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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Ford's Theatre Launches Speech Workshop Series: *Our Words, Our Power* February 22-June 21, 2021

**Monthly workshops explore how ordinary citizens and public figures
use their words to inspire change**

Washington, D.C. – Ford's Theatre announced the launch of its monthly *Our Words, Our Power* workshop series, exploring how ordinary citizens and public figures use their words to inspire change and shape our world. The hour-long workshops are livestreamed over Zoom **at 7:00 p.m. ET on select Mondays, February 22 - June 21, 2021**. Each includes a performance of a notable speech or poem on a particular theme, a facilitated discussion on the speech's impact, the emotions evoked and the relevancy of the words today, and applicable tips that anyone can use to improve public speaking.

Our Words, Our Power workshops are open to the general public (recommended for ages 18+) and are facilitated by Ford's Theatre Teaching Artists and Master Oratory Fellows, who are performing artists and educators trained in the Ford's Approach to Oratory. The approach is employed by educators nationwide to accomplish multiple curricular goals, from analyzing great historical speeches, to writing persuasive speeches, to speaking more effectively, to listening and critiquing constructively.

"Many assume public speaking is an innate talent," said **Associate Director of Arts Education Cynthia Gertsen**. "Ford's Oratory tools provide a structure for cultivating effective speaking and listening skills, receiving constructive feedback and using one's voice as active participants in our democratic society. *Our Words, Our Power* is an opportunity to highlight powerful words that have shaped our lives today and to share our work with the wider public, building a broader understanding of American changemakers."

Videos, posters and lessons supporting use of the Ford's Approach to Oratory are available on the Ford's website at <https://www.fords.org/for-teachers/teaching-oratory/>. The full *Our Words, Our Power* schedule is available online at https://www.fords.org/for-teachers/programs/#jump_link_1.

Virtual Workshop Schedule

February 22, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. EST

Black History Month

Text: Frederick Douglass's "What to the American Slave is the Fourth of July" (Abridged)

Register: <https://fieldtripzoom.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJclcO6orjlvG9KXfRLPciZk4uX2yzi1lgv1>

March 22, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. EST

Women's History Month

Text: Hillary Clinton's "Women's Rights are Human Rights"

Register: <https://fieldtripzoom.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMudOqrqTwoGNYNoOy8-TMizfuLMBiCiOK3>

April 19, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. EST

National Poetry Month

Text: Original poem by poet, musician, actor and Ford's Teaching Artist W. Ellington Felton

Register: <https://fieldtripzoom.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJcld-CsqDlpE9z8TulCTuUUWwrNW37CJe5b>

May 17, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. EST

Access to Education

Text: Malala Yousafzai's speech to the United Nations Youth Assembly (Abridged)

Register: <https://fieldtripzoom.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEIfuuzr8jEtFaBUqrT0O8RpFPxXN10B5q>

June 21, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. EST

LGBT Pride Month

Text: To Be Announced

Register: <https://fieldtripzoom.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMkdeyhqjwE9Q0P-mUnYkkaK5mY7Ceoylc>

Ford's Theatre education programs are supported by **Bloomberg Philanthropies, BP America, Centene Charitable Foundation, D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Ford Motor Company Fund, The Hearst Foundations, Institute of Museum and Library Services, National Park Service** and **Visa Inc.**

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 ideals and leadership principles: courage, integrity, tolerance, equality and creative expression.

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 theatre-going 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.

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