



Press Release

**FOR RELEASE:**

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**The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts  
Will Present  
The 23rd Mark Twain Prize for American Humor  
to  
**JON STEWART****



**Prize Will Be Awarded at the Kennedy Center  
At a Gala Performance on April 24, 2022**

***Program to be broadcast nationally***

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts will present the 23rd Mark Twain Prize for American Humor to **Jon Stewart** on Sunday, April 24, 2022, in the Kennedy Center Concert Hall. The Prize, which is named to honor one of the world's greatest humorists, will be awarded at a gala performance featuring some of the biggest names in comedy. This year's ceremony, the first since 2019 due to the pandemic, marks the 23rd year that the Kennedy Center's marquee comedy award will be presented and broadcast nationally. Sponsorship packages for the Mark Twain Prize gala performance are on sale now and can be reserved [online](#) or through the Development Office by emailing [mtp@kennedy-center.org](mailto:mtp@kennedy-center.org). Performance-only tickets will go on sale to Kennedy Center Members on February 9 at 12 p.m., and to the general public on February 11 at 12 p.m.

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Capital One® is the Presenting Sponsor of this year's Kennedy Center Mark Twain Prize for American Humor as part of the bank's three-year, \$3 million gift to fund Comedy at the Kennedy Center, a signature program at the Center focused on elevating comedy as an art form and uniting the community through laughter.

Commenting on the prize, Stewart said, "I am truly honored to receive this award. I have long admired and been influenced by the work of Mark Twain, or, as he was known by his given name, Samuel Leibowitz."

The Mark Twain Prize for American Humor recognizes individuals who have had an impact on American society in ways similar to the distinguished 19th-century novelist and essayist Samuel Clemens, best known as Mark Twain. As a social commentator, satirist, and creator of characters, Clemens was a fearless observer of society, who startled many while delighting and informing many more with his uncompromising perspective on social injustice and personal folly.

"For more than three decades, Jon Stewart has brightened our lives and challenged our minds as he delivers current events and social satire with his trademark wit and wisdom. For me, tuning in to his television programs over the years has always been equal parts entertainment and truth," said Kennedy Center President Deborah F. Rutter about this year's recipient. "In these often divisive and challenging times, someone like Jon, through his undaunted advocacy for first responders and veterans, also demonstrates that we all can make a difference in this world through humor, humanity, and patriotism. He is most deserving of this award and I certainly cannot wait to hear the Concert Hall full of laughter again on April 24th."

As a recipient of the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor, Stewart will receive a copy of an 1884 bronze portrait bust of Mark Twain sculpted by Karl Gerhardt (1853–1940). Previous recipients of the Kennedy Center Mark Twain Prize are Richard Pryor (1998), Jonathan Winters (1999), Carl Reiner (2000), Whoopi Goldberg (2001), Bob Newhart (2002), Lily Tomlin (2003), Lorne Michaels (2004), Steve Martin (2005), Neil Simon (2006), Billy Crystal (2007), George Carlin (2008), Bill Cosby (2009; rescinded in 2018), Tina Fey (2010), Will Ferrell (2011), Ellen DeGeneres (2012), Carol Burnett (2013), Jay Leno (2014), Eddie Murphy (2015), Bill Murray (2016), David Letterman (2017), Julia Louis-Dreyfus (2018), and Dave Chappelle (2019).

The 23rd Mark Twain Prize for American Humor is under the direction of the creative team from Done + Dusted, the Kennedy Center's producing partner for the Mark Twain Prize since 2018. This year's ceremony marks the 23rd year that the Kennedy Center's marquee comedy award will be broadcast nationally.

The event was created by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Bob Kaminsky, Peter Kaminsky, Mark Krantz, and John Schreiber. The Kennedy Center is grateful to Cappy McGarr for his steadfast support of the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor since its inception in 1998.

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is America's living memorial to President Kennedy. It is the nation's busiest performing arts facility and annually hosts more than 2,000 performances for audiences totaling nearly 2 million; Center-related touring productions and television and radio broadcasts welcome 40 million more. Now celebrating its 50th anniversary season, the Center presents

performances of music, dance, and theater, supports artists in the creation of new work, and serves the nation as a leader in arts education.

## **ABOUT JON STEWART**

Jon Stewart is considered one of America's top social and comedic voices. Over his 16-year run as host and executive producer of Comedy Central's *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, Stewart redefined political satire in American culture. Stewart and *The Daily Show* received a collective 56 Emmy Award nominations and won 20 times. Their 10 consecutive wins for Outstanding Variety, Music, or Comedy Series represent the category's longest streak in Emmy history. *The Daily Show* also received two prestigious Peabody Awards.

Most recently, Stewart launched *The Problem with Jon Stewart* on AppleTV+. In the series, which Stewart hosts and executive produces, he brings together people impacted by different parts of a global problem to discuss how we come up with change. In addition, Stewart serves as an Executive Producer on CBS' *Late Show with Stephen Colbert*. He also co-created and Executive Produced Comedy Central's award-winning series *The Colbert Report*. Stewart has twice served as host of both the Grammy Awards® (2001, 2002) and the Academy Awards® (2006, 2008).

On the feature side, Stewart wrote and directed the film *Irresistible* starring Steve Carell and Rose Byrne. The film, which Stewart also produced with Plan B, was released by Focus Features in June 2020. In 2014, Stewart wrote and directed his first feature film, *Rosewater*, which he also produced alongside Gigi Pritzker and Scott Rudin.

Stewart is a best-selling author. In 2004, his book *America (The Book): A Citizen's Guide to Democracy Inaction* (Warner Books) topped the *New York Times* Best Seller List for 18 consecutive weeks and was named Book of the Year by *Publishers Weekly*. Additionally, *America (The Audiobook)* received a 2005 Grammy Award® for Best Comedy Album. Stewart's latest book, *Earth (The Book): A Visitor's Guide to the Human Race* (Grand Central Publishing) also debuted at #1 on the *New York Times* Best Seller List.

In addition to his work both in front and behind the camera, Stewart is also a dedicated social activist. His efforts have played an integral role in the passing of legislation such as the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund Bill, which benefitted thousands of first responders and their families. Stewart also works tirelessly on behalf of America's wounded veterans through initiatives led by organizations such as the Wounded Warrior Project and Team Rubicon.

## **TICKET INFORMATION**

Performance tickets to the *Mark Twain Prize for American Humor* performance will go on sale to Kennedy Center Members on February 9 at 12 p.m., and to the general public on February 11 at 12 p.m.

Performance tickets will be available at the Kennedy Center Box Office, online at [kennedy-center.org](http://kennedy-center.org), and via phone through Instant Charge, (202) 467-4600; toll-free at (800) 444-1324. For all other ticket-related customer service inquiries, call the Advance Sales Box Office at (202) 416-8540.

*Mark Twain Prize for American Humor* sponsorship packages are available now and start at \$600 for the cocktail reception and performance, and \$1,300 for the cocktail reception, performance, and post-concert party, among other perks and benefits. Sponsorship packages can be reserved [online](#) or through the Development Office by emailing [mtp@kennedy-center.org](mailto:mtp@kennedy-center.org).

The Kennedy Center continues to prioritize the health and safety of artists, staff, and patrons. Current protocols can be found [here](#) and will continue to be updated as they evolve.

Capital One® is the Presenting Sponsor of the  
23rd annual Kennedy Center *Mark Twain Prize for American Humor*.

A full listing of our generous sponsors can be found [online](#).

For more information, please visit the [Mark Twain Prize webpage](#).

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