



Curt Columbus, The Laura H. Harris Artistic Director - Kate Liberman, Executive Director
201 Washington Street • Providence, Rhode Island, 02903 • www.trinityrep.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 2, 2024

CONTACT: Laura Weick, Communications Specialist • (401) 453-9226 • lweick@trinityrep.com

TRINITY REP NAMES HONOREES FOR 25TH PELL AWARDS

**Octavia Spencer to accept the
Pell Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Arts
on June 10, 2024**

PROVIDENCE: Trinity Repertory Company announces the local and national honorees of the 2024 Pell Awards Gala. Academy Award-winning actress **Octavia Spencer** will receive the Pell Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Arts. This year's recipient of the Rhode Island Pell Award for Excellence in the Arts is painter **Bob Dilworth**. Brown University President **Christina H. Paxson** will receive the Charles Sullivan Award for Distinguished Service in the Arts, and philanthropist **Charles M. "Chuck" Royce** will receive the Pell Award for Outstanding Leadership in the Arts. The 2024 Pell Awards Gala is co-chaired by **Sally Lapidés** and **Michael J. Sweeney**, along with honorary chairs **Ann and Sam Menco**.

"Senator Pell was an incredible champion for the arts and for the people of Rhode Island," The Laura H. Harris Artistic Director **Curt Columbus** said. "The spirit of his commitments has always guided the selection process in identifying Pell Award winners. This year's honorees demonstrate that spirit in remarkable ways, both in their contributions to the arts, and how their art impacts their communities. I am thrilled to join the Pell Committee in honoring these four incredible people."

The 25th Pell Awards Gala will be held on **Monday, June 10, 2024**, in Providence, Rhode Island at **The Lindemann Performing Arts Center**. The state-of-the-art facility opened last fall in the heart of Brown University's campus.

"Trinity Rep is excited to celebrate these incredible artists and leaders at Brown University's transformational new venue," Executive Director **Katie Liberman** said. "Since 2002, Brown and Trinity Rep have worked in partnership to lead our world-class Brown/Trinity Rep MFA Programs in Acting and Directing. Hosting this event at the Lindemann Performing Arts Center exemplifies the core of our relationship. We are honored to recognize the indelible marks these award winners have left on our industry, our state, and our world."



The event will begin at 6:00 pm with a VIP cocktail reception. All guests will enjoy a seated dinner at 7:15 pm, followed by the awards ceremony at 8:15 pm. Attendees will mingle with artists, business, political, and social leaders; savor food by Russell Morin Fine Catering; and experience unforgettable moments as the theater honors individuals committed to bettering the world through art, education, and activism.

Tickets, sponsorships, and event program tribute ads are on sale at trinityrep.com/pell or by phone at (401) 453-9237. All proceeds from the Pell Awards Gala support Trinity Rep's artistic, educational, and community engagement programs.

ABOUT THE PELL AWARDS

Established in 1997 to honor the legacy of U.S. **Senator Claiborne Pell** (D-RI), The Pell Awards recognize excellence in artistry and advocacy, both regional and national. Throughout his life, Senator Pell worked to support the arts: He was the principal sponsor of landmark legislation that established the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities in 1965 and chaired the Senate Education and Arts subcommittee. He also took a lead role in eliminating barriers to higher education with his legislation creating the Basic Educational Opportunity Grants, which Congress named "Pell Grants" in 1980.

Past Pell Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Arts honorees include: Ted Danson and Mary Steenburgen, The Indigo Girls (Amy Ray and Emily Saliers), Mary McDonnell, Jane Alexander, Kate Burton, Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis, Viola Davis, Olympia Dukakis, Laurie and Oskar Eustis, Adrian Hall, Richard and Sharon Jenkins, Jessica Lange, Arthur Miller, Liza Minnelli, Toni Morrison, Robert Redford, Chita Rivera, Jason Robards, Maurice Sendak, Beverly Sills, and Stephen Sondheim.

