The Art of Leadership: Lessons from the American Presidency

Jon Meachum
Thursday, Sept. 19
10:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Governors Ballroom
Jon Meacham


His “Destiny and Power: The American Odyssey of George Herbert Walker Bush,” published in 2015, was a #1 New York Times bestseller. He is currently at work on a biography of James and Dolley Madison.

Meacham’s book “American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House,” was a New York Times bestseller. Awarded the Pulitzer Prize for biography in 2009, the book was cited as an “unlikely portrait of a not always admirable democrat, but a pivotal president, written with an agile prose that brings the Jackson saga to life.” His other New York Times bestsellers include “Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power,” “Franklin and Winston: An Intimate Portrait of an Epic Friendship,” exploring the relationship between the two great leaders who piloted the free world to victory in World War II, and “American Gospel: God, the Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation.”

A member of the Council on Foreign Relations and of the Society of American Historians, Meacham is a distinguished visiting professor at Vanderbilt University. He is a contributing writer to The New York Times Book Review, a contributing editor of Time, and has written for The New York Times op-ed page, The Washington Post, Vanity Fair, and Garden & Gun. Meacham is also a regular guest on “Morning Joe” and other broadcasts.

Meacham’s biography of President Bush was named one of the ten best books of the year by The Washington Post and one of the best books of the year by The New York Times Book Review, Time, National Public Radio, and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. “Destiny and Power” was also honored for excellence in politics and leadership in 2015 by the Plutarch Committee of BIO, the Biographers International Organization.

“Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power” received the 2013 Fraunces Tavern Museum Book Award from the Fraunces Tavern Museum and the Sons of the American Revolution in the State of New York, a prize that “recognizes books of exceptional merit written on the Revolutionary War era.” “Franklin and Winston” was honored with the Colby Award of the William E. Colby Military Writers’ Symposium at Norwich University. Meacham was also honored with the 2015 Nashville Public Library Literary Award; other winners include John Lewis, Robert K. Massie, Margaret Atwood, John McPhee, Billy Collins, Doris Kearns Goodwin, John Irving, Ann Patchett, John Updike, David McCullough, and David Halberstam.

A former executive editor at Random House, he published the letters of Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and books by, among others, Al Gore, John Danforth, Clara Bingham, Mary Soames, and Charles Peters. After serving as managing editor of Newsweek for eight years, Meacham was the editor of the magazine from 2006 to 2010. He is a former editor of The Washington Monthly and began his career at The Chattanooga Times.