

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

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ARENA STAGE ANNOUNCES DIALOGUE STARTERS FOR ARENA CIVIL DIALOGUES ON NOVEMBER 11, 2018

***** Previously announced Ayad Akhtar is joined by Alejandra Castillo, Becky Norton Dunlop, James Fallows and Caroline Fredrickson for upcoming Civil Dialogue *****

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater continues to host Arena Civil Dialogues to engage the D.C.-area community. Scholar, professor and public intellectual **Amitai Etzioni** curates and moderates a series of discussions focusing on topics and questions in today's headlines. The next Arena Civil Dialogue will **discuss what makes a great America** and will be held in the **Molly Smith Study at Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater from 5:30-7 p.m. on November 11, 2018.**

Who decides what makes America great? The November 11 Dialogue Starters will discuss this question as well as what makes a great America. The Dialogue Starters that evening include **Ayad Akhtar**, Tony-Award nominated playwright and novelist; **Alejandra Castillo**, chief executive officer (CEO) of YWCA USA; **Becky Norton Dunlop**, Ronald Reagan Distinguished Fellow at The Heritage Foundation; **James Fallows**, national correspondent with *The Atlantic*; and **Caroline Fredrickson**, president of the American Constitution Society.

Upcoming Schedule

Sunday, November 11: *What makes a great America?*

Who decides what makes America great? What are the alternate views of what makes a great America, at home and in a global sense? Can America still call itself a global leader?

There will be a reception before the discussion, starting at 5 p.m. in the Grand Lobby. This event is free and open to the public; reservations are required.

For more information and to register for future Arena Civil Dialogues, visit: arenastage.org/civildialogues

November 11 Dialogue Starter Biographies

Amitai Etzioni (curator and moderator) is a university professor and professor of International Relations at The George Washington University. He served as a senior advisor at the Carter White House; taught at Columbia University, Harvard University and University of California at Berkeley; and served as president of the American Sociological Association (ASA). A study by Richard Posner ranked him among the top 100 American intellectuals. Etzioni is the author of many books, including *The Limits of Privacy* (1999) and *Privacy in a Cyber Age* (2015). His most recent book, *Happiness is the Wrong Metric: A Liberal Communitarian Response to Populism*, was published by Springer in January 2018.

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Ayad Akhtar is the author of *Junk* (Lincoln Center, Broadway; 2018 Kennedy Prize for American Drama, Tony nomination); *Disgraced* (Lincoln Center, Broadway; Pulitzer Prize for Drama, Tony nomination); *The Who & The What* (Lincoln Center); and *The Invisible Hand* (Obie Award, Outer Critics Circle John Gassner Award, Olivier and Evening Standard nominations). As a novelist, he is the author of *American Dervish* (Little, Brown & Co.), published in over 20 languages. Recipient of an Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the 2017 Steinberg Playwriting Award, as well as fellowships from the American Academy in Rome, MacDowell, the Sundance Institute and Yaddo, where he serves as a board director. Board trustee at PEN/America and New York Theatre Workshop.

Alejandra Y. Castillo serves as the chief executive officer of YWCA USA and its network of 210 associations serving 2.2 million women and girls around the country in 46 states and the District of Columbia. With over two decades of professional experience in Washington, D.C., she has served in senior leadership in two presidential administrations. Given her policy, legal and business expertise, Alejandra has worked in various public, private and non-profit settings. In 2014, Alejandra was appointed by the Obama administration to serve as the national director of the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), becoming the first Hispanic-American woman to lead the agency, helping to secure financing and capital in excess of \$19 billion, and creating or retaining over 33,000 jobs. Alejandra holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the State University of New York at Stony Brook in economics and political science; a Master of Arts degree in public policy from the Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Affairs, University of Texas at Austin; and a Juris Doctorate from American University, Washington College of Law. Alejandra is an active member in various civic and professional organizations, and currently serves on a number of boards. She considers herself an example of the American dream and is proud to have raised two amazing nieces she calls her daughters. A long-standing and committed resident of the District of Columbia, Alejandra is a supporter of the arts and an avid international traveler.

