

FIRST MOTHERS

The Women Who
Raised America's Presidents



November 4, 2024

At the New Hazlett Center for Performing Arts

Prime Stage Theatre

** presents **

First Mothers

The Women Who Raised America's Presidents

* * * * *

Written by L.E. McCullough

Directed by Ponny Conomos Jahn

** featuring **

KAITLIN CLIBER

Virginia Clinton, Sarah Lincoln, Hannah Nixon

LYNNE FRANKS

Dorothy Ford, Mary Washington, Lillian Carter

KERRY McGRATH

Rose Kennedy, Nelle Reagan, Nancy Lincoln

STACEY ROSLECK

Elizabeth Jackson, Martha Truman, Ann Obama

JEN SINATRA

Sara Roosevelt, Rebekah Johnson, Ida Eisenhower

Production Stage Manager and Lighting Designer

Jason Kmetic

Dialect Coach
Lisa Bansavage

Sound Designer
L.E. McCullough

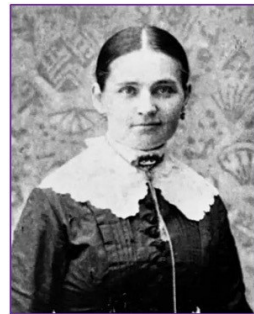
~ Special Thanks ~

We offer our special thanks to the following:

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Elizabeth Elias Huffman of PICT Theatre
Wynne Anders
Barbara Farrar Evans
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Vivian Meisner
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Despite the personal and political diversity of the men occupying the White House over the last two centuries, one common factor emerges – the essential ethical character and philosophical outlook of each were strongly shaped by his *Mother*.

Through compelling first-person dramatizations, **FIRST MOTHERS** presents crucial moments in the lives of 15 women who not only raised a President ... but helped determine the destiny of the United States as we know it today.



First Mothers: The Women Who Raised America's Presidents



Kaitlin Cliber



Lynne Franks



Kerry McGrath



Stacey Rosleck



Jen Sinatra



Ponny Conomos Jahn



L.E. McCullough



Lisa Bansavage



Jason Kmetic

~ Scenes ~

- Scene 1:** April 19, 1781. A swamp outside Camden, South Carolina, just before dawn.
- Scene 2:** March 17, 1905. The parlor of the Livingston brownstone, 8 E. 76th Street, New York City, mid-afternoon.
- Scene 3:** May 9, 1922. Jack Reagan home, 816 S. Hennepin, Dixon, Illinois, before supper.
- Scene 4:** September 1, 1890. John Truman home, S. Crysler Street, Independence, Missouri, mid-morning.
- Scene 5:** September 22, 1928. Nixon's Market, Highway 72, Whittier, California, 5 a.m.
- Scene 6:** February 7, 1949. Minister's parlor, Grace Episcopal Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, late evening.
- Scene 7:** February 3, 1929. Joseph Kennedy home, 5040 Independence Avenue, Riverdale, New York, early afternoon.
- Scene 8:** March 2, 1927. Sam Johnson farm, outside Johnson City, Texas, late morning.
- Scene 9:** July 14, 1948. Bus station, New Orleans, Louisiana, late afternoon.
- Scene 10:** November 9, 1981. Conference room, Ford Foundation, 320 E. 43rd Street, New York City, 10 a.m.
- Scene 11:** April 12, 1789. Mary Washington home, Lewis & Charles Streets, Fredericksburg, Virginia, mid-morning.
- Scene 12:** May 1, 1912. Belle Springs Creamery, Abilene, Kansas, mid-morning.
- Scene 13:** October 5, 1820. Thomas Lincoln farm, Little Pigeon Creek, Indiana, late night.
- Scene 14:** December 24, 1967. Medical clinic, Vikhroli, India, nearly midnight.



