

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

Molly Smith Artistic Director Edgar Dobie Executive Director Zelda Fichandler Founding Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Lauren Alexander
press@arenastage.org, 202-600-4055

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ARENA STAGE HOSTS ONE NIGHT ONLY GALA
TO HONOR D.C. MAYOR MURIEL BOWSER AND JESSICA STAFFORD DAVIS
THURSDAY, MAY 10, 2018

*** The Arena Stage Annual Gala features presentation of the Beth Newburger Schwartz Award to D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser and the recognition of Emerging Leader Jessica Stafford Davis, Founder of The Agora Culture ***

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage Artistic Director Molly Smith and Executive Director Edgar Dobie are pleased to announce the presentation of the third annual Beth Newburger Schwartz Award to D.C. Mayor **Muriel Bowser**, as well as recognize **Jessica Stafford Davis** as an Emerging Leader at the **2018 Arena Stage Annual Gala**. The Gala is helmed by event chairs and Arena Stage Trustees **Lavern Chatman and Maggie FitzPatrick**, and will be held on **Thursday, May 10, 2018** at the Mead Center for American Theater (1101 Sixth St., SW).

The evening kicks off with a cocktail reception, followed by a performance and a three-course seated dinner. The performance will feature presentation of the Beth Newburger Schwartz Award to Mayor Muriel Bowser, in recognition of her unparalleled commitment to and support of the arts throughout Washington, D.C. The award was first presented to Arena Stage board chair Newburger Schwartz in 2016, and Arlene Kogod in 2017, and celebrates a female leader who strives to better the community in which she lives through her own unique strengths and talents. In addition, Jessica Stafford Davis will be honored as an Emerging Leader in recognition of her passion and entrepreneurial support of the arts. Davis is the founder and CEO of The Agora Culture, a multi-cultural arts platform that connects emerging and well-known artists with collectors.

All proceeds from the evening support Arena Stage's award-winning artistic and community engagement programs.

Space is limited. Performers to be announced at a later date.

Event Schedule

Thursday, May 10, 2018
5:30 p.m. Cocktail reception
6:30 p.m. Award presentation and one night only performance
8:00 p.m. Seated dinner

Individual Tickets

Dinner Ticket - \$1,000
Young Professional Ticket (35 or under) - \$300

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For additional event details visit arenastage.org/donate/special-events/1718benefit/index.shtml.

For information on individual ticket or table purchases please contact Maria Corso at 202-600-4025 or email mcorso@arenastage.org.

For information on corporate sponsorship packages, please contact Char Manlove-Laws at 202-600-4030 or email cmanlove-laws@ArenaStage.org.

Arena Stage Annual Gala is generously sponsored by Exelon. Additional support is provided by GEICO.

Muriel Bowser serves as Washington, DC's seventh elected Mayor. Sworn in on January 2, 2015, she pledged to bring a fresh start to the District of Columbia, create pathways to the middle class for residents, and foster a culture of inclusion, transparency and action. Mayor Bowser expanded opportunity across all 8 Wards of DC by strengthening job training programs, and by attracting and retaining jobs in the District. As of the first quarter of 2016, there are burgeoning projects across the city that will eventually deliver 32,000 new jobs. Washington, DC is the economic engine of the metropolitan region, and has one of the strongest local economies in the country. Mayor Bowser is committed to producing, protecting and preserving affordable housing. In her first budget, she devoted an historic \$100 million to the Housing Production Trust Fund, putting an unprecedented number of affordable housing units into the pipeline. She also made historic investments in education to accelerate the pace of education reform. DC has the fastest improving urban school district in the nation. The Mayor is committed to making sure every Washingtonian gets a fair shot, including its most vulnerable residents. When she came into office, she pledged to end homelessness. She has taken bold moves to deliver on that commitment, including closing DC General to replace it with family transitional homes. In everything she does, the Mayor puts District residents first, and ensures that the city's priorities match the peoples' priorities. She holds community engagement forums to solicit public input prior to finalizing her fiscal year budget. She is creating a more transparent and open government through a cutting edge open data policy. She championed the successful launch of one of the largest, most transparent body worn camera programs in the nation, to enhance trust between the community and DC's metropolitan police department. And she launched an inclusive technology program to support startups and entrepreneurs offering products and services to underserved communities. Prior to her time as Mayor, Bowser served as the Ward 4 councilmember of the DC Council – first elected in a special election in 2007, and re-elected in 2008 and 2012. As a Councilmember, Bowser served as the Chairwoman of the Committee on Economic Development which created more than 5,000 units of affordable housing, passed legislation to build a new soccer stadium and secured from the federal government the best portion of the Walter Reed campus for DC. Bowser led her colleagues to pass comprehensive ethics reform and increased transparency in government contracting. Bowser also served as an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner in the Riggs Park neighborhood. A native Washingtonian, Bowser earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Chatham University and a Master's degree in Public Policy from American University.

