

citizens

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chicago Humanities Festival Announces Newsmakers and Cultural Commentators Added for Fall 2015

Citizens

Oct. 24–Nov. 8

Presenting Ta-Nehisi Coates, Evan Wolfson, Roxane Gay,
Sarah Vowell, Jon Ronson, and Laura Eason

CHICAGO, IL—July 14, 2015—Today the Chicago Humanities Festival (CHF) announced added newsmakers and cultural commentators for the 26th annual Fall Festival, who will explore the theme of **Citizens**, with more than 100 events **Oct. 24–Nov. 8, 2015**. On the heels of the Charleston, SC shooting and the Supreme Court decision on gay marriage, CHF will set the stage for some of today's most important voices on the issues confronting our nation. Presenters include *Between the World and Me* author and *Atlantic* columnist **Ta-Nehisi Coates**, leading gay rights activist **Evan Wolfson**, cultural critic and writer **Roxane Gay**, humorist **Sarah Vowell**, *So You've Been Publicly Shamed* author **Jon Ronson**, and *House of Cards* story editor and playwright **Laura Eason**.

A complete schedule will be released in August at chicagohumanities.org/citizens. Tickets to the 26th Chicago Humanities Festival go on sale to **CHF Members** on **Tuesday, Sept. 8** and to the general public on **Monday, Sept. 14**.

"We are in a moment of rapid change," said **Jonathan Elmer, CHF Artistic Director**. "Embedded assumptions—on race, sexuality, privacy—are falling away. And radically new modes of association are emerging. These changes are not magic. They have been fought over, predicted, and imagined by the eloquent and visionary leaders that CHF provides a platform for in Chicago."

Confirmed Presenters for the 2015 Fall Festival Include:



Ta-Nehisi Coates is a leading critic on racial relations in the US. He comes to CHF to speak about his newly published book, *Between the World and Me*, an exploration, in a letter to his son, of America's racial history. Coates is a National Correspondent for *The Atlantic*, author of the memoir *The Beautiful Struggle*, former writer for *The Village Voice*, and contributor to *Time*, *O*, and *The New York Times Magazine*. He has received the Hillman Prize, the George Polk Award for his *Atlantic* cover story, "The Case for Reparations," and his *Atlantic* blog was named by *Time* as one of the 25 Best in the World.



Evan Wolfson is considered by many to be one of the foremost architects of the marriage equality movement that resulted in the recent Supreme Court decision. An attorney and gay rights advocate, Wolfson formed Freedom to Marry in 2001. Wolfson is also the author of *Why Marriage Matters: America, Equality, and Gay People's Right to Marry*. On the heels of the June Supreme Court ruling on gay marriage, Wolfson will offer his front-and-center view of this struggle, its dark moments, its accelerating victories, and the work that lies ahead. *This program is generously underwritten by Southwest Airlines.*

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Roxane Gay is an outspoken voice on gender, racial issues, and pop culture. A national contributor to the *New York Times*, her writing has appeared or is forthcoming in *Best American Mystery Stories 2014*, *Best Sex Writing 2012*, *American Short Fiction*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *Bookforum*, *Time*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Nation*, *The Rumpus*, *Salon*, and many others. She is the co-editor of *PANK*. She is also the author of the books *Ayiti*, *An Untamed State*, *Bad Feminist*, and *Hunger*, forthcoming from Harper in 2016. **Lindsay Hunter**, author of *Don't Kiss Me*, joins Gay in lively conversation about culture today. *This program is generously underwritten by Ellen Stone Belic and features an artist, writer, or other creative authority discussing her extraordinary career.*



A prominent humorist and nonfiction writer on American history, **Sarah Vowell** joins the Festival to speak about her new book, *Lafayette in the Somewhat United States* (Oct. 20, 2015), a lively and insightful portrait of Revolutionary War hero Marquis de Lafayette. Her additional works on American history and culture include *Unfamiliar Fishes*, *The Wordy Shipmates*, and *The Partly Cloudy Patriot*. Vowell was a contributing editor for *This American Life* as well as an original contributor to *McSweeney's*. She has been a columnist for *Salon*, *Time*, and *San Francisco Weekly*, and has made numerous appearances on the *Late Show with David Letterman*, *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, and *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*. *This program is presented in partnership with the School of the Art Institute of Chicago's [Visiting Artists Program](#) and its Distinguished Alumni Lecture Series.*



Jon Ronson is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *So You've Been Publicly Shamed*, an exploration of the high-profile public shamings that have dominated the last decade. The Welsh journalist and humorist's works include *The Psychopath Test* and *Lost at Sea: The Jon Ronson Mysteries*; the e-originals *Frank: The True Story That Inspired the Movie* and *The Amazing Adventures of Phoenix Jones*; and international bestsellers *Them: Adventures with Extremists* and *The Men Who Stare at Goats*, as well as the screenplay for *Frank*, which debuted at Sundance 2014.



