

# Ford's Theatre Society **Board of Governors 2024-2025**







## Table of Contents

About Ford's Theatre	
Programming Vision	3
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at Ford's Theatre	5
The Ford's Theatre Legacy Commissions	7
Sensory-Friendly Programs	8
Education Programs	
Oratory Programs	11
On-site Programs	13
Teacher Professional Development	14
Distance Learning	
Our Impact	
Board of Governors	
Exclusive Access	21
The Ford's Theatre Annual Gala	23
Unique Opportunities	25
Membership Benefits	

Phebe N. Novakovic
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Cover: Rendering courtesy of OTJ Architects. Back cover and background: Photos © Maxwell MacKenzie.



## About Ford's Theatre

Ford's Theatre explores
the legacy of President
Abraham Lincoln and
celebrates the American
experience through
theatre and education.





The site of President Abraham Lincoln's assassination, Ford's Theatre lives at the heart of the Washington, D.C. experience—a vibrant stage for engaged and entertaining audiences. Additionally, Ford's Theatre offers theatrical encounters and an immersive environment that celebrates the life and values of Lincoln and his evolving legacy.

Today, Ford's Theatre is operated through a public-private partnership with the National Park Service. As both a national historic site and a producing theatre, Ford's Theatre occupies a unique place among American cultural organizations. We draw upon Lincoln's legacy and the transformative power of the arts to awaken visitors and audiences to the necessity for individual empathy and understanding of societal civics. Many consider Ford's Theatre to be a sacred space, and by keeping the theatre alive, we assert that Ford's Theatre is not just the site of Lincoln's assassination but also a place where everyone can experience the joy and inspiration that Lincoln himself found in the performing arts.

Ford's Theatre is making its mark on American theatre and bringing history to life by commissioning plays like *The Guard*, as well as Lincoln-based world premieres such as *The Heavens Are Hung in Black, Necessary Sacrifices* and *The Widow Lincoln*. Ford's has also helped to elevate the profile of theatre in the nation's capital by producing new and critically acclaimed works. In 2016, Ford's produced the East Coast premiere of *Come From Away* prior to its engagement on Broadway, where it won the Tony Award for Best Direction of a Musical. Launched in 2020 The Ford's Theatre Legacy Commissions serves as an artistic incubator for stories about social justice and racial history and explores the varied experiences of underrepresented characters and lesser-known historical figures in American history.



Christopher Bloch and Felicia Curry in *My Lord, What a Night* (2021). Photo by Scott Suchman.



Kimberly Gilbert and Craig Wallace in *A Christmas Carol* (2023). Photo by Scott Suchman.



The company of SHOUT SISTER SHOUT! (2023). Photo by André Chung.

Ford's Theatre is committed to making productions accessible for all and offers closed captioning, audio described and sign-interpreted performances. In 2018, braille programs, sensory-friendly performances and museum experiences were introduced to annual programming offerings.

Ford's fosters an audience whose members reflect the communities we serve and the nation's varied population. Through diverse casting and by selecting plays and musicals that feature lesser-told stories of the American experience, our audiences see themselves represented on our historic stage.

Lincoln believed fervently in the United States; a country more united by its commonalities than divided by its

differences. We follow Lincoln's examples—his capacity to see the humanity in every person—during one of the most turbulent eras in our country's history.

With Lincoln's leadership as our inspiration, Ford's Theatre endeavors to be a beacon of hope while advancing his unfinished work. We bring together people from across the world, from diverse backgrounds and with varying viewpoints. We strive to bridge divides, cultivate empathy, encourage civic dialogue and embrace shared ideals. We do these things to inspire people to choose community over isolation and to find and celebrate our common humanity.



Chani Wereley in Little Shop of Horrors (2024). Photo by Scott Suchman.



The history of the Ford's Theatre National Historic Site is interwoven with the fight for racial equity and justice.

On April 14, 1865, John Wilkes Booth, a proud white supremacist and Confederate sympathizer, assassinated President Abraham Lincoln at Ford's Theatre. A few days prior, Booth attended a speech at the White House where Lincoln expressed support for limited Black suffrage. After hearing Lincoln's speech, Booth responded, "Now, by God, I'll put him through. That is the last speech he will ever give."

