

THE PROGRESSIVE FORUM

Great Minds, Great Answers

For release:
September 25, 2013

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Bill McKibben at The Progressive Forum April 21, 2014



Environmental activist Bill McKibben returns to The Progressive Forum on April 21, 2014, at the Wortham Center, Cullen Theater at 7:30. McKibben will sign books and greet fans at the end of the evening.

Tickets range from \$19 to \$79. Tickets are available at ProgressiveForumHouston.org or by calling 832-251-0706. There is no physical box office except at the theater on event night.

The Citizens League for Environmental Action Now (CLEAN) is the associate presenter of this event.

Randall Morton, Progressive Forum president, said, “McKibben’s event should be timely. The President’s decision on the northern end of the Keystone XL Pipeline should be getting more attention as will the United Nations IPCC 5-year report due this fall. I hope our event stimulates discussion in our Houston community on the potential ramifications of heavy tar sand oil connecting to our refineries.

“Moreover, our community needs to host serious discussions on climate change. The consequences are dire for life on our planet,” Morton continued. “The EPA reports Texas emits more green house gasses than any other state, 294 million tons of carbon dioxide in 2010. That’s more than the next two states combined, Pennsylvania and Florida. And Houston is a key driver of those emissions. This issue ought to be at the top of our political agenda.”

Bill McKibben first captivated Progressive Forum audiences in April of 2008. At that appearance, he described leading a 2006 walk across Vermont to demand action on global warming, as well as his Step It Up 2007 campaign. Step it Up 2007 organized over 2000 rallies spanning all 50 states.

Building on that model, McKibben went on to cofound 350.org, which describes its mission as “building a global grassroots movement to solve the climate crisis. Our online campaigns, grassroots organizing, and mass public actions are led from the bottom up by thousands of volunteer organizers in over 188 countries.” The organization has coordinated over 20,000 climate demonstrations and has been in the news lately for its opposition to the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline. In February 2013, McKibben, joined by previous Progressive Forum speakers Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and James Hansen among others, was arrested at a Keystone protest outside the White House.

As a bestselling author, McKibben has written books that have shaped public action on climate change, alternative energy, and the need for more localized economies. His seminal books include *The End of Nature*, widely seen as the first book on climate change for a general audience, and *Deep Economy*, a bold challenge to move beyond "growth" as the paramount economic ideal and to pursue prosperity in a more local direction—an idea that is the cornerstone of much sustainability discourse today. McKibben is a contributor to several magazines, including *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, *Mother Jones*, *The New York Review of Books*, and *Rolling Stone*.

While a student at Harvard, McKibben was president of the school's paper *The Harvard Crimson*. He began his professional career as a staff writer at *The New Yorker*. He went on to write over a dozen books. He is a scholar in residence at Middlebury College in Vermont, where he lives with his wife and daughter.

The Progressive Forum is America's only civic speaker organization expressly dedicated to progressive values. It originated a new model for civic speaker organizations in Houston by presenting speakers in the city's finest theater, compared to the hotel luncheons of traditional organizations. It was designed to present the world's intellectual stars to large audiences in a high quality, theatrical experience. The Progressive Forum markets region-wide to sell tickets to the public in open events. There is no membership fee and the ticket prices are low starting at \$19.

The Progressive Forum also originated a unique innovation in public media, reaching a worldwide audience by presenting the great minds online. The Progressive Forum is America's only civic speaker group providing website pages with event video on its past speakers. These pages are in-depth and comprehensive and include video, biographical sketches, news updates, related links, and reading lists. Most of the videos are longer than common internet fare; however they're broken down into segments and short clips on interesting topics. The website is intended to serve as a source of inspiration for scholars and seekers, a source of perpetual enrichment long after the curtains have closed on the theatrical event.

Speakers have included Michelle Alexander, Karen Armstrong, Lester Brown, Ken Burns, Gail Collins, Richard Dawkins, Jared Diamond, Sylvia Earle, Elizabeth Edwards, Tim Flannery, Jane Goodall, Al Gore, Brian Greene, James Hansen, Seymour Hersh, Arianna Huffington, Molly Ivins, Garrison Keillor, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Joe Klein, George Lakoff, Richard Leakey, Rachel Maddow, William McDonough, Bill McKibben, Bill Moyers, Nancy Pelosi, T. Boone Pickens, Michael Pollan, Robert Redford, Frank Rich, Sir Ken Robinson, Eric Schlosser, Anna Deavere Smith, George Soros, Sonia Sotomayor, Gloria Steinem, John Paul Stevens, Alice Waters, Larry Wilmore, and Edward O. Wilson.

Founder and president, Randall R. Morton, operated Randall Morton International, Inc. for over 32 years, an advertising and public relations agency whose clients included leading oil equipment companies in the U.S., Japan, Mexico, and Europe. Morton cocreated and cohosted the Oilfield Breakfast Forum from 1994 to 2003, another speaker series which is still the largest in the oil industry. He earned a B.A. degree in government from Georgetown University, and attained a national ranking of three as a pass receiver in nonscholarship football. While at Georgetown, he served as an issue writer for the Democratic National Committee. Later, he

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earned a second B.A. in communications from Tulsa University, serving the following year as adjunct professor teaching advertising design and copy. He is married to Suzanne Longley, formerly prima ballerina of the Houston Ballet and now owner of Suzanne Longley Landscapes. They have two children who are in college.