Jessica Stafford Davis is the founder of The Agora Culture, a multi-cultural arts platform that connects artists with a diverse array of new and experienced collectors. Raised in Virginia, love of art is nothing new for Jessica. During her childhood and beyond, she had an admiration art, but access to both physical pieces and art education was more difficult to come by. Aside from the aesthetic appeal, her appreciation for artists cultivated as she learned just how nuanced the creation process can be. While her professional career initially took her into jobs in the finance and business world, Jessica has always known her passion was art, and merging that love into a "job" was a top priority. Motivated, Jessica went back to school for art history as she prepared for the launch of her new business. The Agora Culture launched in July 2013 with a private reception in McLean, Virginia for Mequitta Ahuja, a world-renowned mixed media artist. Subsequently, she co-curated her first exhibition, "Women as Color Light and Form", with the Galerie Myrtis in Baltimore, Maryland. The exhibition was a part of Network Exhibition Sondheim awards for the 2013 Artscape festival, America's largest free arts festival. Jessica currently serves on the boards of the Washington Project for the Arts (WPA) and the Advisory Council for George Mason University School of the Arts. Jessica also is a member of ArtTable, a leadership organization for professional women in the visual arts. At home, Jessica nurtures her most precious works of art, her two sons, Thurston and Triston.

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Beth Newburger Schwartz is an entrepreneur who has founded and sold several businesses and is currently heading Richlynd Federal and Epoch Communications. She is known for her work as director of communications for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Prior to joining the National Trust, she was appointed by President Clinton to co-chair the Presidential Women’s History Commission and vice-chair the bi-partisan Congressional Women’s Progress Commission. She also served in both Clinton administrations as associate administrator of the general services administration and outreach coordinator for the White House Office of Women’s Initiatives and Outreach. Before entering public service, Beth was the founder and CEO of Corabi International Telemetrics, Inc., the company that invented and marketed the patented telepathology process that allows physicians to make diagnoses from a remote location. She was also the founder/president of Owlcat/Digital Research, Inc., the company that developed the first computer-based test preparation products for the SATs. Newburger Schwartz has also served as publisher of *Washington Woman Magazine*, chairman/CEO of Health Street, Inc., marketing manager of *The Washington Post* and the director of advertising for the *New Republic Magazine*. Newburger Schwartz is a former chairman and currently a trustee of the National Children’s Museum and the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library. In addition to Arena Stage, she also serves on the boards of the Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, President’s Council of Cornell Women, ApolloPacs and Boat Owners Association of the United States. The Cornell University graduate shared her love of theater and the arts with her late husband, Richard Schwartz, the founder of BoatUS and an extraordinary philanthropist.

Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater, under the leadership of Artistic Director Molly Smith and Executive Director Edgar Dobie, is a national center dedicated to American voices and artists. *Arena Stage produces plays of all that is passionate, profound, deep and dangerous in the American spirit, and presents diverse and ground-breaking work from some of the best artists around the country. Arena Stage is committed to commissioning and developing new plays, and impacts the lives of over 10,000 students annually through its work in community engagement. Now in its seventh decade, Arena Stage serves a diverse annual audience of more than 300,000.* arenastage.org

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