

UNIVERSITY OF PUGET SOUND

PRESENTS

# AN EVENING WITH LEONARD PITTS JR.

UNIVERSITY OF PUGET SOUND SCHNEEBECK CONCERT HALL  
OCTOBER 3, 2016 | 8 P.M.



## LEONARD PITTS JR.

Born and raised in Southern California, Pitts began writing while still a child and published his first magazine story at age 14. He entered college at 15 on a special honors program, graduating four years later with a degree in English from the University of Southern California. He spent almost the first two decades of his working life as a music critic for magazines, radio programs, and newspapers, including *The Miami Herald*, where, after a few years, he began writing his own column. Today millions of readers seek out that twice-weekly column, which examines the hopes, dreams, and experiences of a nation.

Called "the most insightful and inspiring columnist of his generation," Pitts was awarded the 2004 Pulitzer Prize for commentary. He is a three-time recipient of the National Association of Black Journalists' Award of Excellence, and was chosen as NABJ's 2008 Journalist of the Year. The National Society of Newspaper Columnists named him its inaugural Columnist of the Year, and he has been recognized multiple times with the Atlantic City Press Club's National Headliners Award and Society of Professional Journalists' Green Eyeshade Award. In 2001 his column "We'll Go Forward From This Moment," an angry and defiant open letter to the terrorists of 9/11, circulated the globe, and has been set to music, reprinted on posters, and shared on television and radio.

In addition to his success as a columnist, Pitts is the critically acclaimed author of five books, most recently *Grant Park*, a compelling story about a black writer and a white editor. His nonfiction books include *Becoming Dad*, about black fatherhood and his own experience of growing up, and *Forward From This Moment*, a collection of his columns. Pitts' 2009 novel *Before I Forget*, about a faded soul singer whose early onset Alzheimer's disease reconnects him with his family, was called a "rare, memorable debut" by *Publisher's Weekly*, and *The Washington Post* called his 2012 novel *Freeman* "a uniquely American epic."

He currently makes his home in Bowie, Md., with his wife and family.

**PROGRAM**

Monday, Oct. 3, 2016, 8 p.m.

University of Puget Sound

Schneebeck Concert Hall

Introduction

Isiaah Crawford

President

Leonard Pitts Jr.

Questions and Answers

Reception following the lecture at Pierce Atrium in Wyatt Hall.

Please turn off all cell phones and pagers.  
No photo or recording devices allowed.



The Susan Resneck Pierce Lectures in Public Affairs and the Arts series was named in honor of Susan Resneck Pierce, University of Puget Sound president from 1992 to 2003, in recognition of her years of outstanding service to the university. The lecture series annually brings to the University of Puget Sound campus and the wider community public intellectuals, writers, and artists of significant prominence.

**2016–Marlon James**

The Books That Made Me Write Books

**2016–The Honorable Eric H. Holder Jr. in conversation with Michael Reiss, J.D.**

Principled Leadership: The Courage to Face Challenge

**2015–Edwidge Danticat**

Create Dangerously

**2014–Henry Louis Gates Jr.**

Genealogy and Genetics

**2014–E.J. Dionne**

Our Divided Political Heart: The Battle for the American Idea in an Age of Discontent

**2013–Junot Díaz**

An Evening with Pulitzer Prize and *New York Times* Bestselling Author

**2013–Wole Soyinka**

Writing for Freedom

**2012–Robert Reich**

The Global Economy and the Future of Everything National

**2012–Carlos Fuentes**

From Law to Literature: A Personal Journey

**2011–Kay Redfield Jamison**

Minds on Fire: Mood Disorders and Creativity

**2011–Spike Lee**

America Through My Lens

**2009–Sherman Alexie**

Without Reservations: An Urban Indian's Comic, Poetic, and Highly Irreverent Look at the World

**2009–Suzan-Lori Parks**

An Evening with Suzan-Lori Parks

**2008–Twyla Tharp**

The Creative Habit

**2008–Cory Booker**

An Evening with Cory Booker

**2007–David Brooks**

How Does Being American Shape Us?

**2007–Philip Glass**

An Evening with Philip Glass

**2006–Cornel West**

Democracy Matters

**2006–Edward Albee**

Improvisation and the Creative Mind

**2005–Fareed Zakaria**

The Future of Freedom

**2005–Nina Totenberg**

The Supreme Court and Its Impact on You

**2004–Robert Pinsky**

Poetry in the World

**2004–Terry Tempest Williams**

The Open Space of Democracy

**2003–David Halberstam**

The Children: The Unique Courage and Faith of Ordinary Citizens to Change America

**2003–Anna Deavere Smith**

Snapshots: Glimpses of America in Change

**2002–Thomas Friedman**

Global Economy and American Foreign Policy