Previous recipients of the Rhode Island Pell Award for Excellence in the Arts include John Benson, Howard BenTré, Dan Butterworth, Len Cabral, Charlene Carpenzano, John Chan, Bob Colonna, Robert Coover, Umberto "Bert" Crenca, Richard Cumming, Ruth Frisch Dealy, Tony Estrella, Barnaby Evans, Richard Fleischner, Peter Geisser, Malcolm Grear, Michael Harper, Bunny Harvey, Dorothy Jungels & the Everett Dance Theatre, George Kent, Eugene Lee, David Macaulay, Salvatore Mancini, Marta V. Martínez, Dave McKenna, Barbara Meek, Denny Moers, Morris Nathanson, Timothy Philbrick, Ricardo Pitts-Wiley, Duke Robillard, Thomas Sgouros, Sr., Consuelo Sherba, Gretchen Dow Simpson, Maria Spacagna, Judith Lynn Stillman, Valerie Tutson, Chris Van Allsburg, Paula Vogel, Keith and Rosmarie Waldrop, William Warner, Rose Weaver, Steven Weinberg, and Toots Zynsky.

Past recipients of the Charles Sullivan Award for Distinguished Service in/to the Arts include Elizabeth Z. Chace, Mayor Vincent A. Cianci, Jr., Martha Douglas-Osmundson, Sally and Joe Dowling, Deloris Grant, Adrian Hall,



Mary Paula Hunter, P. William Hutchinson, Virginia Lynch, Suzanne Magaziner, Lowry Marshall, Jane S. Nelson, Elaine Foster Perry, and Julie Adams Strandberg.

Past Pell Award for Outstanding Leadership in the Arts honorees include Jeannine Chartier, Joseph A. Chazan M.D., Trudy Coxe, Mihailo "Misha" Djuric, Michael Gennaro, Roger Mandle, Senator Claiborne Pell, J.L. "Lynn" Singleton, Rosanne Somerson, and George Wein.

ABOUT TRINITY REPERTORY COMPANY

Rhode Island's Tony Award-winning theater, Trinity Rep has created unparalleled professional theater for and with its community since its founding in 1963. Trinity Rep strives to facilitate human connection and has been a driving force behind the creativity that fuels and defines the region for more than 50 years.

Trinity Rep is committed to reinventing the public square and inspiring dialogue by creating emotionally stimulating live productions that range from classical to contemporary and innovative education programs for all ages and abilities. Its annual production of *A Christmas Carol* has brought families together for more than four decades and made memories for nearly two million audience members. For more information, visit Trinity Rep's website at www.trinityrep.com

2024 Pell Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Arts

Octavia Spencer



Academy Award-winning actress Octavia Spencer has become one of Hollywood's most lauded talents with a resume as extensive as it is versatile. Her performance as Minny in the DreamWorks feature film *The Help* won her the Academy Award, BAFTA Award, Golden Globe Award, SAG Award, and Broadcast Film Critics' Choice Award, among numerous other accolades. She has since received two additional individual Academy Award nominations and served as an executive producer on the critically acclaimed drama, *Green Book*, which won the 2019 Academy Award for Best Picture and Golden Globe for Best Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy.

Spencer was most recently seen in the third and final season of Apple TV+'s thriller, "Truth Be Told," as Poppy Parnell, a true crime podcast host who risks everything in pursuit of truth and justice. In addition to starring, she also serves as an executive producer on the program alongside Reese Witherspoon's Hello Sunshine and Chernin Ent/Endeavor Content. Spencer received a nomination for Outstanding Actress in a Drama Series by the NAACP Image Awards for her performance in the series.

Additional film credits include Apple TV+'s *Spirited*, alongside Ryan Reynolds and Will Ferrell; Amazon Studios' sci-fi thriller *Encounter*; *Thunder Force* opposite Melissa McCarthy; *The Witches*, Robert Zemeckis' adaptation of the Roald Dahl classic book, alongside Anne Hathaway; the animated film *Onward*; the fantasy comedy film, *The*