We see direct connections between the history we teach at our Civil War-era historic site, and the legacy of that history nearly 160 years later. We embrace the opportunities that connection provides to foster empathy, shared humanity and unity.

Inspired by Lincoln's gift for storytelling, Ford's renews our commitment to use our storytelling and artistic abilities to effect change and make a difference. Through theatre, curation and education, we seek to inspire the country's citizens—our audiences—with stories of courage, hope, determination and justice.

In 2019, Ford's Theatre Society began a multi-year project to intentionally address equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility. Internally, our staff is participating in EDI training and knowledge-building for responding to potentially challenging discussions and interactions amongst patrons with differing viewpoints.

To advise and amplify this work, Ford's created a director of equity, diversity and inclusion role to oversee and guide these efforts. In partnership with Ford's staff



The cast of Twelve Angry Men (2019). Photo by Scott Suchman.



Nia Savoy-Dock, Kaiyla Gross and Kanysha Williams in *Little Shop of Horrors* (2024). Photo by Scott Suchman.



The cast of Something Moving: A Meditation on Maynard (2023). Photo by Scott Suchman.

and members of the Board of Trustees, they have developed internal and external goals and objectives through *Living the Legacy: EDI by 25*. This initiative aims to make strategic advancements in production and artistic direction, educational programming, museum curation and overall visitor and site experiences by 2025. Ford's considers this initiative as a continuation of the unfinished work of Lincoln.



Charlayne Woodard in her Ford's Theatre reading of *A Designer of Note, A Woman of Style* (2024). Photo by Rachel Flannery.

"We can succeed only by concert. It is not 'can any of us imagine better?' but 'can we all do better?' The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise—with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew."

- Abraham Lincoln, December 1862



John Floyd, Jay Frisby, Fatima Quander and Noah Keyishian in the Ford's Theatre reading of The American Five (2024). Photo by Andrew Buchsbaum.

In August 2020, Ford's launched The Ford's Theatre Legacy Commissions, an unprecedented artistic initiative to expand the voice of the American Theatre storytellers. In a time when our nation is facing a long-overdue reckoning on our racial history, Ford's Theatre has forged partnerships with 10 BIPOC playwrights. The commissions explore lesser-known historical figures and illuminate stories about their contributions to American life, social justice and the racial struggle for equality. The commissions speak to our moment while giving voice to underrepresented stories and forgotten heroes. Following President Lincoln's example, this artistic initiative aims to expand our understanding of race and history while allowing for dialogue and engagement at regional and national theatres.

Around the table, starting middle L: actor Constance Swain, dramaturg Sydné Mahone, director Hana S. Sharif, playwright Nambi E. Kelley, stage manager Joan Foster McCarty and production assistant Safiya Muthaliff. Photo by Daniella Ignacio.

The commissions process provides extensive supports for the artists, which may include first readings, developmental workshops and world-premiere productions through the next decade. Pearl Cleage's *Something Moving: A Meditation on Maynard*, developed in the initial cohort of commissioned works, received its world premiere production on the Ford's Theatre stage in fall 2023.



Playwright Chess Jakobs and director Aaron Posner at rehearsal for Ford's Theatre's reading of *The American Five* in January 2024. Photo by Taylor Malone.



Tobias A. Young, Jake Loewenthal, Lawrence Redmond and Jay Frisby meet guests at the meet and greet during the sensory-friendly performance of *Little Shop of Horrors* (2024).

Photo by Carolina Dulcev.

Since 2018, Ford's Theatre has offered relaxed, sensory-friendly performances and museum experiences for people with sensory sensitivities. These programs are designed to create a museum or theatre experience that is welcoming for individuals with autism or those who might benefit from an adjusted environment. Our sensory-friendly theatrical performances include adjustments like modified lighting; lower sound levels, especially for sudden or loud sounds; designated take-a-break and quiet spaces; and allowance for audience talking, movement and use of tablets and smartphones.

Ford's Theatre also offers Ford's For Me, a sensory-friendly museum experience. This free event welcomes visitors onsite to tour the museum and theatre in an environment adjusted for their needs. Ford's For Me has included activities such as access to the historic stage, crafting Lincoln hats, historic story time sessions and a sensory-friendly performance of the one-act play, One Destiny. Visit adjustments include reduced wait times, fewer people at Ford's Theatre during the time of the experience, Ford's Theatre staff trained to be inviting and accommodating to patrons' needs, and allowance for the use of tablets and smartphones for communication.

