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FORD'S THEATRE EDUCATION PRESENTS

Twelfth Annual Lincoln Oratory Festival February 4 and 5, 2020

400 Local Students Honor President Lincoln's Birthday by Performing Historic Speeches

Washington, D.C. – More than 400 local elementary and middle-school students will perform a selection of President Abraham Lincoln's speeches on the Ford's Theatre stage on the mornings of February 4 and 5, 2020. The programs feature local students who have worked with Ford's Theatre Teaching Artists this school year to expand vocabulary, develop students' confidence and public-speaking skills and build a comprehensive understanding of the oration of Abraham Lincoln.

The **February 4** performance at 10:45 a.m. features third- through fifth-grade students from **Brent, Horace Mann, J.O. Wilson, J.C. Nalle, Kimball, Ludlow-Taylor and Payne Elementary Schools and Sela Public Charter Schools** in D.C. Students will perform speeches including Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, his address to the 166th Ohio Regiment and the Gettysburg Address. Performance tickets may be reserved in advance online at www.fords.org/for-teachers/programs/oratory/oratory-residency-and-festival/lincoln-oratory-festival/#tickets. Day-of tickets are available on a first-come basis from the Ford's Theatre box office.

The **February 5** performance at 10:45 a.m. includes sixth- through eighth-grade students from **Alice Deal and MacFarland Middle Schools** in D.C.; and **George Washington and Gunston Middle Schools**, and

Mosby Woods and Fairhill Elementary Schools in Virginia. Students will perform speeches including Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, his House Divided speech and his speech at Independence Hall. Performance tickets may be reserved in advance online at www.fords.org/for-teachers/programs/oratory/oratory-residency-and-festival/lincoln-oratory-festival/#tickets. Day-of tickets are available on a first-come basis from the Ford's Theatre box office.

Limited space is available for media to attend the events on February 4 and 5. Interested media should contact Alexandria Moreland at amoreland@fords.org.

"The Lincoln Oratory Festival provides local students a unique opportunity to study Lincoln's words through a process that is active and creative. At the same time, students hone their public-speaking skills through study of some of the greatest speeches in American history," said **Ford's Theatre Associate Director for Arts Education Cynthia Gertsen** "Every year, we are inspired by the students' interpretations of these historical speeches. Their performances and voices remind us that ideas like the beauty of our democracy and the importance of forgiveness are timeless."

Ford's Theatre education programs are supported by **Lead Education Sponsor BP America**. Additional support for this program is provided by **Lincoln Oratory Residency and Festival Sponsor Bloomberg Philanthropies**.

Both performances feature appearances by Bloomberg Government representatives who will discuss the personal and professional benefits of developing public speaking skills and share their own tips and tricks for mastering oratory.

"We are proud to support this incredible Ford's Theatre initiative, which helps students understand the importance of developing two vital skills—thoughtful speaking and attentive listening," said **Bloomberg's Greg McCaffery**.

Local schools or teachers interested in participating in future Lincoln Oratory Festivals should email the Ford's Theatre Education department at education@fords.org.

Ford's Theatre Society

The 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 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. For its accomplishments, the organization was honored in 2008 with the National Medal of Arts. For more information, visit www.fords.org. 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. Currently, under the leadership of Board Chairman Phebe N. Novakovic, Ford's Theatre Society is advancing the unfinished work of Abraham Lincoln by creating a vibrant, accessible Ford's Theatre campus that cultivates civic discourse, supports our nation's educators and engages the community with our history.

#FordsOratory

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