

THE PROGRESSIVE FORUM

Great Minds, Great Answers

July 5, 2011
For Release

Contact:
Randall Morton
President, Progressive Forum
713-664-0020 office
713-702-2245 cell
rmorton@progressiveforumhouston.org

More at www.progressiveforumhouston.org

Michael Pollan at The Progressive Forum October 27, 2011

Bestselling author Michael Pollan will appear at The Progressive Forum Thursday, October 27, 2011, at the Wortham Center, Cullen Theater, at 7:30 PM. The event is produced in association with Urban Harvest. He will greet fans and sign books at the end of the evening.

Tickets range from \$14 to \$54. A limited number of \$74 tickets are available which includes a pre-event reception with Pollan at 6:15 PM and center-front seating. Tickets are available at www.progressiveforumhouston.org or by calling 832-251-0706. There is no physical box office except at the theater on event night.

Randall Morton, Progressive Forum president, said, "Our Michael Pollan event is the second in our multi-year series on informed food choices, following Eric Schlosser's event, author of *Fast Food Nation* on September 30, 2010.

Sponsors of the Pollan event include Urban Harvest; The Inn at Dos Brisas and Dos Brisas Farms; Georgia's Farm to Market; Organic Horticultural Business Alliance (OHBA), a committee of Urban Harvest; San Jacinto Environmental Supplies, and Garland Kerr and Jim Blackburn.

-More

Pollan's presentation is entitled "In Defense of Food: The Omnivore's Solution." He describes his program this way:

Real food--the kind of food your great-grandmother would recognize as food—is being undermined by science on one side and the food industry on the other, both of whom want us to focus on nutrients, good and bad, rather than actual plants, animals and fungi. The rise of "nutritionism" has vastly complicated the lives of American eaters without doing anything for our health, except possibly to make it worse. Nutritionism arose to deal with a genuine problem--the fact that the modern American diet is responsible for an epidemic of chronic diseases, from obesity and type II diabetes to heart disease and many cancers--but it has obscured the real roots of that problem and stood in the way of a solution. That solution involves putting the focus back on foods and food chains, for it turns out our personal health cannot be divorced from the health of the soil, plants, and animals that make up the food chains in which we take part. In this talk, Pollan explores what the industrialization of food and agriculture has meant for our health and happiness as eaters, and looks at the growing national movement to renovate the food system.

Named by *Newsweek* among its top ten "New Thought Leaders" in 2009, Michael Pollan is leading the American conversation about the places where the human and natural worlds intersect: food, agriculture, and gardens. *The New York Times* said, "Michael Pollan [is a] distinguished author and designated repository for the nation's food conscience."

He is the author of the bestsellers *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto* and *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*, which was named one of the ten best books of 2006 by the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. It also won the James Beard Award for best food writing.

He narrated the Oscar nominated documentary *Food, Inc.*

Pollan's previous book, *The Botany of Desire: A Plant's Eye View of the World*, was also a *New York Times* bestseller. PBS premiered a two-hour special documentary based

on *The Botany of Desire* in fall 2009. His most recent book is *Food Rules*, which was an immediate number one *New York Times* bestseller upon publication at the end of 2009. He is also the author of *A Place of My Own* (1997) and *Second Nature* (1991). A contributing writer to *The New York Times Magazine* since 1987, his writing has received numerous awards, including the James Beard Award for best magazine series in 2003. His essays have appeared in many anthologies, including *Best American Essays* (the 1990 and 2003 editions), *Best American Science Writing* (2004), and the *Norton Book of Nature Writing*. In addition to publishing regularly in *The New York Times Magazine*, his articles have appeared in *Harper's* (where he served for many years as executive editor), *Mother Jones*, *Gourmet*, *Vogue*, *Travel + Leisure*, *Gardens Illustrated*, and *The Nation*. Michael Pollan was chosen by *Time Magazine* for the 2010 Time 100 in the Thinkers category.

In 2003, Pollan was appointed the John S. and James L. Knight Professor of Journalism at UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism, and the director of the Knight Program in Science and Environmental Journalism. In addition to teaching, he lectures widely on food, agriculture, and gardening.

Michael Pollan, who was born in 1955, grew up on Long Island, and was educated at Bennington College, Oxford University, and Columbia University, from which he received a

Master's in English. He lives in the Bay Area with his wife, the painter Judith Belzer, and their son, Isaac.

The Progressive Forum is a nonprofit 501(C)(3) civic speaker organization presenting its events at The Wortham Center. It's the only civic speaker organization in America dedicated expressly to progressive values. Its purpose is to enrich our democracy and culture by striving to present the greatest minds from all the fields of human endeavor, the sciences and the humanities as well as politics and public affairs, great minds it believes are advancing the success of individuals, our species, and life on the earth.

The last year of 2010 marked the fifth anniversary of The Progressive Forum.

The Progressive Forum premiered on June 13, 2005, with Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and Houston Mayor Bill White in a program called "Our Environmental Challenges." Al Gore launched *An Inconvenient Truth* at The Progressive Forum June 7, 2006, his first U.S. book event for that title. On September 17, 2008, Gloria Steinem celebrated the 30th anniversary of the historic National Women's Conference held in Houston. On March 27, 2008, Robert Redford introduced a film he produced and narrated, *Fighting Goliath: Texas Coal Wars*, a documentary about 32 Texas cities banding together opposing coal plant permits. In June 12, 2009, Nancy Pelosi became the first sitting U.S. House Speaker to make a public appearance in Houston in modern times. On December 7, 2009, The Progressive Forum produced the national launch event for the first book by premier climatologist James Hansen of NASA, *Storms of My Grandchildren: The Truth about the Coming Climate Catastrophe and Our last Chance*

to Save Humanity. And in 2010, The Progressive Forum presented John Paul Stevens, the first U.S. Supreme Court Justice to appear in a public event in Houston.

Other speakers have included Karen Armstrong, Lester Brown, Ken Burns, Richard Dawkins, Jared Diamond, Sylvia Earle, Elizabeth Edwards, Tim Flannery, Jane Goodall, Brian Greene, Arianna Huffington, Seymour Hersh, Molly Ivins, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., George Soros, Edward O. Wilson, Frank Rich, Garrison Keillor, Joe Klein, Anna Deavere Smith, George Lakoff, Richard Leakey, Bill McKibben, Eric Schlosser, T. Boone Pickens, Larry Wilmore, and Edward O. Wilson.

Confirmed upcoming speakers include Bill Moyers November 17, 2011.

The Progressive Forum originated a new model in civic speaker organizations in Houston to deliver a larger audience and a higher quality experience in a theater rather than a hotel luncheon as with traditional speaker organizations. The Progressive Forum model is similar to a performing arts company by using the finest theaters, paying speaker fees to present the top intellectual stars, and marketing to the public throughout the region rather than just members of a speaker organization. It offers convenient box office services through its website allowing ticket buyers to print tickets at their computer in addition to traditional phone sales.

Founder and president, Randall R. Morton has owned Randall Morton International, Inc. for 34 years, an independent advertising and public relations agency whose clients have included leading oil equipment in the U.S., Japan, Mexico, and Europe. Morton created, produced, and hosted the Oilfield Breakfast Forum from 1994 to 2003, a another speaker platform which is still the largest in the oil industry. While earning a

degree in government from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., he served as an issue writer for the Democratic National Committee. At Georgetown, he was ranked third nationally as a pass receiver in nonscholarship football. He earned a second B.A. degree from the University of Tulsa in communications where he later served as an adjunct professor teaching advertising design and copy writing.