Ford's Theatre sensory-friendly experiences aim to provide a safe environment where individuals and families can relax and be their most authentic selves.



Attendees meet the actors Jonathan Atkinson and Joe Mallon after *One Destiny's* sensory-friendly performance, during the *Ford's For Me: A Sensory-Friendly Museum Experience* (2023). Photo by Carolina Dulcey.



## As the premier destination for exploring the life and legacy of President Lincoln, Ford's Theatre is committed to providing access to students and teachers from the Washington, D.C.-area and across the nation. We are eager to expand our public programming options with the opening of the Frances and Craig Lindner Center for Culture and Leadership.

## **Education Programs**



Lincoln's skill as an orator is one of his greatest legacies. Ford's Theatre offers programs that teach the art of public speaking to students and teachers locally and nationally.

## LINCOLN ORATORY RESIDENCY AND FESTIVAL

This free program brings Ford's Theatre Teaching Artists into D.C.-area classrooms to familiarize students with oratory and develop their public speaking skills through learning and performing speeches by President Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, Mary McLeod Bethune and other powerful speakers who have made history. Throughout a five-visit, in-school residency, students learn and rehearse speeches in groups which are then performed on the Ford's Theatre stage for an audience of fellow students, friends and family members. To remove any participation barriers, Ford's Theatre provides free round-trip bus transportation to and from the theatre for students.

## LINCOLN ONLINE ORATORY PROJECT

Ford's Theatre Teaching Artists conduct a web-based version of the Oratory Residency and Festival program via virtual oratory residences, with performances from classrooms around the country posted on the Ford's Theatre YouTube page. In three classroom visits, teaching artists introduce the basics of Ford's Approach to Oratory and rehearse with the students, preparing them to film an ensemble performance of a historical speech.



Screen grab of Lincoln Online Oratory Project video by Ford's Theatre staff.



Oratory students perform on the Ford's Theatre stage. Photo by Carolina Dulcey.

#### NATIONAL ORATORY FELLOWS

This multi-year, professional development program helps teachers learn the art and science behind compelling and effective public speaking to integrate it into their classroom curriculum. The National Oratory Fellow are a growing network of 41 Teacher Fellows from 20 states and Washington, D.C., all of whom are invested in cultivating strong student voices through public speaking and performance.

Each summer, the program kicks off with three days of workshops and planning sessions, which shapes the course of instruction for the school year. To monitor progress and maintain momentum, Fellows work with Ford's Theatre Teaching Artists throughout the year via virtual coaching sessions. Fellows also utilize an online meeting space to collaborate and exchange best practices with their peers. The program culminates every May with the Fellows and their student delegates traveling to Washington, D.C. to perform original and historic speeches on the Ford's Theatre stage.



 $The \ 2024 \ National \ Or a tory \ Fellows \ and \ students \ outside \ Ford's \ Theatre. \ Photo \ by \ Tricia \ Patrick.$ 



2023 Civil War Washington teachers at Ford's Theatre. Photo by Carolina Dulcey.

Each year, Ford's Theatre welcomes students to the historic campus to experience a live theatrical performance or learn about Lincoln's assassination and legacy.



2023 Civil War Washington participants on the Ford's Theatre stage. Photo by Carolina Dulcey.

## HISTORIC SITE FIELD TRIPS

Ford's Theatre offers field trips for local students to learn about Lincoln's assassination, its lasting impact on our nation and how Lincoln's legacy is relevant today. To ensure all students have access to this opportunity, Ford's Theatre offers free tickets to Washington D.C. public and charter schools and Title I schools in Maryland, Virginia and around the country upon request. Free round-trip bus transportation is also made available to Washington, D.C. public and charter schools and Title I schools from Maryland and Virginia within the Capital Beltway.

## STUDENT MATINEES

Ford's Theatre offers weekday performances of its mainstage productions to introduce Washington D.C.-area students to live theatre. As with Historic Site Field Trips, Ford's Theatre offers a limited number of free tickets and bus transportation for Washington, D.C. public and charter schools as well as Title I schools from Maryland and Virginia within the Capital Beltway.