Laura Eason is a screenwriter, playwright and musical book writer. She is an executive story editor in her third season on the Netflix drama *House of Cards* (WGA nomination, outstanding writing in a drama series). Recent theater credits include: *Sex with Strangers* (Second Stage, NYC; Steppenwolf Theatre, Chicago; Sydney Theatre, AU; Blackwing Productions, Buenos Aires, AR; published by Overlook Press and DPS), the musical *Days Like Today* (Writers Theatre, Chicago) and *Around the World in 80 Days* (upcoming St. James Theatre, London; published by Broadway Play Publishing). She is a member of Lookingglass Theatre Company and New Georges and Rising Phoenix Rep, NYC. *This annual lecture is supported by the Doris Conant Endowment for Programs on Women and Culture and is presented in partnership with Northwestern University School of Communication's MFA in Writing for Screen+Stage.*

The Chicago Humanities Festival is proud to partner with [The Chicago Community Trust](#) as its lead partner for the 2015 Fall Festival. For the past 100 years, the Trust has connected the generosity of donors with the needs of the community. In its role as CHF's first-ever lead partner, the Trust and CHF will work together to develop Fall Festival programming that explores themes of civic engagement and philanthropy in all its forms—time, treasure, and talent. This will include several Centennial-specific programs, details of which will be released later this summer.

UPDATES:

Anna Deavere Smith, previously announced in May, is unable to present at the Fall Festival due to a scheduling conflict. CHF plans to reschedule her event for a later date.

SAVE THE DATES:

- **Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2015** – CHF Gala Benefit featuring a public program with Walter Isaacson.
- **Saturday, Oct. 24, 2015** – Fifth annual Morris and Dolores Kohl Kaplan Northwestern Day on the Northwestern University campus in Evanston.
- **Sunday, Oct. 25, 2015** – Ninth annual Hyde Park Day on the University of Chicago campus.
- **Monday, Oct. 26–Sunday, Nov. 8, 2015** – Chicago Humanities Festival in and around downtown Chicago.

TICKETS:

Tickets to the 2015 Chicago Humanities Festival go on sale to CHF Members on **Tuesday, Sept. 8** and to the general public on **Monday, Sept. 14**. Tickets for the public program with Walter Isaacson will go on sale separately, later this summer. The full schedule of all programs will be available at chicagohumanities.org/citizens in August. To become a member, visit supportchf.org. CHF Box Office hours are Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

About the Chicago Humanities Festival

For 25 years, the Chicago Humanities Festival has celebrated the questions that shape and define us as individuals, communities, and cultures. For the curious at heart, CHF's vibrant **year-round programming** and robust **Fall Festival** offer the opportunity to engage with some of the world's most brilliant minds. Collaborating with leading arts, cultural, and educational organizations, it presents scholars, artists and architects, thinkers, theologians, and policy makers that change how we see the world, where we're from, and where we're going. CHF also presents the spring **Stages, Sights & Sounds**, Chicago's only international performance festival for young audiences. Under the leadership of **Executive Director Phillip Bahar**, **Marilynn Thoma Artistic Director Jonathan Elmer**, and **Associate Artistic Director Alison Cuddy**, CHF is one of Chicago's most vital presenting organizations. Visit chicagohumanities.org for more information.

About The Chicago Community Trust

The Chicago Community Trust, our region's community foundation, partners with donors to leverage their philanthropy in ways that transform lives and communities. Since its founding in 1915, the Trust has awarded approximately \$2.3 billion in grants to thousands of local and national nonprofits, including \$164.5 million in 2014. Throughout its Centennial year, the Trust will celebrate how philanthropy in all its forms--time, treasure and talent--strengthens our region and impacts the lives of its residents in countless ways.

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