~ Cast ~

Kaitlin Cliber (Virginia Clinton, Sarah Lincoln, Hannah Nixon) received her BFA in Fine Arts with a dual major in Theatre from Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania. Most recently Kaitlin has performed in the Pittsburgh New Works Festival, *Once Upon A Mattress* (Theatre Factory), *Last Of The Boys* (Greensburg Civic), *A League Of Their Own* (Amazon Prime), Edinburgh Fringe Festival (Scotland) and is currently in production of horror film *Locust* (Atomic Fear Films). When Kaitlin isn't on stage she is the Dolce & Cupcake supervisor at Oakmont Bakery, does marketing for The Oaks Theater, serves on the board at The Theatre Factory and performs with Mystery's Most Wanted traveling murder mystery company. Kaitlin wants to thank Prime Stage and Ponny for this once in a lifetime opportunity.

Lynne Franks (Dorothy Ford, Mary Washington, Lillian Carter) is honored to be part of this wonderful project for Prime Stage Theatre with all these wonderful artists. I'll have to be on my toes to keep up with all these talented actors, playwright, director, coaches and technical crew and advisors. Prime Stage has welcomed me many times and I'm thrilled to be included in another Monday Specials event. Thank you and please enjoy, be entertained and enlightened.

Kerry McGrath (Rose Kennedy, Nelle Reagan, Nancy Lincoln) is thrilled to be back at Prime Stage after performing in *RUR* last fall! When she's not on stage, Kerry is a high school English teacher, so she is delighted to bring this educational show to life with a dream team of powerhouse women! Favorite roles include Judy Boone in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, Susan Hendrix in *Wait Until Dark* (both at Little Lake Theatre) and Charlotte Lange in *Charlotte's Revival* (Pittsburgh New Works Festival). Much love to her real life kids, Nora and Clark, who would both be phenomenal Presidents someday.

Stacey Rosleck (Elizabeth Jackson, Martha Truman, Ann Obama) is a stage and film actor who has performed with numerous Pittsburgh-area companies/festivals. She is delighted to be back at Prime Stage Theatre, where she was most recently seen in *And Then They Came For Me: Remembering the World of Anne Frank*. Favorite roles include Ruth in *Blithe Spirit*, Marie Antoinette in *The Revolutionists*, Elizabeth Condell in *The Book of Will*, Charlie's Mom in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, Kate Keller in *The Miracle Worker*. Film credits include *Godless Children* (Rumination Images), *Being Frank* (Carpio Pictures), Kelly in *House of Stones* (Redwood Media). Much love and gratitude to Ponny, this remarkable cast and crew, and also (and especially) to hubby Chris and kitties Roxie and Murray.

Jen Sinatra (Sara Roosevelt, Rebekah Johnson, Ida Eisenhower) is very happy to make her debut at Prime Stage in *First Mothers* and *Great Expectations*. She has appeared in numerous productions in the Pittsburgh area over the years with Little Lake Theater, Pittsburgh Playwrights and The Summer Company. Some of her favorite roles include Rosemary in *Outside Mullingar*, Jean in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* and Veronica in *God of Carnage*.



~ Creative Team ~

Ponny Conomos Jahn (Director) is a proud Pittsburgh native who has worked professionally as an actor, theatre instructor and stage director for 29 years. Ponny has performed and directed for many theater companies throughout the US and abroad including Prague Ensemble Theatre (which she co-founded as Producing Artistic Director), Buffalo Theatre Ensemble (Chicago), Player's Theatre Columbus, Prime Stage Theatre and Pittsburgh Public Theater. Her production of Ken Ludwig's *The Gods of Comedy* received Pittsburgh City Paper's BEST THEATRE PRODUCTION 2023. Other local productions include: *Witness for the Prosecution*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *Noises Off*, *Shirley Valentine*, *Top Girls*, *Hayfever*, *Middletown*, *The Audience* and *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. Ponny is a passionate teaching artist who has been commissioned as an artist-in-residence for schools both in the U.S. and Eastern Europe. She holds a MA in Theatre Performance and Dramatic Literature from Northwestern University and was fortunate enough to spend a summer learning from the spectacular Uta Hagen. Thank you, Larry, for entrusting me with this fascinating look at how our roots affect our outcomes. And thank you to my extremely talented cast who brought these remarkable women to life. Break a leg!

