



JEFFERSON EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY

GLOBAL SUMMIT

“Celebrating USA at 250”

SPEAKER LINEUP

19 EVENTS
30 SPEAKERS

SEPTEMBER – NOVEMBER 2026 · ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA

JEFFERSON
EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY

Hugh Hewitt

“President Trump, the MAGA Movement and 2028: What’s Next for the GOP”

"Hugh Hewitt is the host of the Hugh Hewitt Show, now in its 26th year on the Salem Radio Network and Salem News Channel. He is also a Fox News contributor and a Professor of Law at Chapman University Law School in Orange County. Hugh is originally from Warren, Ohio, is the author of 14 books, a lover of the Cleveland Browns, Cavs and Guardians, and a Camp Notre Dame Alum from the 1960s."

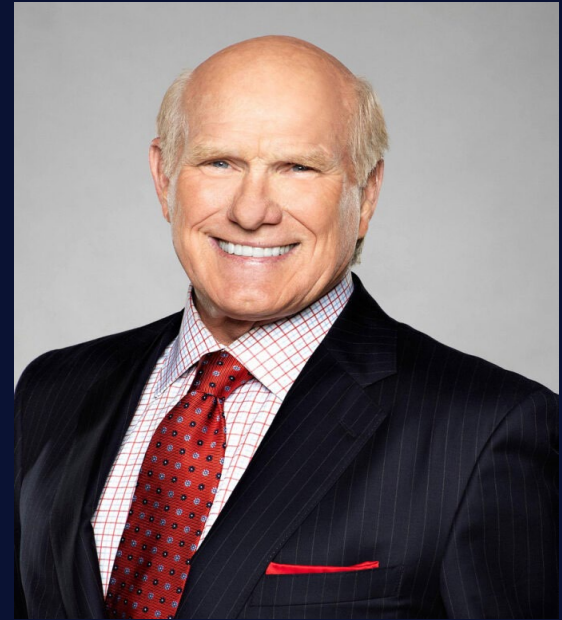


Tuesday, September 22

Terry Bradshaw

“Steeler Legend & FOX SPORTS Broadcaster Talks Everything Football”

The first NFL player with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, Bradshaw continues to defy an easy pigeonhole. Four-time Super Bowl champion quarterback (Pittsburgh Steelers), two-time Super Bowl MVP and Pro Football Hall of Fame inductee. Multi- Emmy and award-winning broadcaster for FOX on *Fox NFL Sunday*. Enduringly popular actor, most recently in the box office smash comedy romance *Failure to Launch*. Add to that gospel/country singer motivational speaker, *New York Times* best-selling author, breeder of championship quarter horses.



Thursday, September 24

Ambassador William Taylor & Jim Berlin

“How Erie is Shaping Ukraine’s Future”

Ambassador William B. Taylor is a distinguished fellow with the Atlantic Council’s Eurasia Center and a veteran diplomat with extensive experience in international affairs and conflict regions. He served as U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine from 2006 to 2009 and again as chargé d’affaires in Kyiv from 2019 to 2020. Throughout his career, Taylor has led U.S. assistance and reconstruction efforts in the Middle East, Iraq, Afghanistan, Eastern Europe, and former Soviet states, including key roles during the Arab Spring. Before joining the Atlantic Council, he served as vice president for Europe and Russia at the United States Institute of Peace. A graduate of United States Military Academy and Harvard Kennedy School, he also served as a U.S. Army officer in Vietnam and Germany.

Jim Berlin is the founder and CEO of Logistics Plus, which he launched in 1996 with three employees and a single contract after a 20-year career in the trucking industry. Under his leadership, the company has grown into a global supply chain provider serving more than 2,000 customers with approximately 1,000 employees in 30 countries and nearly \$500 million in annual revenue. A passionate advocate for Erie, Berlin has invested significantly in the city’s revitalization, including the restoration of Union Station as the company’s headquarters, and has been recognized with numerous honors, including Entrepreneur of the Year.



