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Access photos from the gala [HERE](#).

ANNUAL GALA

**The Ford's Theatre Annual Gala
Honors President Lincoln's Legacy**

**Rita Moreno and Marlene A. Malek
Receive the Lincoln Medal**

**Gala Performances by Host Scott Bakula,
Larry Braggs, Carrie Compere, Sierra Hull, Justin Moses,
The War and Treaty, Time for Three and the Ford's Ensemble**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Ford's Theatre Society celebrated the legacy of President Abraham Lincoln at the *Ford's Theatre Annual Gala* on Sunday evening, June 11, 2023, at Ford's Theatre. For more than 40 years, the Society has hosted this bipartisan event, which provides crucial support to the nonprofit's theatrical and educational programs.

"The gala has a long tradition of being a necessary bipartisan space for our community here in Washington, D.C. and it is a joy to unite and highlight President Abraham Lincoln's universal and expansive appeal together," said **Ford's Theatre Director Paul R. Tetreault**. "Thanks to our gala supporters, our vision of creating a campus for learning, connection and meaningful dialogue in the spirit of celebrating Lincoln's legacy can come to life, with more than 750,000 visitors in a typical year at our performances and history and education programming. Ford's Theatre continues to be one of the most successful public-private partnerships between a nonprofit and the National Park Service, under the leadership of the Department of the Interior. We are proud to reflect and serve American life in all we do."

The gala performance was attended by numerous dignitaries and members of the diplomatic community, including Senators **John Hickenlooper**, **Edward Markey**, **Rand Paul** and **James Risch**; Representatives **Emanuel Cleaver II**, **James E. Clyburn** (a 2022 Lincoln Medalist), **Debbie Dingell**, **Ro Khanna**, Speaker Emerita **Nancy Pelosi** and **Michael Turner**; The Honorable **Elaine L. Chao**; Special Assistant and Senior Advisor to the Counselor to the President **John McCarthy**; Counselor to the President of the United States **Steven Ricchetti**, White House Social Secretary **Carlos Elizondo**, Ambassador **Sheikh Meshal bin Hamad Al-Thani** and Ambassador **Dina Kavar**.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of the **Lincoln Medal** to actress **Rita Moreno** by acclaimed American playwright and screenwriter **Tony Kushner**, and to noted philanthropist and healthcare advocate **Marlene A. Malek**, by former Maryland Governor **Larry Hogan**. The recipients, through their achievements and personal attributes, exemplify the lasting legacy of Abraham Lincoln.

Performance

The event at the historic Ford's Theatre included memorable performances, such as "Believe in Yourself" from *The Wiz* and "Rock Me" from *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!*, performed by **Carrie Compere** and the Ford's Ensemble; "Got To Get You Into My Life," performed by former Tower of Power and Temptations lead singer **Larry Braggs**; a spirited rendition of "Chaconne in Winter" by classical trio **Time for Three**; "Yesterday's Burn," a group performance with Americana artists **The War and Treaty**, **Sierra Hull** and **Justin Moses**; and a full company performance of the rousing crowd-pleaser "Stand by Me" by Ben E. King. The gala performance was followed by a seated dinner at the National Portrait Gallery and Smithsonian American Art Museum.

The First Lady of the United States, **Dr. Jill Biden**, served as the Honorary Chair of the gala this year. The Honorary Co-Chairs were **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 A. 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**.

The *Ford's Theatre Annual Gala* benefits Ford's Theatre Society and its programming, including Ford's Theatre theatrical and education initiatives. This event is made possible by the generous support of Lead Sponsor: **General Dynamics** and Red Carpet Sponsor: **Ovation**. Ford's Theatre gratefully acknowledges **Marcia Myers Carlucci** and **Michael R. Hemmerich** for their support of the 2023 Lincoln Medal presentation. The **Willard InterContinental Hotel** is the Official Hotel of the *Ford's Theatre Annual Gala*.

Lincoln Medal

The Lincoln Medal, first bestowed in 1981 to Senator Milton R. Young, is an annual 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 Abraham Lincoln.

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, a true Hollywood and Broadway legend, has been honored for her acclaimed performances during her more than 80-year career. She has won all four of the most prestigious entertainment awards: an Oscar, a Tony, two Emmys and a Grammy. Her career began with her Broadway debut at age 13. She 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 Rep. She tours the U.S. for speaking engagements and lectures.

Ms. 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. Ms. 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 debut 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*.

Ms. 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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