Lisa Bansavage (Dialect Coach) is delighted to be working on her tenth production with Prime Stage Theatre. As an actor, her career spans Broadway, Off Broadway, regional theatre, film, television and national commercial credits including *Master Class*, *Sideman*, *Turn of the Screw*, *A Man for All Seasons*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Grace & Glorie*, *Mastergate*, *Red Scare on Sunset*, *The Changeling*, *The Country Wife*, *A View from the Bridge*, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *The Sisters Rosenweig*, *Night of the Iguana*, *Mississippi Burning*, *Married to the Mob*, *Three Men and a Baby*, *The Fisher King*, *Diary of Anne Frank*, *The Loman Family Picnic* and a third of the full Shakespearean canon as well as a role opposite Sir Anthony Quayle in the BBC-London production of *An Exchange of Gifts*. She is a graduate of Carnegie- Mellon University's theatre conservatory and holds a Masters from The University of Pittsburgh where she was the Merrill Fellow. Her most recent New York performance was as Elizabeth Jackson, Rebekah Baines Johnson and Virginia Clinton in *First Mothers: The Women Who Raised America's Presidents*.

Jason Kmetc (Production Stage Manager) has been working in theatre for 20 years. He started with Prime Stage Theatre in 2005 and has worked with them on and off for the last 19 years, along with for Disney and production companies in California. His credits include: *The Long Road Today/El Largo Camino Del Hoy*, *Apsis Requiem*, *Gypsy*, *Of Mice and Men*, *15 Min of Fame*, *1984*, *Animal Farm*, *The Mousetrap*, *The Boxcar Children*, *The Miracle Worker* and most recently as production stage manager Prime Stage High School Drama Awards. Jason is proud to have worked on this production and would like to thank his parents for their continued support.

L.E. McCullough, Ph.D. (Playwright) is a Pittsburgh author of 52 books of fiction, non-fiction and plays, including 218 published stage works performed at schools, community centers, festivals, museums, historical societies and theatre venues around the world. His commissions include plays on Galileo, journalist Ernie Pyle, 1920s jazz artist Charlie Davis, pharmacist Eli Lilly, Catholic activist Dorothy Day, Mercy Hospital founder Frances Warde, President Grover Cleveland, singer-heiress Libby Holman, Pittsburgh Holocaust survivor Melvin Goldman and, for the National Constitution Center, a play on the U.S. Constitution. The New York premiere of his *Blues for Miss Buttercup*, based on the life of blues piano legend Leroy Carr, won an Emerging Playwright Award and 2 New York Bistro Awards. He is the book writer for *Orphan Train* (lyrics-Michael Barry Greer, music-Doug Katsaros), a featured presentation of the 2013 Grand Central Terminal Centennial. He is a member of Prime Stage Theatre's Board of Directors and Teacher Advisory Council.
www.educationalclassroomplays.com

~ The First Mothers ~

Mary Ball Washington

(1707-1789) Born Lancaster County, Virginia; died Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Elizabeth Hutchinson Jackson

(1737-1781) Born County Antrim, Ireland; died Lancaster County, South Carolina.

Nancy Hanks Lincoln

(1784-1818) Born Hampshire County, Virginia; died Little Pigeon Creek, Indiana.

Sarah Bush Lincoln

(1788-1869) Born Elizabethtown, Kentucky; died Coles County, Illinois.

Sara Delano Roosevelt

(1854-1941) Born Newburgh, New York; died Hyde Park, New York.

Martha Young Truman

(1852-1947) Born Jackson County, Missouri; died Grandview, Missouri.

Ida Stover Eisenhower

(1862-1946) Born Mount Sidney, Virginia; died Abilene, Kansas.

Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy

(1890-1995) Born Boston, Massachusetts; died Hyannis Port, Massachusetts.

Rebekah Baines Johnson

(1881-1958) Born McKinney, Texas; died Austin, Texas.