Becky Norton Dunlop is a prominent leader, strategist and counselor in the conservative movement and is The Heritage Foundation's Ronald Reagan Distinguished Fellow. Dunlop, who joined the leading think tank in 1998, holds the only policy chair in the country to be officially named for the 40th president. Dunlop oversees special projects, travels as an ambassador for Heritage and works tirelessly to assure that the legacy of principles, policies and practices represented by the life and service of Ronald Reagan remain in the hearts and minds of Americans. Previously, Dunlop was Heritage's vice president for external relations from 1998 until May 2016. She served on the Trump transition team. Dunlop was a senior official in the Reagan administration from 1981-1989 inside the White House, at the Justice Department and at the Interior Department. She served from 1994-1998 as Secretary of Natural Resources for the Commonwealth of Virginia in the Cabinet of then-Virginia Gov. George Allen. As Virginia's natural resources chief, Dunlop worked to streamline, decentralize and down-size agencies while protecting and improving the environment. She is one of the few "free-market environmentalists" to have headed a state agency and put ideas into action. Her book, *Clearing the Air* (Alexis de Tocqueville Institute, 2000), chronicles some of her experiences in advancing those principles. In 2002, President George W. Bush appointed her to a part-time post as chairwoman of the Federal Service Impasses Panel. Other current leadership roles include the boards of the Virginia Institute for Public Policy, the Reagan Ranch Board of Governors, the Reagan Alumni Association, the Association for American Educators and the AAE Foundation, the Council for National Policy and the American Conservative Union. In addition to topics addressing conservative principles and their roots in the nation's founding, Dunlop is a sought-after public speaker on the idea that personnel is policy; on energy, natural resources and the environment (including free-market environmentalism); on federalism as a former member of a governor's Cabinet; on capitalism and the rule of law; and on the Reagan administration (including the 40th president's effective leadership style). A graduate of Miami University in Ohio, she currently resides in Arlington, Virginia, with her husband, George S. Dunlop. The Dunlops are members of Oakland Baptist Church in Alexandria, Virginia.

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James Fallows is based in Washington, D.C. as a national correspondent for *The Atlantic* and has written for the magazine since the late 1970s, reporting extensively from outside the United States. In addition to working for *The Atlantic*, he has spent two years as chief White House speechwriter for Jimmy Carter, two years as the editor of *US News & World Report* and six months as a program designer at Microsoft. He is an instrument-rated private pilot.

He and his wife, Deborah Fallows, are the authors of the new book *Our Towns: A 100,000-Mile Journey Into the Heart of America*, which has been a *New York Times* best seller and is the basis of a forthcoming HBO documentary. James has won the National Magazine Award for his 2002 story “Iraq: The Fifty-First State?” warning about the consequences of invading Iraq; he has been a finalist four other times. He has also won the National Book Award for nonfiction for his book *National Defense* and a N.Y. Emmy award for the documentary series *Doing Business in China*. He was the founding chairman of the New America Foundation. His recent books *Blind Into Baghdad* (2006) and *Postcards From Tomorrow Square* (2009) are based on his writings for *The Atlantic*. Before *Our Towns*, his latest book was *China Airborne* (2012). He and Deborah have two married sons.

Caroline Fredrickson is president of the American Constitution Society. During her tenure, Frederickson has helped grow ACS, which now has lawyer chapters across the country, student chapters in nearly every law school in the United States and thousands of members throughout the nation. She is an eloquent spokesperson for ACS and the progressive movement on issues such as civil and human rights, judicial nominations and the importance of the courts in America, marriage equality, voting rights, the role of money in politics, labor law and anti-discrimination efforts, among others. Fredrickson has published works on many legal and constitutional issues and is a frequent guest on television and radio, including noteworthy appearances on *All In with Chris Hayes* on MSNBC in 2018 discussing the Russia investigation and *The O'Reilly Factor* on Fox News in 2012 defending the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act. She is author of *Under The Bus: How Working Women Are Being Run Over*. Before joining ACS, Frederickson served as the director of the ACLU's Washington Legislative Office and as general counsel and legal director of NARAL Pro-Choice America. In addition, she served as the chief of staff to Senator Maria Cantwell of Washington and deputy chief of staff to then-Senate Democratic Leader Tom Daschle of South Dakota. During the Clinton administration, she served as special assistant to the president for Legislative Affairs. Fredrickson is currently a member of If/When/How's Advisory Board. She is a co-chair of the National Constitution Center's Coalition of Freedom Advisory Board. In 2015 Fredrickson was appointed a member of the Yale Les Aspin Fellowship Committee. Fredrickson received her J.D. from Columbia Law School and her B.A. from Yale University in Russian and East European Studies summa cum laude. She clerked for the Hon. James L. Oakes of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater, under the leadership of Artistic Director Molly Smith and Executive Producer 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 groundbreaking 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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