Voyage of Doctor Dolittle; *Luce* (which earned her a nomination for “Best Supporting Female” at the 35th Annual Film Independent Spirit Awards); *Ma*; *The Shape of Water* (for which she earned an individual Golden Globe, BAFTA, and Academy Award nominations for her role in the film); *Instant Family*, a comedy alongside Mark Wahlberg and Rose Byrne; *A Kid Like Jake* opposite Claire Danes, Jim Parsons and Priyanka Chopra; the independent drama *Small Town Crime* with John Hawkes and Anthony Anderson; *Hidden Figures*, the Academy Award-nominated drama that tells the true story of several African-American women who provided NASA with critical information needed to launch the program’s early successful missions and earned Spencer her second individual nominations for the Academy Awards, SAG Awards, Golden Globe Awards and NAACP Image Awards; *The Shack*; *Gifted*; *Allegiant*, for which Spencer reprised her role as Johanna in the third installment of Lionsgate’s *The Divergent Series* franchise; the Disney animated film *Zootopia*, which won the Academy Award for Best Animated Film; *The Free World*; *Fathers and Daughters*; *The Great Gilly Hopkins*; Mark Waters’ *Bad Santa 2*; *Black or White*; *On Up*; *Snowpiercer*; the indie-drama *Fruitvale Station* for which Spencer was awarded Best Supporting Actress from the National Board of Review; *Paradise*; *Smashed*; Bryce Dallas Howard’s directed segment of *Call Me Crazy: A Five Film*, an anthology of five short films focused on various stories of mental illness; *Blues for Willadean*, *Fly Paper*, *Peep World*, *Dinner For Schmucks*, *Small Town Saturday Night*, *Herpes Boy*, *Halloween II*, *The Soloist*, *Drag Me To Hell*, *Seven Pounds*, *Pretty Ugly People*, *Coach Carter*, *Charm School*, *Win A Date With Tod Hamilton*, *Bad Santa*, *Spiderman*, *Big Momma’s House*, *Being John Malkovich*, *Never Been Kissed*, and *A Time to Kill*. In 2009, Spencer directed and produced a short film titled *The Captain*, which was a finalist for the coveted Poetry Foundation Prize at the Chicago International Children’s Film Festival.

In 2020, Octavia starred as the title role in “Self Made: Inspired by the Life of Madam C.J. Walker,” a limited series for Netflix about entrepreneur and social activist, Madam C.J. Walker, which she executive produced along with LeBron James and his production company, Springhill Entertainment. Her performance earned her a nomination for “Outstanding Lead Actress in a Limited Series or Movie” at the 72nd Primetime Emmy Awards as well as a nomination for the 52nd NAACP Image Awards in the category of “Outstanding Actress in a Television Movie, Limited–Series or Dramatic Special.” Additional television credits include a recurring guest star role in several episodes of the hit CBS comedy, “Mom,” “30 Rock,” “Halfway Home” “Ugly Betty,” “The Big Bang Theory,” “E.R.,” “CSI,” “CSI: NY,” “Raising the Bar,” “Medium,” and “NYPD Blue.”

In 2019, Octavia Spencer launched her production company, Orit Entertainment, which she runs with partner and producer, Brian Clisham, and Head of Production and Development, Stephanie Kluff. Projects under the Orit

Entertainment banner include the scripted series “Truth Be Told” and “Self-Made: Inspired by The Life of Madam C.J. Walker.” In November, Orit premiered two docuseries, “Lost Women of Highway 20” and “Feds”, as part of their partnership with ID and October Films. Narrated by Spencer, “Lost Women of Highway 20” is a three-episode documentary series that examines a stretch of Oregon’s U.S. Highway 20 where many women and girls went missing and were attacked between the 1970s and 1990. “Feds” is a six-part series that takes viewers deep inside America’s most elite crime-fighting agency for the first time and features exclusive access to active-duty FBI agents in the special forces division. Orit recently signed a first-look deal with Skydance Television. The first project from the partnership is an eight-episode series with Hannah Waddingham and Spencer starring in and executive producing. The currently untitled series follows two best friends, one of whom is living a double life as a highly trained assassin.

Among her many other professional achievements, Spencer has co-authored an interactive mystery series for children called *Randi Rhodes, Ninja Detective*. The first title in the series, *Randi Rhodes, Ninja Detective: The Case of the Time-Capsule Bandit* was published by Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing in fall 2013 and the second book, *Randi Rhodes, Ninja Detective: Sweetest Heist in History* followed the next year.

Spencer is a native of Montgomery, Alabama and holds a BS in liberal arts from Auburn University. She currently resides in Los Angeles.

