

# from the FOOTLIGHTS

APRIL 2016

“Life shouldn’t be all work and no plays.”

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

## April 21: Dinner–discussion of *All the Way* by Robert Schenkkan



“All The Way With LBJ” was the slogan of President Lyndon Johnson’s 1964 election campaign. But the year 1964 – and LBJ’s actions in that tumultuous time – were so much more than just winning a landslide over

Barry Goldwater. **Robert Schenkkan’s** play *All The Way*, which Footlights will discuss on Thursday, April 21, deals with those tensions.

Though 1964 is now often remembered for the Gulf of Tonkin “attack” which LBJ virtually manufactured to deepen U.S. escalation in Vietnam, the year – and his campaign – were dominated by civil rights. So was the Democratic Convention in Atlantic City. Schenkkan’s play, which won the 2013 Edward M. Kennedy Prize for Drama Inspired by American History, awarded by Columbia University, covers all that and more:

- ▶ How Johnson maneuvered for passage of the historic 1964 Civil Rights Act, over the Southern filibuster led by LBJ’s old colleagues and mentors there, twisting arms and enlisting Senate Republican leader Everett Dirksen to overcome the blockade.
- ▶ His relations with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. – whom LBJ’s FBI secretly wiretapped – and other civil rights leaders.
- ▶ Freedom Summer and the murders of three civil rights workers in Mississippi.
- ▶ The only real controversy at the convention, over seating the segregated Mississippi delegation or the integrated, and progressive, Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party delegation.
- ▶ Johnson’s relationship with the staffers he inherited from assassinated President John F. Kennedy, and the Bobby Kennedy-LBJ bitterness.
- ▶ Intrigue over whom Johnson would pick as his running mate.

And all of this is relevant today, as the 1964 election produced the first radical shift of the Democrats and Republicans to the state-by-state party lineup we see today: The Old South, plus the Plains States as solidly “red” and

ferverently right wing Republican and the Northeast and the Midwest – which used to be Republican or swing states – moving into the “blue” Democratic column and for the most part, staying there.

To discuss the play, and its relevance to current lineups, Footlights is hosting one of the most distinguished historians of post-war U.S. electoral patterns, Professor **Allan Lichtman** of American University. A deep student of electoral politics, Professor Lichtman is the author of *Keys to the White House*, a comprehensive analysis of which factors – there are 13 of them – are the most-reliable for predicting the outcomes of U.S. presidential elections. Those factors, unlike polls, tactics or campaign events, are the best guideposts, Professor Lichtman has found through his studies, for who will win the White House in November, and why. He also is a scholar of the civil rights movement and has written about it and testified in civil rights cases. Mark Gruenberg will moderate our discussion.

Playwright Robert Schenkkan received the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1992 for his play *The Kentucky Cycle*. *All the Way* earned the 2014 Tony Award, Best Play. Schenkkan has written a second LBJ play, *The Great Society*, which chronicles his second term, from November, 1964 to March, 1968 when he shocked the country by announcing on television that he would not run for re-election.

Reserve now. Alfio’s is located at 4515 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD, on the ground floor of the Willoughby Apartments – a short walk from the north entrance of the Friendship Heights metro stop on the red line. Street parking is limited if you drive, but valet parking is available at Alfio’s. Dinner is at 6:30, the discussion begins at 7:30 and ends at 9. (Note: if you know you must leave before 9, please try to sit near the door so you can exit quietly.)

The all-inclusive cost for dinner and discussion is \$20. Dinner is a green salad, choice among six entrées, and spaghetti, green beans, bread and butter, ice cream, and tea or coffee. Alfio’s salad bar may be substituted for the entrée if you wish. Cash or check, please – no credit cards. Wine, beer, cocktails are available from the bar. You may come for the discussion only for just \$5.

**Make reservations** with Phyllis Bodin, at [phylbo@verizon.net](mailto:phylbo@verizon.net) or 301-986-1768. Reservations and/or cancellations will be accepted until noon on April 21. If you

must cancel, please let Phyllis know as soon as possible since the restaurant needs a complete count. This is a seated, table-service dinner, not a buffet. We may be charged for no-shows and expect you to cover our cost.

*All the Way* is playing at Arena Stage through May 8. Copies of the play are available from Dramatists Play Service, Samuel French or Amazon.

### *May 9: Blackberry Winter by Steve Yockey*

Join Footlights for a dinner-discussion of Steve Yockey's ***Blackberry Winter*** – a rolling world premiere – with guest speakers director and Forum co-founder **Michael Dove** and the amazing **Holly Twyford** – both making a return visit to Footlights. Holly will star in the play as the very organized Vivienne Avery, who has always felt able to deal with

anything. Anyone who has ever cared for an ill family member will sympathize as Vivienne helplessly watches her mother's long slide into dementia. Mary Ann Wren will moderate the discussion.

Forum will present *Blackberry Winter* May 14 through June 11. Steve Yockey's ***Pluto*** – a play about school shootings – was a sensation during Forum's 2014 season.

### **About Footlights**

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### **Calendar:**

- **Sunday, April 10**, 2:30 p.m. performance of Scott Carter's ***The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens and Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord*** at Washington Stage Guild, in the Undercroft Theatre (ground level), Mount Vernon Place United Methodist Church: 900 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, DC. Tickets are \$20. Contact Robin, 240-669-6300 or [robinlarkin@comcast.net](mailto:robinlarkin@comcast.net).
- **Thursday, April 21**, 6:30 p.m. dinner-discussion of Robert Schenkkan's ***All the Way*** with guest historian **Allan Lichtman**. At Alfio's, 4515 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD. Reserve with Phyllis Bodin, [phylbo@verizon.net](mailto:phylbo@verizon.net) or 301-986-1768.
- **Monday, May 9**, 6:30 p.m. dinner-discussion of Steve Yockey's ***Blackberry Winter*** with guests Forum Theatre director **Michael Dove** and actor **Holly Twyford**. At Alfio's. Reserve with Phyllis Bodin, [phylbo@verizon.net](mailto:phylbo@verizon.net) or 301-986-1768.

Robin Larkin for **FOOTLIGHTS**

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