



Media Contact:
Anali Alegria, Communications Associate
(202) 639-1586
aalegria@fords.org

Ford's Theatre
511 Tenth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20004
www.fords.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Students and Teachers from Across the United States
Perform at Ford's Theatre in
8TH ANNUAL NATIONAL ORATORY FELLOWS PERFORMANCE
Monday, May 6, 2019
3:30 to 5:30 p.m.**

Washington, D.C. – On May 6, 2019, 22 students and four teachers from across the United States will deliver both historical and original speeches on the historic Ford's Theatre stage. The performance marks the culmination of the 2018-2019 **Ford's Theatre National Oratory Fellows program**, which trains teachers to integrate oratorical skills, from performance to speechwriting, into their curricula. The May 6 performance is free and open to the public. Tickets can be reserved in-person at the Ford's Theatre box office or in advance at www.fords.org.

The students featured in the performance were chosen as student delegates by the National Oratory Fellows in conjunction with Ford's Theatre Teaching Artists, based on a variety of criteria, including academic effort and progress and excellence in oratory. A select number of National Oratory Fellows will also perform.

This year's performance includes: ***Protect Legal Immigration***, an original speech by a Kentucky student; ***Teens Addicted to Tech***, an original speech by a Missouri student; ***If You Have Women's Rights, Give Them to Her***, a historical speech by Sojourner Truth performed by a California student; ***I've Been to the Mountaintop***, a historical speech by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., performed by an Arizona student; and many other speeches.

Additionally, the **2019 Lincoln Teacher Leader Award**, recognizing educators who have demonstrated outstanding skill as leaders in Ford's Theatre programs and within their profession will be presented to National Oratory Fellows **Giani Clarkson** (Cesar Chavez Public Charter School, Washington, D.C.), **Caitlin Goodwin** (McGraw Junior Senior High School, McGraw, New York) and **Jeff Weary** (James Bridger Middle School, Independence, Missouri).

Ford's Theatre education programs are supported by Lead Education Sponsor **BP America**.

The National Oratory Fellows program

The National Oratory Fellows program, which began in 2011, seeks to highlight the importance of oratory integration into English-Language Arts and history curricula. Inspired by President Lincoln's oratory, this approach to teaching and learning focuses on the power of the spoken word, throughout history and today. The National Oratory Fellows program empowers Fellows to become teacher leaders in their schools, giving them the tools to share resources and advice with other educators. The 2018-2019 cohort of Fellows is composed of 32 teachers from 16 states, selected by the Ford's Theatre Education team through a competitive application process.

By speaking the words of powerful orators throughout history, students learn to put themselves in others' shoes. **National Oratory Fellow Joe Moneymaker** (South Livingston Elementary, Livingston, Kentucky) commented that, "The simple act of having the students speak the words aloud made a great deal of difference in what my students took away from the lesson. Once students made the transition from reading powerful words into speaking them, they began to take on and inhabit the voices and perspectives of others. In my classroom, this helped students go from learners to empathizers."

Additionally, the program helps teachers integrate speechwriting into their curricula, demonstrating how oratory can be a tool to drive civic change. **Associate Director for Arts Education Cynthia Gertsen** commented, "By studying orators throughout history including President Lincoln himself, students begin to understand that they too can write powerful speeches. By learning the performance skills and rhetorical strategies that made historic speeches successful, they also learn how to apply those strategies to their own speeches. We can't wait to hear the students' speeches and learn about issues that are important to them!"

The 2018-2019 Lincoln Teacher Leader Award

The Lincoln Teacher Leader Award recognizes educators who have demonstrated outstanding skill as teacher leaders in Ford's Theatre programs and within their profession. In keeping with Lincoln's leadership qualities, Lincoln Teacher Leaders are courageous in their work, specifically by demonstrating creativity in their teaching practice, actively supporting the creative voices of their students, and exhibiting integrity as orators by speaking up on important issues in education. This award is presented by **BP America**.

The 2018-2019 National Oratory Fellows

The 2018-2019 cohort of fellows includes teachers from 16 states and the District of Columbia. The 32 fellows are (in alphabetical order): **Lauren Baxter** (Denver, Pennsylvania), **Mike Buchanan** (Wallace, Nebraska), **Stacey Callaway** (Midland, Texas), **Joe Cernak** (Homer Glen, Illinois), **Lindsey Charron** (Newport Beach, California), **Giani Clarkson** (Washington, D.C.), **Darrin Comstock** (Omaha,

Nebraska), **Barbara Connery** (Morris, Connecticut), **Marie Connolly** (Washington, D.C.), **Allison Decker** (Harrison, Ohio), **Joyce Erb-Appleman** (Bowie, Maryland), **Caitlin Goodwin** (McGraw, New York), **Georgette Hackman** (Denver, Pennsylvania), **Angela Hambleton** (Lafayette, Colorado), **Wally Hames** (Kuna, Idaho), **Vanessa Holloway** (Kansas City, Missouri), **Dave McIntire** (Wichita, Kansas), **Krista McKim** (Rockville, Maryland), **Joseph Moneymaker** (Smithland, Kentucky), **Alexandra Navarro** (Mesa, Arizona), **Kathryn Notarpole** (Mesa, Arizona), **Amber Obert** (Kuna, Idaho), **Angelo Parodi** (Washington, D.C.), **Karen Richey** (Elk Grove, California), **Ben Rivers** (Wichita, Kansas), **Jim Rossi** (Hagerstown, Maryland), **Kelly Rowland** (Toledo, Ohio), **Jason Rude** (New Hampton, Iowa), **Susan Scola** (Rockville, Maryland), **Jennifer Stockdell** (Independence, Missouri), **Jeff Weary** (Independence, Missouri) and **Melissa Woodward** (Independence, Missouri).

The 2018-2019 Student Delegates

The 2018-2019 National Oratory Fellow student delegates include 26 students from 11 states. The 22 students performing on May 6 are: seventh-graders **Hannah Bruce** and **Addison Niven** (Cocalico Middle School, Denver, Pennsylvania), eighth-graders **Melanie Gonzalez** and **Katherine Cherry** (Horace Ensign Intermediate School, Newport Beach, California), fifth-graders **Hadley Morrow** and **Kara Reida** and eighth-graders **Jayda Kelly** and **Shreya Reddy** (The Independent School, Wichita, Kansas), eighth-graders **Kacie Wooten** and **Miranda Keen** (Kuna Middle School, Kuna, Idaho), eighth-graders **Kaylee Lang** and **Hailey McCall** (McGraw Junior Senior High School, McGraw, New York), eighth-graders **Quinten Reicks** and **Liliana Chatman** (New Hampton Middle School, New Hampton, Iowa), fifth-graders **Zoey Hodge** and **Joshua Turner** (South Livingston Elementary, Smithland, Kentucky), seventh-graders **Mylie Pearson** and **Gabby Carrillo** (Stapley Junior High School, Mesa, Arizona), seventh-graders **Karisse Maceda** and **Rebekah Bradley** (Toby Johnson Middle School, Elk Grove, California), and eighth-graders **Charles Alt** and **Brahna Schulenberg** (Osage Trail Middle School, Independence, Missouri).

Other student delegates include: seventh-graders **Anthony Boone** and **Rikia Martin** (Imagine Clay Avenue Community School, Toledo, Ohio), eighth-graders **Anna Basti** and **Jaylee Zeigler** (James Morris School, Morris, Connecticut).

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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