[Click here to download Ms. Spencer’s headshot. Photo by Art Streiber.](#)

2024 Rhode Island Pell Award for Excellence in the Arts

Bob Dilworth



Nationally and internationally recognized and exhibited, Bob Dilworth's works on canvas and paper have won many awards, including the 2024 General Operating Support for Artists Grant from the Rhode Island State Council for the Arts, and the 2014 Rhode Island State Council for the Arts Fellowship in Painting. He has also been awarded grants from the Rhode Island Foundation, the University of Rhode Island Center for the Humanities, the University of Rhode Island Council for Research, the National John Biggers Award in Drawing, and the Virginia Commission for the Arts.

Dilworth's work has also won fellowships from the following artist residencies: Iris Project Artist Residency Program in Los Angeles, CA; Brush Creek Foundation for the Arts in Saratoga, WY; Angels Gate Cultural Center in association with Marymount California University in San Pedro, CA; Playa Artist Residency in Summer Lake, OR; Anderson Ranch Art Center in Snow Mass, CO; Hambidge Creative Center for the Arts and Science in Rabun Gap, GA; the Klaus Center for the Arts in San Pedro, CA; Contemporary Artist Center in North Adams, MA; the African American Master Artist in Residence Program (AAMARP) at Northeastern University in Boston, MA; and the La Cite International des Artes, Artist Residency in Paris, France.

His work is included in corporate and private collections including many Chicago libraries and public institutions, the RISD Museum, the Newport Art Museum, and others. Dilworth earned a Master of Fine Arts degree from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Rhode Island School of

Design. He has taught art and design at colleges and universities across the country, including Princeton University, Brown University, Columbia College Chicago, and Saint Paul's College in Virginia.

Dilworth is professor emeritus for the Department of Art & Art History at the University of Rhode Island (URI), where he taught for over 28 years. Between 2010 and 2013, he served as chair of that department; he was also chair of the Africana Studies Department between 2018 and 2020. From 2014 and 2018, Dilworth served as director of the URI's Main Gallery, where he curated academic-centered exhibitions by local, regional, and national artists.

He retired from the URI in the spring of 2020. He served on the Board of Trustees at the Newport Art Museum (2017-2020). Currently, he serves on the Board of Directors at the Jamestown Art Center, the Board of the Langston Hughes Community Poetry Reading Group, and is a current member of the Providence Art in City Life Commission. Dilworth lives in Providence, where he works as a full-time visual artist, represented by Cade Tompkins Projects.

[Click here to download Mr. Dilworth's headshot. Photo courtesy of Bob Dilworth.](#)

2024 Charles Sullivan Award for Distinguished Service in the Arts

Christina H. Paxson



Christina Hull Paxson has served as Brown University's 19th president and professor of economics and public policy since July 1, 2012.

Under Christina H. Paxson's leadership, Brown has fortified its standing as a leading research university known for its excellence and innovation in undergraduate education, its transformational vision in fueling economic development through community and government partnerships, and its commitment to inclusion and access.

Christina H. Paxson's ambitious strategic plan for Brown establishes the University at the forefront of higher education in all these areas. She has led the creation and growth of centers and institutes that connect top researchers and scholars to confront critical 21st-century issues in areas spanning neuroscience, environmental and climate studies, economics, international and public policy, humanistic studies, and translating science and technology to find treatments and cures for disease. At the same time, Brown continues to lead in undergraduate education, with the University among the top producers of Fulbright winners each year.

Led by Christina H. Paxson, Brown's public-private partnerships with government, businesses, and industry have anchored the ongoing economic transformation of the formerly depressed Jewelry District in downtown Providence. This includes fueling the development of South Street Landing by moving 400 Brown employees into a former power plant; becoming the lead anchor tenant to enable the opening of the Wexford Innovation

Center developed by Wexford Science and Technology; and Brown's partnership with the University of Rhode Island and two global startup accelerators to create one of the state's new innovation campuses.

Christina H. Paxson is a passionate advocate on issues of access to higher education, and Brown has gained international attention for its campus-wide effort to develop and implement its comprehensive Pathways to Diversity and Inclusion action plan, which the University launched in 2016.

In addition, Brown became a national model in working with its students to create one of the first student centers for undocumented, low-income and first-generation college students. Her leadership in creating The Brown Promise financial aid initiative has eliminated loans from the financial aid packages awarded by the University, decreasing financial barriers to access to a Brown education. In addition, Christina H. Paxson has overseen consecutive record-setting years in philanthropic support for Brown. Growth in fundraising and investment has strengthened the University's teaching and research with support for state-of-the-art facilities that include the Friedman Hall undergraduate teaching and learning building, the Engineering Research Center, expansion of the Watson Institute for Public and International Affairs, and spaces for research and study for data sciences, brain science, education, entrepreneurship, public health, and other growing fields at Brown.