## **TEACHER PREVIEW WORKSHOPS**

Washington D.C.-area teachers are invited to attend free workshops to better understand our mainstage production's themes prior to their students attending a Student Matinee. Educators learn tools focused on teaching storytelling and history using theatrical techniques to incorporate the arts into the classroom. Following each workshop, teachers are invited to attend a free performance of the mainstage production.



The 2023 Set In Stone cohort in front of Ford's Theatre. Photo by Andrew Buchsbaum.

Each summer, Ford's Theatre provides professional development workshops that empower teachers to incorporate historical resources into their classroom instruction to teach compelling American history lessons. To enhance these experiences, Ford's Theatre partners with several historic sites in and around the nation's capital to introduce a variety of perspectives and approaches to interpretation.

## THE CATHERINE B. REYNOLDS FOUNDATION CIVIL WAR WASHINGTON

Since 2008, this week-long summer intensive has brought teachers to Washington, D.C. to explore the capital as President Lincoln would have known it during the Civil War. Teachers and educators from around the country gain tools to help their students grapple with histories whose legacies matter today. This program is free of charge, but teachers have the opportunity to opt into receiving graduate credit through Trinity University Washington for a fee.

## SET IN STONE: CIVIL WAR MEMORY, MONUMENTS AND MYTHS

Since 2015, this week-long summer intensive has brought teachers to Washington, D.C. to examine how people have sculpted the narrative of United States History through monuments and memorials in our nation's capital, and how the legacies of the Civil War and Reconstruction continue to shape public memory. Teachers from around the country learn how to lead nuanced discussions with their students about how our country's history is reflected in our communities and physical spaces and continues to impact us today. The program is free-of-charge, but teachers have the opportunity to opt into receiving graduate credit through Trinity University Washington for a fee.

## MUSEUM PLACE-BASED LEARNING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ford's Theatre expanded our professional development options for local educators by offering a series of workshops featuring topics covered by our Summer Teacher Institutes in single-day Saturday sessions. These programs introduce teachers practical ways to translate and apply what they learn onsite into their classroom curriculum. In collaboration with local scholars and organizations, these half day workshops include visits to lesser-known local monuments and sites important to the development of Washington, D.C.'s evolving landscape. Our historians and museum education staff highlight the relationships between historical occurrences and contemporary issues.



The Ford's Theatre education department offers a range of online experiences and resources to extend learning opportunities to students, teachers, history-lovers and learners of all ages around the country who are unable to visit the historic site and museum in person. Since 2020, these programs have been expanded to better serve classrooms locally and across the country.



Ford's Theatre offers live virtual field trips, bringing the Ford's experience directly to remote viewers. Led by a Ford's Theatre educator, these low to no-cost virtual field trips explore a range of topics such as Lincoln's life and presidency and his assassination in Ford's Theatre, Lincoln's death inside the Petersen House, reactions to Lincoln's assassination, exploring Civil War Washington and what happened to Ford's Theatre after 1865.



Photo of Chris Stinson by Niew Bharyaguntra.

## VIRTUAL INVESTIGATION: DETECTIVE MCDEVITT

Through live videoconferencing, students act as virtual deputies to Detective James McDevitt, who was on duty at the Washington Metropolitan Police headquarters on the night President Lincoln was assassinated.

#### **EXPLORING LINCOLN'S ASSASSINATION**

Learners of all ages can explore Lincoln's assassination on their own—from the genesis of the conspiracy to the event's impact on Lincoln's legacy. Visitors can browse through digitized historic artifacts and firsthand accounts to examine key details of this important chapter of American history.



East Brunswick, NJ. Photo by Kristen Ferrara and Craig Segall.

## **ONE DESTINY: ON DEMAND**

A play that explores the fateful night of Abraham Lincoln's assassination, told from the perspectives of Ford's Theatre owner Harry Ford and actor Harry Hawk, is made accessible to individuals and school groups beyond Ford's Theatre historic site visitors.

## REMEMBERING LINCOLN

This online collection of primary sources illustrates the reaction to Lincoln's assassination. Using an interactive map and timeline, visitors can view their state's public and private responses to the assassination, as well as contribute new items to the collection.

