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## **Ford's Theatre Education Announces National Oratory Fellows for 2018-2019 School Year**

Washington, D.C. – The Ford's Theatre Education team announced the 2018-2019 cohort of 32 **National Oratory Fellows**, who were selected after a competitive application process. The Ford's Theatre National Oratory Fellows program, started in 2011, helps teachers integrate oratorical skills and strategies, from performance to speechwriting, into their curricula. Through oratory, students develop speaking, writing and leadership skills, in addition to gaining a deeper understanding of great American orators including Abraham Lincoln.

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), **Mick 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 fellows were invited to Ford's Theatre on August 3-5 to take part in a weekend retreat. This professional development opportunity included lectures, tailored workshops, and special access to the Ford's Theatre Historic Site.

"The National Oratory Fellows program is a way for Ford's Theatre to continue the legacy of Abraham Lincoln by helping teachers to integrate speech writing and public speaking into classrooms

around the country," said **Ford's Theatre Associate Director for Arts Education Cynthia Gertsen**. "By looking to President Lincoln words, not only do educators better understand the components of powerful oratory, but they also learn how oratory can help drive civic change."

During the 2018-2019 school year, the National Oratory Fellows will partner with Ford's Teaching Artists for virtual teaching and coaching, and work with students via videoconference. The Fellows also meet virtually as a group every month to discuss best practices and support one another.

At the end of the school year, each Fellow, in conjunction with Ford's Theatre Teaching Artists, will select two students who have demonstrated excellence in oratory. In May 2019, Fellows and their student delegates will travel to Ford's to participate in a weekend retreat that will culminate in the opportunity to present a historical or original speech on the Ford's Theatre stage.

Ford's Theatre education programs are supported by Lead Education Sponsor **BP America** with additional support from the **Institute of Museum and Library Services**, **Bloomberg Philanthropies**, **Comcast NBCUniversal**, **Phillips 66** and the **National Park Service**.

**Schools and teachers interested in learning more** about the National Oratory Fellows Program should visit [www.fords.org/for-teachers/programs/oratory/national-oratory-fellowship](http://www.fords.org/for-teachers/programs/oratory/national-oratory-fellowship) or email [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 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 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 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).

### **#FordsOratory**

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