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FOR RELEASE
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Ford's Theatre

ANNUAL GALA

Ford's Theatre Society Announces Rita Moreno and Marlene A. Malek As 2023 Lincoln Medalists

**Awards To Be Presented At
The *Ford's Theatre Annual Gala* Performance
On June 11, 2023**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Ford's Theatre Society celebrates the legacy of President Abraham Lincoln at its annual gala performance on **Sunday, June 11, 2023, at Ford's Theatre**. For more than 45 years, Ford's Theatre Society has hosted this bipartisan event, which provides crucial support to the nonprofit's theatrical and educational programs. As part of the evening, **Ford's will recognize EGOT-winning, trailblazing actress Rita Moreno and Ford's Theatre trustee, health care advocate and patron of the arts Marlene A. Malek with the Lincoln Medal**—an award given by the Ford's Theatre Society to a person or persons who, through their body of work, accomplishments or personal attributes, exemplify the lasting legacy and mettle of character embodied by the most beloved president in our nation's history, President Lincoln.

"Every year, we reflect upon Abraham Lincoln's legacy as a complex and inspiring American through the Lincoln Medal," said **Ford's Theatre Director Paul R. Tetreault**. "We are honored to present this year's Lincoln Medals to two exceptional women who, like Lincoln, have shaped American life and artistic expression for decades, dedicating their lives to the pursuit of positive change - from changing the

trajectory of cancer research and being a stalwart patron of the arts like Malek, to blazing a trail for women and artists of color like Moreno.”

We are honored to have the First Lady of the United States, **Dr. Jill Biden**, serve as the Honorary Chair of the gala this year. The First Lady is joined by Honorary Co-Chairs: **Mrs. Rima Al-Sabah, Mrs. Abigail P. Blunt, Mrs. Marcia Carlucci, Hon. Elaine L. Chao, Mrs. Dianne Cleaver, Mrs. Sandy Cornyn, Hon. Deborah I. Dingell, Mrs. Robin Hickenlooper, Mrs. Kennisandra Jeffries, Mrs. Ritu Ahuja Khanna, Mrs. Frances R. Lindner, Mrs. Marlene Malek, Dr. Susan J. Blumenthal Markey, Mrs. Judy McCarthy, Ms. Catherine Merrill, Mrs. Noémi K. Neidorff, Mrs. Kelley Paul, Mr. Paul Pelosi, Mrs. Vicki Risch, Mrs. Hilary Geary Ross and Ms. Iris Weinshall.**

Ford's Theatre gratefully acknowledges **Marcia Myers Carlucci** and **Michael R. Hemmerich** for their support of the 2023 Lincoln Medal presentation.

The *Ford's Theatre Annual Gala* is made possible by the generous support of Lead Sponsor **General Dynamics** and Red Carpet Sponsor **Ovation**. The **Willard InterContinental Hotel** is the Official Hotel of The *Ford's Theatre Annual Gala*.

For information on tickets and sponsorships for the *Ford's Theatre Annual Gala*, please contact the Ford's Theatre Development office at gala@fords.org or 202-347-4835.

Ford's Theatre Society continues to prioritize the health and safety of its artists, volunteers, staff and patrons. Current safety protocols are available on our website at www.fords.org/visit-us/plan-your-visit/covid-19-health-and-safety. We strongly encourage face masks during performances.

Lincoln Medal

Past recipients of the Lincoln Medal include The Honorable James E. Clyburn (2022) and music industry legend Clive Davis, Jr. (2022); General Colin L. Powell and Alma J. Powell (2019) and political humorist Mark Russell (2019); philanthropist and businesswoman Sheila C. Johnson (2018) and golf champion Jack Nicklaus (2018); former NFL player Peyton W. Manning (2017); civil rights activist Diane Nash (2015); Congressman John D. Dingell (2014) and actor James Earl Jones (2014); former Secretary of State Dr. Condoleezza Rice (2013); Holocaust survivor and author Elie Wiesel (2012); human rights activist Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu (2010) and Justice Albie Sachs (2010); filmmaker George Lucas (2009), singer Aretha Franklin (2009) and actor Sidney Poitier (2009); Dr. Maya Angelou (2008), actor Ruby Dee (2008) and Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor (2008); and Congressman John Lewis (2007).

About Rita Moreno

Rita Moreno is a true national treasure, a cultural icon and a Hollywood and Broadway legend, having been honored for her acclaimed performances during her more than 80-year career. In 1977, she became the third artist to achieve EGOT status, having won all four major awards in the entertainment industry: two Emmys, a Grammy, an Oscar and a Tony. Her career began with her Broadway debut at age 13. She has over 170 credits as an actor on IMDb, has starred on Broadway and London's West End, appeared in more than 40 feature films and television shows and performed in regional theaters, including her one-woman show, *Life Without Makeup*, at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre. She tours across the U.S. for speaking engagements and lectures on the performing arts and diversity and inclusion.

Moreno was recently cast in the Netflix film *Family Leave*, starring opposite Jennifer Garner, for release Christmas 2023. Other recent film credits include *80 for Brady* with NFL great Tom Brady. This spring 2023, she appears as Vin Diesel's grandmother in *Fast X* of the *Fast and Furious* franchise. Moreno co-

starred and served as an Executive Producer on Steven Spielberg's 2022 remake of *West Side Story*. Her documentary, *Rita Moreno: Just a Girl Who Decided to Go for It*, had its world premiere at Sundance Film Festival and was released in theaters nationwide. It is now on Netflix. Moreno co-starred in the critically acclaimed Latinx reimagining of Norman Lear's classic sitcom, *One Day At A Time*.

Moreno received the Peabody Career Achievement Award, the Kennedy Center Honor and the 50th Screen Actors Guild Life Achievement Award for her lifetime contributions to American culture. She was the Grand Marshal for the Rose Parade and the National Puerto Rican Day Parade. She received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President George W. Bush and the National Medal of Arts from President Barack Obama.

About Marlene A. Malek

Marlene A. Malek is a community activist, health care advocate and a patron of the arts. Mrs. Malek is Vice-Chairman of Friends of Cancer Research, our country's leading voice in advocating for policies and solutions to get treatment to patients in the safest and quickest way. She serves on the Board of M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas, Duke University's Cancer Institute in Durham, North Carolina and the Mayo Clinic Cancer Center Leadership Council. Mrs. Malek received a President Appointment to the National Cancer Advisory Board, which is part of the National Institute of Health, and served a six-year term.

Mrs. Malek is Vice-Chairman of the Board of Trustees at Marymount University and was awarded the University's Gold Medal for Community Leadership and Outstanding Alumni Achievement Award. The Malek School of Nursing Professions at Marymount University is named in her honor, for her service and commitment. She was a Presidential Appointee to the Kennedy Center's Board of Trustees from 2002-2008 and serves on their International Committee. She serves on Boards of Trustees for Ford's Theatre Society, the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Vital Voices Global Partnership, Explore Children's Museum and WETA.

Mrs. Malek is a member of the Executive Roundtable of the Republican Governors and serves on the George & Barbara Bush Foundation Board. She served on the Vice President's Residence Foundation Board in 2000–2008 and in 2016–2020. In 2019, *Washingtonian* named her a "[Washingtonian of the Year](#)"—one of the most powerful women in Washington—for her work supporting cancer research. In 1979, she graduated from Marymount University School of Nursing. She lives in McLean, Virginia. She has two grown children and five grandchildren.

About 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 life and legacy.

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 *Grace*, *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 American life.

For more information on Ford's Theatre and the Ford's Theatre Society, please visit www.fords.org.

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#FordsGala

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