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Media Backgrounder Ringling College Library Association

-TOWN HALL Lecture Series

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Ringling College Library Association, established in 1975, is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the on-going development of Verman Kimbrough Memorial Library at Ringling College of Art and Design, Sarasota, FL, and acts as a catalyst for the educational growth of students, faculty and community. Each year artists, designers, journalists, students, faculty and community members make more than 100,000 visits to Kimbrough Library. In its 33-year history, the Ringling College Library Association has raised more than \$3.4 million for an endowment funding the purchase of books, periodicals, research materials, on-line services, hand-made artist's books, and scholarships for students at Ringling College of Art and Design.

Membership in the Ringling College Library Association is open to the public. Membership levels range from \$50 for an individual or \$100 per couple, to \$1500 for a life membership. Library Association members receive benefits ranging from priority notification and processing for TOWN HALL subscriptions, to discounts on Ringling College Continuing Studies and Special Programs classes, reduced fees for Art Lecture Series events, check-out privileges at the Verman Kimbrough Memorial Library on the campus of Ringling College of Art and Design, and more. Membership information is on our web site; click on "Join Us."

The Library Association is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Its primary fundraising event is the **TOWN HALL Lecture Series**. (See below.) Information about the Library Association's Board of Directors is available at the Library Association's web site on the 'About Us' page.

The Library Association also sponsors the **Art Lecture Series**, featuring unique opportunities to learn about art, artists and arts-related subjects in our community and in southwest Florida. Art Lecture Series events are open to the public and reservations are required. Some are offered at no charge and some require a fee. Visit our web site on the 'Art Lecture Series' page for the most current information.

Links: Ringling College Library Association and TOWN HALL: www.RcLAssociation.org
Verman Kimbrough Memorial Library: www.ringling.edu/Library.9.0.html
Ringling College of Art and Design www.ringling.edu

For a more detailed history of Ringling College of Art and Design including Ringling College Library Association, please go to: <http://www.rclassociation.org/uploads/RCAD50yrs.pdf>
About Ringling College Library Association's

TOWN HALL Lecture Series

Ringling College Library Association's primary fundraiser, the TOWN HALL Lecture Series, has a proud 29-year history in Sarasota.

TOWN HALL is run by an all-volunteer committee, the Chair of which sits on the board of the Library Association. TOWN HALL lectures are held at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall on Sarasota's beautiful bayfront. Generally speaking, morning lectures begin at 10:30 am and evening lectures start at 7:30 pm. While the TOWN HALL lectures are held at the Van Wezel, neither the organization nor the event is affiliated with the Van Wezel.

Subscriptions to TOWN HALL are sold for the series and range in price (depending upon seat location) from \$250 - \$600 per seat for the entire series. Different benefits accrue to subscribers at different price levels.

Tickets are sold separately for optional lunches and receptions held in the Van Wezel's Grand Foyer following each lecture. Attendees at these events are often treated to a more intimate experience with the speakers, who may make additional remarks, take questions or just circulate with the guests.

History

In 1981, TOWN HALL's inaugural year, Doris Steltzer, a founding member of the Ringling School Library Association (then known as the Ringling School of Art and Design Library Association) was named as the Chair of the very first TOWN HALL. She invited bandleader Peter Duchin, Nieman-Marcus Chairman Stanley Marcus and international spy Aline, Countess of Romanones to speak. Since then, the TOWN HALL stage has been graced by over 120 world leaders, entertainers, journalists, political pundits, athletes and authors. Speakers have included Jack Anderson, George Plimpton, Robert Kennedy, Jr., Terry Anderson, James Lovell, Ralph Nader, Ken Burns, Carl Bernstein, Prime Minister Benezir Bhutto and Bill Moyers. Prior to the creation of TOWN HALL, the Library Association held a series of different fundraising events, including fashion shows, art tours, and other events. As the Series grew, it quickly developed a reputation for delivering quality speakers on a broad range of topics of interest. Year after year, subscriptions sold rapidly and demand exceeded supply. For a complete list of TOWN HALL Chairpersons and speakers please refer to our website on the "TOWN HALL History" page.

A milestone of the TOWN HALL Lecture Series was the 2005 decision to expand to include an evening series of lectures. Chair Lydia McIntire asked her speakers to make two speeches, and opened TOWN HALL to a whole new audience of those who were either unavailable to attend daytime lectures, or who could not be accommodated due to ever-increasing demand for tickets. While the morning series continued at the Van Wezel, the first evening series was held at Sarasota High School.

In 2006, TOWN HALL Chair Elizabeth Wery took the step to expand the evening series and move it to the Van Wezel. The success of her vision is apparent, as demand for subscriptions continues to swell. Those interested in subscribing to TOWN HALL may contact Ringling College Library Association at (941) 925-1343 during regular business hours.

TOWN HALL 2009 continues the tradition of bringing eminent speakers who entertain, inform and enlighten us. Under the leadership of Chair Stacey Corley, 2009 speakers include the following luminaries:

Madeleine Albright, first female Secretary of State, January 14

Newt Gingrich, former Speaker of the House, January 28

Doris Kerns Goodwin, world renowned historian, February 9

Dr. Robert Ballard, 1985 discovery of the Titanic, March 3

President Mikhail Gorbachev, leader of the Soviet Union from 1985-1991, March 23