



## #DOUGLASSWEEK Celebrates Famed Abolitionist Frederick Douglass

### Broadway Stars Charles Randolph-Wright, Roger Guenveur Smith, Kristolyn Lloyd, Marcus Hummon, Paul Oakley Stovall and Nikhil Saboo to Perform During Valentine's Day Tribute

**Washington, D.C.** – An all-star cast will turn out on Valentine's Day at Arena Stage for a tribute that honors the life and legacy of abolitionist, orator, writer, suffragist, and statesman Frederick Douglass and his family. The performance is part of a week of events in Washington, D.C. called #DouglassWeek, an annual event series that commemorates Douglass's lifelong fight for freedom and equality. This year, the series coincides with Black History Month and Douglass's chosen birthday of Feb. 14th. As a formerly enslaved person, Douglass didn't know his actual birthday, so he chose Valentine's Day because he said his mother had called him her "Little Valentine."

The star-studded Valentine's Day birthday celebration, [\*Frederick Douglass and the Douglass Family: A Commemoration in Word & Song\*](#), will include Douglass descendant **Kenneth B. Morris, Jr.**; Irish Ambassador to the U.S. **Dan Mulhall**; U.S. Congresswoman **Eleanor Holmes Norton**; and actors **Roger Guenveur Smith** (*Do the Right Thing, Frederick Douglass NOW*); **Paul Oakley Stovall** (*Hamilton*); and **Nikhil Saboo** (*Mean Girls, Dear Evan Hansen*). The evening will also preview the upcoming musical [\*American Prophet: Frederick Douglass in His Own Words\*](#), set to premiere at Arena Stage this summer. *American Prophet* co-writer and director **Charles Randolph-Wright** (*Motown The Musical; Trouble in Mind*); Grammy-award winning co-writer and musical director **Marcus Hummon**; and actress **Kristolyn Lloyd** (*Dear Evan Hansen*) will perform.

#DouglassWeek brings together students, researchers, historians, artists, activists, musicians, athletes, politicians, and authors for talks, walks, and events commemorating Douglass and other changemakers. This year will also feature the launch of a new series of engaging discussions called *Douglass Dialogues*.

"#DouglassWeek is an opportunity to educate and inspire people around the world about my great-great-great grandfather's speeches, publications, and activism," said Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives Co-Founder & President **Kenneth B. Morris, Jr.** "His life's work laid the foundation for the modern civil rights movement and Black History Month, inspiring leaders like the late Congressman John Lewis and many others who we hope will follow in his footsteps."

*Hamilton* star **Paul Oakley Stovall** said, “I am so excited to be part of this one night only show exploring different parts of Frederick Douglass’s life through music and performance, including his journey to Ireland, his family life with his wife Anna Murray Douglass, and his support for voting rights and representation. And having Ken Morris as a Douglass family member join us is a particular dream come true.”

“I am excited to participate in #DouglassWeek 2022 because it is particularly important to commemorate the legacy of Frederick Douglass and his family in this city,” said **Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC)**. “Douglass was our nation’s foremost abolitionist, a longtime resident of the city, and a champion of equal rights for all DC residents. I encourage everyone to take part in these important events to learn more about this great American statesman and his remarkable family.”

“It is the ultimate honor to co-create a new musical exploring the revolutionary legacy of Frederick Douglass and his wife Anna Murray Douglass,” said **Charles Randolph-Wright**. “The amazing words of Frederick Douglass are even more relevant today as they inspire all of us to work for change together.”

Born into slavery in Maryland in 1818, Douglass became an outspoken and influential leader in the anti-slavery movement in the 19th century. At the age of 54 in 1872, Douglass moved to Washington with his wife Anna Murray Douglass, eventually settling in Anacostia at a home they called “Cedar Hill,” now a national historic site. Douglass was an advisor to President Abraham Lincoln and held many prominent roles in Washington, including as U.S. Marshal for the District of Columbia, the first D.C. Recorder of Deeds, and Trustee of Howard University.

#DouglassWeek co-creators and organizers **Dr. Caroline Dunham-Schroeter** and **Kristin M. Leary** said this event is evidence of the continuing relevance of the Douglass story. “#DouglassWeek is thrilled to partner with the Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives and these incredibly gifted artists to share their stories, songs, and music inspired by Frederick Douglass. This will be a once in a lifetime event and sure to be a moving and emotional night. The #DouglassWeek event series highlights the importance of honoring our history to inspire transformative change today.”

**#DOUGLASSWEEK2022 runs from Thursday, February 10th to Tuesday, February 15th, 2022**

**Members of the press interested in covering the event at Arena Stage and scheduling interviews, please contact: Joann Donnellan, JD MEDIA, on behalf of #DouglassWeek. [joann@jdmediapr.com](mailto:joann@jdmediapr.com), 703-966-1990.**

Review and register for events here: [www.douglassweek.org](http://www.douglassweek.org)

Follow #DouglassWeek on [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#) to engage in our activities.

**About #DouglassWeek:**

#DouglassWeek is an annual collaborative event series celebrating the life and work of Frederick Douglass and other changemakers. Organizers **The Globe Lane Initiative** partner with a network of scholars, historians, researchers, artists, musicians, poets, athletes, community groups, and activists on engaging programs, activities, and events. #DouglassWeek will include events in additional cities around the world each year.