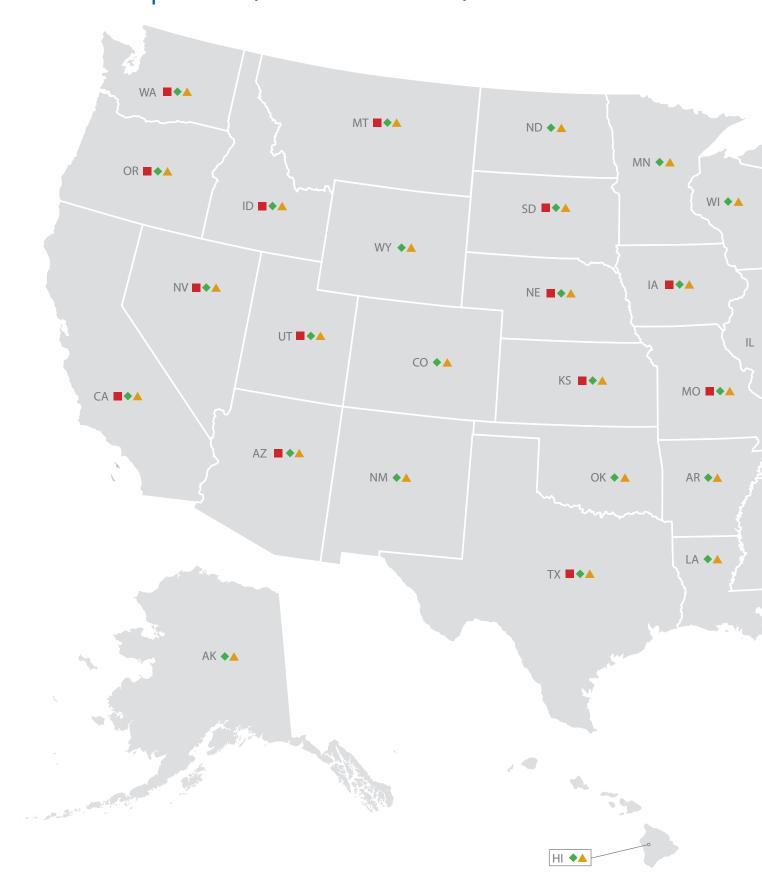


Screen grab of fords.com, Investigating the Assassination.



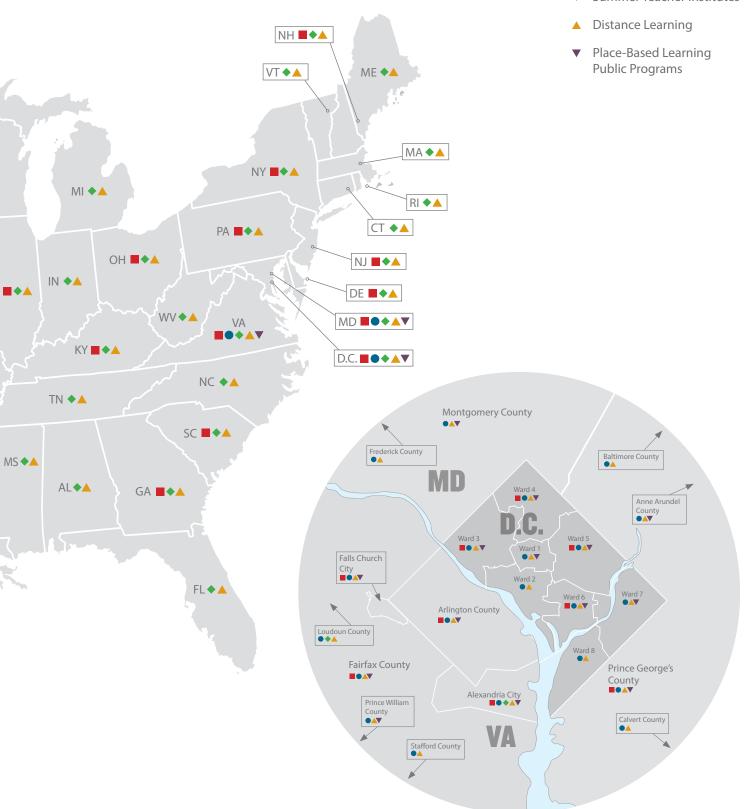
Screen grab of www.rememberinglincoln.com

## Our Impact (2023-2024)



#### **KEY**

- Oratory Programs
- On-site Programs
- ◆ Summer Teacher Institutes









Since its inception in 1970, the Board of Governors has supported Ford's Theatre in the exploration of President Abraham Lincoln's legacy and the celebration of the American experience through theatre and education. Today, the Board of Governors advances the mission of Ford's Theatre through a variety of activities, including production underwriting, education program sponsorship and general operating support.