Tuesday, September 29

In Partnership With:



Thomas B. Hagen Dignitas Recipient

Bishop Sean W. Rowe

28th Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church

The Most Rev. Sean W. Rowe is the Presiding Bishop and Primate of The Episcopal Church, elected in 2024 and serving as the church's chief pastor and CEO. Recognized for his expertise in organizational learning and adaptive change, he is focused on strengthening local ministry and mission across the church. Rowe was ordained bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania in 2007 after serving as rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Franklin, Pennsylvania. He has also served as bishop provisional of the Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem and helped lead a partnership between the Episcopal Dioceses of Northwestern Pennsylvania and Western New York. He holds degrees from Grove City College, Virginia Theological Seminary, and Gannon University



Thursday, October 1

Geoffrey Hinton

“The ‘Godfather’ of Artificial Intelligence on the New Frontier of Technology”

Known as the "Godfather of AI," Dr. Geoffrey Hinton received the 2024 Nobel Prize in Physics for his foundational work on artificial neural networks. A former VP and Engineering Fellow at Google, he left the company in 2023 to speak freely about the risks of artificial intelligence. His research forms the backbone of nearly every modern AI system in use today.



Monday, October 5

Jeffrey Rosen

“The US Constitution and Our Republic: Will We Keep it?”

Jeffrey Rosen is the CEO Emeritus at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, the only institution in America chartered by Congress to "disseminate information about the United States Constitution on a nonpartisan basis." A prolific author and professor at George Washington University Law School, Rosen is one of America's foremost public intellectuals on constitutional law, civil liberties, and the legacy of the Founders.



Monday, October 19

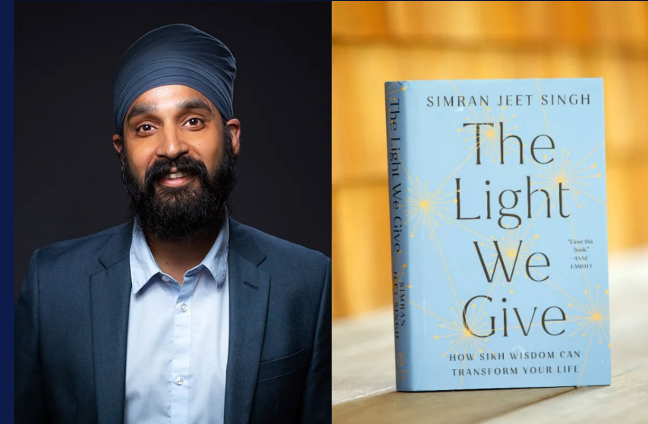
Gannon READS Event

*Simran Jett Singh - "The Light We Give:
How Sikh Wisdom Can Transform Your Life"*

A special collaborative event with Gannon University celebrating literacy, civic engagement, and the power of ideas. The Dr. David and MaryAnne Kozak Gannon READS (Reading to Enhance the Awareness of Diverse Society) initiative brings together students, faculty, and the broader Erie community around a shared reading experience — connecting literature to the pressing conversations of our time.

Simran Jeet Singh is the Executive Director of the Religion & Society Program at the Aspen Institute and the author of the national bestseller, "The Light We Give: How Sikh Wisdom Can Transform Your Life."

In Partnership With:



Tuesday, October 20

Sally Painter & Mariam Lambert

“Why the Transatlantic Alliance Matters: Protecting Ukraine’s Children and Europe’s Next Generation”

Sally Painter is a global business strategist and co-founder of Blue Star Strategies, advising corporations and governments on international affairs and transatlantic relations. Mariam Lambert brings expertise at the intersection of public policy and civic innovation. Together, they will discuss: “Why the Transatlantic Alliance Matters: Protecting Ukraine’s Children and Europe’s Next Generation.”