Hannah Milhous Nixon

(1885-1067) Born Butlerville, Indiana; died Whittier, California.

Dorothy Gardner Ford

(1882-1967) Born Harvard, Illinois; died Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Lillian Gordy Carter

(1898-1983) Born Richland, Georgia; died Americus, Georgia.

Nelle Wilson Reagan

(1883-1962) Born Fulton, Illinois; died Santa Monica, California.

Virginia Cassidy Clinton

(1923-1994) Born Bodcaw, Arkansas; died Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Ann Dunham Obama

(1942-1995) Born Wichita, Kansas; died Honolulu, Hawaii.



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MONDAY prime stage SPECIALS

Prime Stage Theatre uses our open Monday nights to present innovative and emerging theatre. Join us at New Hazlett Theater for exciting glimpses into upcoming shows and Pittsburgh theatre talent.

November 4, 2024

First Mothers: The Women Who Raised America's Presidents

January 20, 2025

How I Learned What I Learned

August Wilson's stage biography starring Wali Jamal

March 3, 2025

Staged Reading of Freedom House: Giving Life a Second Chance

how America's first EMS unit began in Pittsburgh

May 5, 2025

Staged Reading of Speak

an original Prime Stage Theatre premiere of
Laurie Halse Anderson's powerful young adult novel

SLB Radio congratulates Prime Stage on its 28th Season of Strength, Voices, and Hope



SLB's Youth Media Center on the Northside has free programs for teens from Allegheny County and beyond.

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givebig
PITTSBURGH

Tuesday, December 3, 2024

Each year **GiveBig Pittsburgh** and the global **Giving Tuesday** initiative offer supporters of nonprofits around the world the chance to make a personal contribution for causes close to their hearts.

This coming Tuesday, Dec. 3, Prime Stage Theatre has a special [online Giving Page](#) where you can make an instant donation to boost our **2024-25 Season of Strength, Voices & Hope**.



Visit our GiveBig Pittsburgh page [here](#)

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- Since 1996, Prime Stage Theatre has presented more than 100 inspiring plays for audiences of all ages throughout Western Pennsylvania ... plays that convey themes of empathy, hope and transformation and help bring our community together to share common bonds.
 - Each year, we sponsor unique classroom programs for students and teachers that show the power of theatre in stimulating new ways of thinking, learning and problem-solving.
 - Your support helps us continue our literacy workshops ... develop new sensory-inclusive programming for special needs students ... grow our Prime Stage Sprouts plays for elementary age audiences.
-

On Tuesday, Dec. 3, you can make a [Giving Tuesday donation](#) that will help Prime Stage reach more students and families with the kind of meaningful theatre you can be assured makes a major difference in their present *and* future.

We thank you for your support!

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THE MISSION OF PRIME STAGE THEATRE

To bring great literature to life through the transformative process of live theatre – to entertain, inform, enrich and inspire audiences with engaging programs that deliver long-lasting benefits to the students, educators, youth, families and theatregoers of our region.

TEEN ADVISORY BOARD

The Prime Stage Teen Advisory Board is a group of young adults who are passionate about theatre and the arts, who have the desire to uphold the mission of Prime Stage, to serve and engage the Pittsburgh community, to connect to and encourage the minds of youth, and prioritize social relevance in the arts.

TEACHER ADVISORY COUNCIL

We believe that literacy and the theatre can lift people up, inspire opportunities, and present new ways of seeing the world in positive ways. Effective teachers help students connect literature to their own world. Students discover literature, enjoy reading and vicariously "live in" the literature. Talented artists bring stories from the pages to life by providing multi-sensory experiences. Our adaptations of literature and historical figures and programs are selected and produced to meet those goals.

AMBASSADORS

They encourage conversations with patrons which will result in continued patronage and support and promote Prime Stage Theatre throughout the Pittsburgh region.

Our Education Outreach Programs



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ACTion*

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January 17 – 26, 2025



I Never Saw Another Butterfly
and The Terezin Promise

Feb 28 - March 9, 2025



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ANGRY MEN

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