Prior to her appointment at Brown, Christina H. Paxson was dean of the Princeton School of International and Public Affairs and the Hughes Rogers Professor of Economics and Public Affairs at Princeton University. She founded and directed both the Center for the Economics and Demography of Aging and the Center for Health and Wellbeing at the Princeton School of International and Public Affairs.

A noted economist and public health expert, Christina H. Paxson became a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2017. Christina H. Paxson has been the principal investigator on several research projects supported by the National Institutes of Health and authored or co-authored numerous journal articles. Her principal research explored the relationship of economic factors to health and welfare over the life course, particularly on the lives of children. While at Princeton, Christina H. Paxson served as investigator for the Fragile Families Study and as co-editor of the journal, *The Future of Children*.

Christina H. Paxson served as vice president of the American Economic Association and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. She is a past chair of the board of directors for the Association of American Universities, a past chair of the board of directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, and a past member of the board of directors for the American Council for Education. She is currently a member the board of overseers of Koç University in Istanbul, Turkey.



Christina H. Paxson is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Swarthmore College and earned her Ph.D. in economics at Columbia University.

[Click here to download Dr. Paxson's headshot. Photo courtesy of Brown University.](#)

2024 Pell Award for Outstanding Leadership in the Arts

Charles M. “Chuck” Royce



Through visionary leadership and investment in the arts and historic preservation, philanthropist Charles M. “Chuck” Royce has made an indelible mark on Westerly, RI. His preservation and community revitalization endeavors have not only breathed new life into local landmarks, but also created dynamic spaces where creativity can flourish.

Royce’s notable historic restoration projects in Westerly include The United Theatre, a former vaudeville theater turned vibrant arts and cultural center and the recipient of the 2023 Rhody Award for Historic Preservation; the Weekapaug Inn, a 19th century seaside resort listed in the National Register of Historic Places; the Lanphear Livery, a late 1800s livery stable sited at the northern entryway to Bay Street repurposed as mixed-use project that serves the community, businesses, and residences alike; and a faithful historic replication of the iconic Ocean House in Watch Hill, once slated for demolition and now a AAA Five Diamond and Forbes Five-Star hotel. Projects outside of Rhode Island include the Avon Theatre in Stamford, CT, now a non-profit, member-supported movie house. In 2019, Royce was inducted into the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame.

Royce is a graduate of Brown University and received his MBA from Columbia University. He currently serves as a trustee of the United Theatre, the Frick Collection, the Bruce Museum, Berkeley Divinity School at Yale, and the Compass Rose Society. Previous trusteeships include the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Boys and Girls Club of Greenwich, Greenwich Historical Society, New York Historical Society, Christ Church Greenwich, and warden of the vestry of Trinity Wall Street.



[Click here to download Mr. Royce's headshot. Photo courtesy of Chuck Royce.](#)



AT A GLANCE

Trinity Rep's 2024 Pell Awards Gala

Date – Monday, June 10, 2024

VIP Reception – 6:00 pm

Dinner – 7:15 pm

Awards Ceremony – 8:15 pm

Honorees

Octavia Spencer, Pell Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Arts

Bob Dilworth, Rhode Island Pell Award for Excellence in the Arts

Christina H. Paxson, Charles Sullivan Award for Distinguished Service in the Arts

Charles M. "Chuck" Royce, Pell Award for Outstanding Leadership in the Arts

Location – The Lindemann Performing Arts Center, Brown University, 144 Angell St., Providence, RI

The Pell Awards Gala celebrates national and local excellence in the arts. Guests will enjoy mixing and mingling with artists, business, political, and social leaders; dinner by Russell Morin Fine Catering; and unforgettable moments as the theater honors individuals who are committed to bettering the world through art. All proceeds benefit artistic, education, and community engagement programming at Trinity Rep.

Tickets – Full event including VIP reception: \$600; Ceremony and dinner only: \$300 (limited availability)

Tickets, sponsorships, and event program tribute ads are on sale at trinityrep.com/pell or by phone at (401) 453-9237.