Ford Hall Forum lecture program, undated

Ford Hall Forum

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"Let There Be Light"

THE FORD HALL FORUM

Jesse Jackson

Henry A. Kissinger

Corazon Aquino
What is the Ford Hall Forum?

Since 1908, the Ford Hall Forum has provided a platform from which the current political, social, intellectual, and cultural issues of the day could be discussed and debated. It is a voluntary assembly of the active and thoughtful people of our community without regard to economic, religious, or political differences, for the purpose of exploring all matters of public concern.

The Forum seeks to educate the public by illuminating the basic issues of our times. Its operating concept is simple: to bring to the platform leading authorities and specialists on diverse subjects, and to insist upon the right of audience members to pose questions directly to the speakers. The Forum has grown to its present magnitude and influence through a policy of free admission to the public, and it seeks to involve the public, the Forum welcomes many new people to its programs for the first time each year.

No Viewpoint Unchallenged

Audiences have been admiring, friendly, and critical, but no viewpoint goes unchallenged. Often two or more speakers present their different opinions and debate a current issue. Whether speaking alone or with others, every speaker is subject to the scrutiny of a lively and involved audience. Among the areas covered are politics, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, science, education, economics, literature, international relations, medical ethics, law, morality, and the burning issues of the day. The entire spectrum of attitudes and opinions from ultra-liberal to arch-conservative is presented. Indeed, it has been a source of constant gratification to the Forum over the years to be the target of criticism from forces of Left and Right for presenting unpopular points of view. This is precisely what the Forum is all about.

Who Listens?

The Ford Hall Forum serves a diverse constituency. Its audience is comprised of the elderly, the middle-aged and the young of all races, religions, ethnic backgrounds and economic levels, not only in Boston and New England, but throughout the country. Generations of students attending Greater Boston colleges have found the Forum to be a vital adjunct to their education, and a source of intellectual ferment. The Forum has members who have attended its sessions for as long as 40 years, and children and grandchildren of early Forum members are now regular attendees of the programs. Also, through its continuing efforts to interest and involve the public, the Forum welcomes many new people to its programs for the first time each year.

The Importance of the Forum

An informed citizenry is vital to a democracy. Yet most Americans obtain their news from television, edited into brief segments that can't explore an issue in depth or fully examine a speaker's statements. The Forum, in contrast, presents expert speakers with the time to explain their beliefs and support their assertions.

In addition, conventional forms of communication—the printed word, radio and television—give an audience no means of responding or questioning. The Forum supplies this added dimension through the unique opportunity to question and challenge these experts and opinion-makers.

Another unusual aspect of the Forum is its use of audience participation in the selection of speakers through regularly distributed program request forms. These, plus unsolicited letters of recommendation, are used in choosing topics and speakers. They keep the Forum in touch with citizens' deep concerns about current issues and place Forum programming at the forefront of public opinion.

Even as it changes to keep pace with the times and adds services to reach more people, the Forum remains true to its original principles: it is free to the public, it provides an open question period for members of the audience, and it presents many points of view in a non-partisan atmosphere.

Among Past Speakers

Bella Abzug
Corazon Aquino
Isaac Asimov
Howard Baker
Bruno Bettelheim
Sissela Bok
Louis Brandeis
Jimmy Breslin
Kingman Brewster, Jr.
Patrick Buchanan
William F. Buckley, Jr.
Ralph J. Bunche
Helen Caldicott
Ramsey Clark
William Colby
Henry Steele Commager
Norman Cousins
Clarence Darrow
Robert F. Drinan
W. E. B. DuBois
Will Durant
Abba Eban
Pierre Mendes-France
Barney Frank
Pavel Frankfurter
Douglas Fraser
Robert Frost
Buckminster Fuller
John Kenneth Galbraith
David Gergen
Germaine Greer
Dick Gregory
David Halberstam
Avery Goffman
Seymour Hersh
Jesse Jackson
Herman Kahn
Martin Kuh
Alexander Kerensky
John Kerry
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Henry A. Kissinger
W. K. Krishna Menon
Robert M. LaFollette
Max Lerner
William Loeb
Sir Bernard Lovell
Sir Bernard Lovell
Seymour Hersh
Thurgood Marshall
Margaret Mead
Arthur Miller
Bill Moyers
Robert Mugabe
Ralph Nader
B. K. Nehru
Reinhold Niebuhr
Robert Novak
Vance Packard
Limas Pauling
Leonard Peikoff
Roscoe Pound
Yitzhak Rabin
Ayn Rand
James Reston
Walter Reuther
Eliot Richardson
Pat Robertson
Eleanor Roosevelt
William A. Rusher
Carl Sandburg
Margaret Sanger
Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.
Daniel Schorr
Pete Seeger
John R. Silber
Upton Sinclair
B. F. Skinner
Lincoln Steffens
Gloria Steinem
I. F. Stone
Lester Thurow
Barbara Tuchman
Gore Vidal
Harold Washington
Tore Wiker
Elie Wiesel
Roy Wilkins
Thomas Winship
Bob Woodward
Andrew Young
Whitney M. Young, Jr.
Adm. Elmo Zumwalt
“The Ford Hall Forum has...been a voice of reason and intelligence, of wit and humor, of caring. May its voice never be stilled.”

_The Boston Herald_

“Among all of Boston’s great cultural institutions, and there are many, probably the one most indispensable in the last analysis is the Ford Hall Forum.”

_The Boston Globe_

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**THE FORD HALL FORUM**

- **Blackman Auditorium**
- Northeastern University
- 50 Huntington Avenue
- Boston, MA 02115

*Contributions to the Forum are tax-deductible.*