

# THE PROGRESSIVE FORUM

Great Minds, Great Answers

February 17, 2012  
For Release

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Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. at The Progressive Forum November 5, 2012

One of the most resolute defenders of the environment and a leading social and political commentator, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. will speak at The Progressive Forum Monday, November 5, the night before election day. The event will be at the Wortham Center, Cullen Theater, at 7:30 PM. He will sign books and greet fans at the end of the evening.

Tickets range from \$14 to \$54. A limited number of \$94 tickets are available, which includes a pre-event, green room reception with Kennedy at 6:15 PM and center-front seating. Tickets are available at [www.progressiveforumhouston.org](http://www.progressiveforumhouston.org) or by calling 832-251-0706. There is no physical box office except at the theater on event night.

Kennedy's program is entitled "Energy and Politics Today." He will be introduced by Bill White. White and Kennedy spoke at the premiere of The Progressive Forum, when Bill White was Mayor of Houston, launching the speaker series seven years ago in June of 2005.

Kennedy was named one of *Time* magazine's "Heroes for the Planet" for his success in helping Riverkeeper, New York's clean water advocate, lead the fight to restore the Hudson River. The group's achievement helped spawn more than 160 Waterkeeper organizations across the globe. In 2009, he was named one of *Rolling Stone*'s "100 Agents of Change."

Kennedy was also featured in the acclaimed environmental documentary *The Last Mountain*. The film examines the struggle to save Coal River Mountain in Coal River Valley, West Virginia — the last mountain in the area untouched

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by the mining practice of mountaintop removal.

Kennedy is a professor of environmental law at Pace University School of Law and serves as co-director of the school's Environmental Litigation Clinic. He also is a senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council, the chief prosecuting attorney for the Hudson Riverkeeper, president-at-large of the Waterkeeper Alliance, a partner on the CleanTech investment team of Silicon Valley's VantagePoint Capital Ventures, the environmental advisor to Napo Pharmaceuticals, and serves on the board of directors for Westinghouse Solar. Earlier in his career, he served as assistant district attorney in New York City.

He is credited with leading the fight to protect New York City's water supply. The New York City Watershed Agreement, which he negotiated on behalf of environmentalists and New York City watershed consumers, is regarded as an international model in stakeholder consensus negotiations and sustainable development. He has also worked on environmental issues across the Americas and has assisted several indigenous tribes in Latin America and Canada in successfully negotiating treaties protecting traditional homelands.

Among his published books are the *New York Times* best-seller *Crimes Against Nature* (2004); *The Riverkeepers* (1997); and *Judge Frank M. Johnson Jr: A Biography* (1977). His articles have appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Newsweek*, *Rolling Stone*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Esquire*, *The Nation*, *Outside* magazine, the *Village Voice*, and many other publications. Kennedy's award-winning articles have also been included in anthologies of America's best crime writing, best political writing, and best science writing.

Kennedy is a graduate of Harvard University. He studied at the London School of Economics and earned his law degree from the University of Virginia Law School. Following graduation, he attended Pace University School of Law, where he earned a master's degree in environmental law.

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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 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 30<sup>th</sup> 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 on November 16, 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

Page 4

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, Bill Moyers, Michael Pollan, Eric Schlosser, T. Boone Pickens, Larry Wilmore, and Edward O. Wilson. Gail Collins is confirmed for June 26.

The Progressive Forum originated a new model for civic speaker organizations in Houston, designed to deliver a larger audience in a theater with a higher quality experience, compared with hotel luncheons by traditional speaker organizations. The Progressive Forum model is similar to a performing arts company by using the finest theaters, paying speaker fees to present top intellectual stars, and marketing throughout the region with public media. It offers convenient box office services through its website, as well as traditional phone sales.

Founder and president, Randall R. Morton has owned Randall Morton International, Inc. for 35 years, an advertising and public relations agency whose clients have included the leading oil equipment companies in the U.S., Japan, Mexico, and Europe. Morton created, produced, and hosted the Oilfield Breakfast Forum from 1994 to 2003, a 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 earned a second B.A. in communications from Tulsa University, serving the following year as adjunct professor teaching advertising design and copy.

