

"This collaboration is an opportunity for us to engage with our local community and history," said **Ford's Theatre Associate Director for Museum Education Jake Flack**. "The Washington Seminary was initially located on F Street NW near Ford's Theatre during the Civil War era, until it was renamed Gonzaga College and relocated to I Street in 1871. We're pleased to showcase the students' thoughtful

research and their highlighting of difficult historical truths. This exhibition represents a model for how students can engage with their local history and their communities.”

*Searching for Truth in the Garden: Gonzaga’s History with Slavery* is open 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. daily. Admission is included with a daytime visit ticket to Ford’s Theatre. Tickets may be reserved in person at the Ford’s Theatre Box Office or online at [www.fords.org](http://www.fords.org). Groups of 10 or more may reserve tickets by calling (202) 638-2367.

*Searching for Truth in the Garden* was initially displayed at Gonzaga College High School in April 2019, where all students had the opportunity to learn the truth about their school’s founding. The student researchers and their history teacher, Ed Donnellan, received awards and recognition at Gonzaga College High School for their work on this project. For more information on the Slavery Research Project, visit <https://www.gonzaga.org/about/history/slavery-research-project>.

Local schools or teachers interested in learning more about the *Searching for Truth in the Garden* exhibit should email the Ford’s Theatre education department at [education@fords.org](mailto:education@fords.org).

### **Ford’s Theatre Society**

One of the most visited sites in the nation’s capital, Ford’s Theatre reopened its doors in 1968, more than a hundred years after the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. Operated through a partnership between Ford’s Theatre Society and the National Park Service, Ford’s Theatre is the premier destination in the nation’s capital to explore and celebrate Abraham Lincoln’s leadership and legacy.

Ford’s Theatre Society was founded under the guidance of executive producer **Frankie Hewitt**, who, during her 35-year tenure, established Ford’s as a living, working theatre producing performances that highlighted the diversity of the American experience. Since the arrival of **Paul R. Tetreault** as Director, critics and the theatregoing public have recognized Ford’s for the superior quality of its artistic programming. With works from the Tony-nominated *Come From Away* and the nationally acclaimed *Big River*, to the world premieres of *Meet John Doe*, *The Heavens Are Hung In Black*, *Liberty Smith*, *Necessary Sacrifices*, *The Widow Lincoln* and *The Guard*, Ford’s Theatre is making its mark on the American theatre landscape. In the past decade, the mission of Ford’s Theatre Society expanded to include education as a central pillar. This expansion led to the creation and construction of the Center for Education and Leadership, which opened in February 2012. Under the current leadership of Board of Trustees Chairman **Phebe N. Novakovic** and through the lens of Lincoln’s leadership and legacy, Ford’s today endeavors to advance Lincoln’s “unfinished work” with programs and performances that cultivate empathy, encourage dialogue and bridge divides in our American life.

For more information on Ford’s Theatre and the Ford’s Theatre Society, please visit [www.fords.org](http://www.fords.org).

**Event Hashtag:**  
**#FordsGonzaga**

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