Members of the Board of Governors have access to several hospitality and networking opportunities including.

- Exclusive events, VIP Openings and receptions and the Annual Board of Governors Breakfast
- Unique hospitality opportunities such as private after-hours tours and use of our event space in the historic theatre as well as spaces in the new Frances and Craig Lindner Center for Culture and Leadership.
- Tickets to *The Ford's Theatre Annual Gala* weekend
- Access to house seats unavailable to the general public



Siemens Corporation's Barbara and David Humpton with Ford's Trustee and the Groups's Art and Sela Collins attending *The Ford's Theatre Annual Gala* (2024) Photo by Norwood Photography.



Photo by Margot Schulman.



Ford's Trustees Ray Dempsey, Beth Hodges and Alphonso Jackson join Senator William Smith (MD-20) and Marcia Jackson at *Something Moving: A Meditation on Maynard* VIP Opening Night. Photo by Norwood Photography.



The Home Depot guests attending VIP Opening Night. Photo by Norwood Photography.



Meta's Kevin Martin and Alston & Bird's Dennis Garris attending the BOG Breakfast. Photo by Norwood Photography.



Vicki Risch, Senator Jim Risch (R-ID) and Paul Tetreault attending a Board of Governors Breakfast. Photo by Norwood Photography.



Since 1978, *The Ford's Theatre Annual Gala* has been the highlight of the Ford's Theatre season, drawing some of Washington's most prominent citizens, Members of Congress, Administration officials, Supreme Court Justices and members of the diplomatic community, as well as national leaders in business and philanthropy.

As one of the most exclusive events in Washington, the *Annual Gala* offers guests a unique chance to visit various iconic Washington, D.C. institutions in one weekend.

The Annual Gala performance features the presentation of the Ford's Theatre Lincoln Medal to individuals who,

through their body of work, accomplishments or personal attributes, exemplify the lasting legacy and character embodied by President Lincoln. Past recipients have included: Rita Moreno, Marlene A. Malek, Morgan Freeman, Doris Kearns Goodwin, Sheila C. Johnson, Peyton W. Manning, Jack Nicklaus, General Colin Powell and Alma J. Powell and Dr. Condoleezza Rice.

The Annual Gala provides critical funding to support artistic performances, arts education programs and outreach initiatives available throughout the year to students and families across the country.



Bernadette Peters performs at *The Ford's Theatre Annual Gala* (2024). Photo by Carol Rosegg.



Albertson's Marie Sylla Dixon and Hank Dixon attending  $\it The Ford$ 's  $\it The atre Annual Gala$  (2024). Photo by Norwood Photography.



Susan Egan, Michael Urie, Bernadette Peters, Brian Stokes Mitchell, Emmy Russel and Josh Groban perform at the Ford's Theatre Annual Gala (2024). Photo by Carol Rosegg.



Brian Stokes Mitchell performs at  $\it The Ford's Theatre Annual Gala (2024)$ . Photo by Carol Rosegg.



Josh Groban performs at *The Ford's Theatre Annual Gala* (2024). Photo by Carol Rosegg.



Mychal Threets, Michelle Ross, Ricci Yuhico and Richard Reyes-Gavilan at *The Ford's Theatre Annual Gala* (2024). Photo by Carol Rosegg.



PwC's Ben Towne, B.J. Agugliaro, Holly McKenzie and Kevin Smithson attending *The Ford's Theatre Annual Gala* (2024). Photo by Norwood Photography.



## RONALD O. PERELMAN BOARD ROOM

Entertain executives, clients and employees while experiencing the grandeur of President Lincoln's era. The Ford's Theatre Board Room elegantly sets the stage for exclusive meetings, receptions and dinners with its 1865 parlor-style décor.

## FRANCES AND CRAIG LINDNER CENTER FOR CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

The Frances and Craig Lindner Center for Culture and Leadership will house education and rehearsal studios as well as a flexible event space with a terrace overlooking the historic theatre. Board of Governor members can access spaces for meetings, receptions and private events. Opening in 2025.

Ronald O. Perelman Board Room photos by Jeremy Norwood.





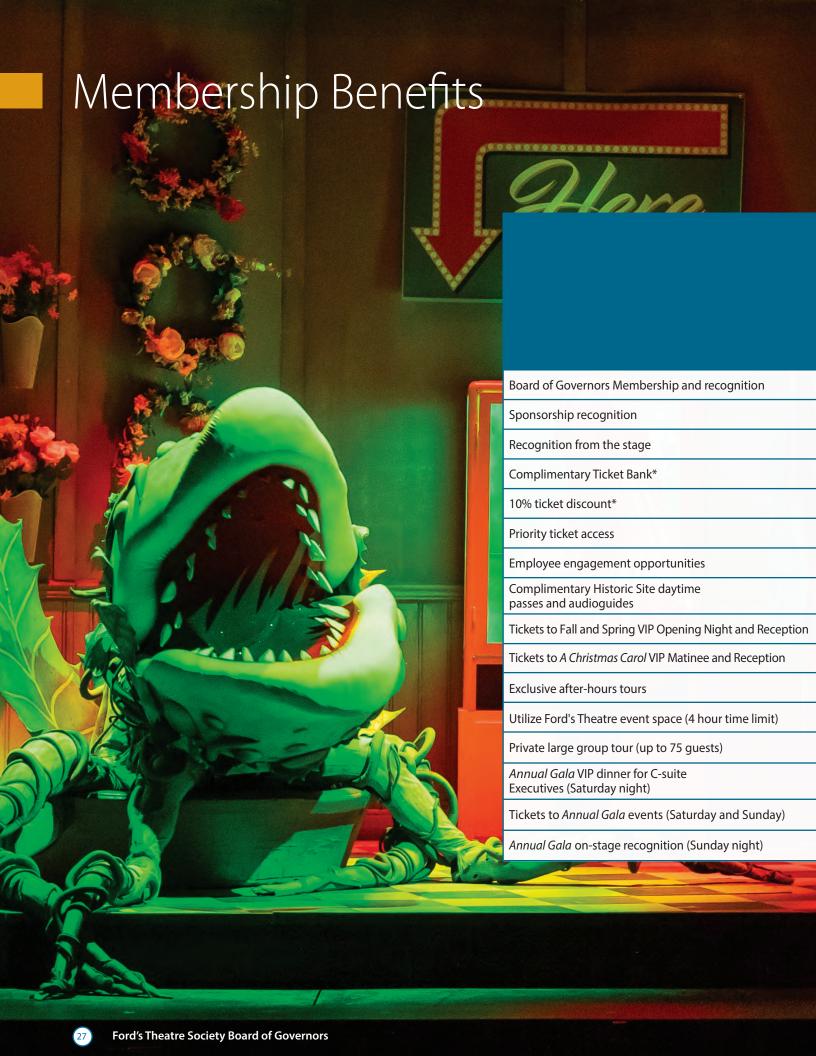




## FORD'S THEATRE PRESIDENTIAL BOX

Arrange an exclusive after-hours tour of Ford's Theatre and the Museum for your executives, clients and employees. Learn more about 1860s Washington and President Lincoln's time in office, while reliving the tragic events of April 14, 1865.







SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES			ANNUAL SUPPORT		
Executive Chairman's Circle Season Sponsor Lead Education+	Chairman's Circle Sponsor Two Productions+	Vice Chairman's Circle Sponsor One Production+	President's Circle Sponsor One Education Program	Vice President's Circle	Director's Circle
\$250,000	\$150,000	\$100,000	\$75,000	\$50,000	\$25,000
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•	•	•	0		
•	•	•			
50 Tickets	40 Tickets	30 Tickets	20 Tickets	20 Tickets	
•	•		•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•		•
•	•	•	•	•	•
10	8	6	6	4	2
20	16	12	8	4	
Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	5/year	4/year	3/year
2/year	2/year	2/year	1/year	1/year	1/year
•	•	•	•	•	
2 Guests	2 Guests	2 Guests			
8 Guests	6 Guests	4 Guests	4 Guests	4 Guests	2 Guests
•	•	•			

^All benefits, including the *Annual Gala*, are not-transferrable to future years

\*Excluding the *Annual Gala* and *A Christmas Carol*+Logo, when possible

Photo of Little Shop or Horrors by Scott Suchman.