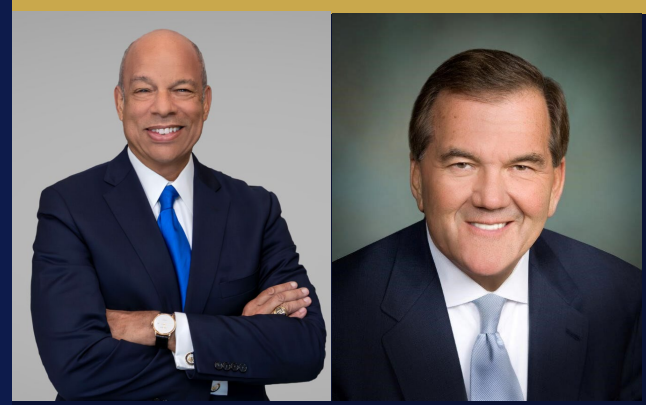


Wednesday, October 21

Jeh Johnson & Fran Townsend, with special appearance by Tom Ridge

“America’s Homeland Security: 25-Years After 9/11”

A landmark conversation on national security, terrorism, and the enduring lessons of September 11, 2001. Jeh Johnson served as U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security under President Obama (2013–2017). Fran Townsend served as Homeland Security Adviser to President George W. Bush and was intimately involved in the nation's response to 9/11. Erie’s own, Tom Ridge served in the George W. Bush administration as the assistant to the president for homeland security from (2001-2003) and as the United States secretary of homeland security from (2003-2005).



Thursday, October 22

Lake Erie Launchpad

Emerging Erie Entrepreneurs pitch what they think are the next best businesses to invest in.

Angels and Sharks, meet Entrepreneurs and Innovators.

Modeled after the hit reality TV show, this event will showcase five to six Erie-based entrepreneurs making business presentations to a panel of angel investors and successful business owners and entrepreneurs. Real funding is on the line. The event is open to the public and anchored in the spirit of America's 250th anniversary and is designed to put Erie on the national stage as a city building its next chapter.

In Partnership With:



Monday, October 26

Steve Leeper and Tim NeCastro

“Looking Back While Forging Ahead: Examining Erie’s Economic Development”

A discussion examining the state of the American economy — workforce transformation, job creation, industrial policy, and the economic challenges and opportunities facing communities like Erie. Panelists, to be announced, will review past and current plans and initiatives in Erie — such as Erie Refocused, Infinite Erie, Erie: 300.

Featuring: Steve Leeper, President and CEO of 3CDC and
Tim NeCastro, President and CEO of Erie Insurance

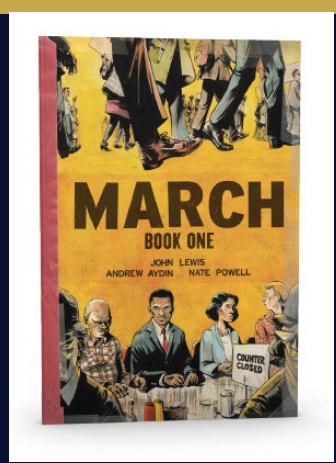


Wednesday, October 28

Andrew Aydin & Nate Powell

“March, Run, Vote: Graphic Storytelling and the Fight for Democracy”

The creative team (Authors & Illustrators) behind “March,” the groundbreaking graphic memoir trilogy co-authored by the late United States Congressman John Lewis. The series chronicles the Civil Rights Movement and Lewis's journey from the rural South to the halls of Congress. “March” won the National Book Award, the Sibert Medal, and numerous other honors — bringing a new generation to the story of American democracy.



Thursday, October 29

Nikole Hannah-Jones

“The 1619 Project: Examining the Origins of American Slavery 400 Years Later”

Nikole Hannah-Jones is one of the most consequential journalists of her generation. Her landmark 1619 Project, published in The New York Times Magazine, reframed the origins of American democracy by centering the history of slavery and its enduring legacy. She received the Pulitzer Prize for Commentary in 2020 and a MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship. She is the Knight Chair in Race and Journalism at Howard University.

In Partnership With:

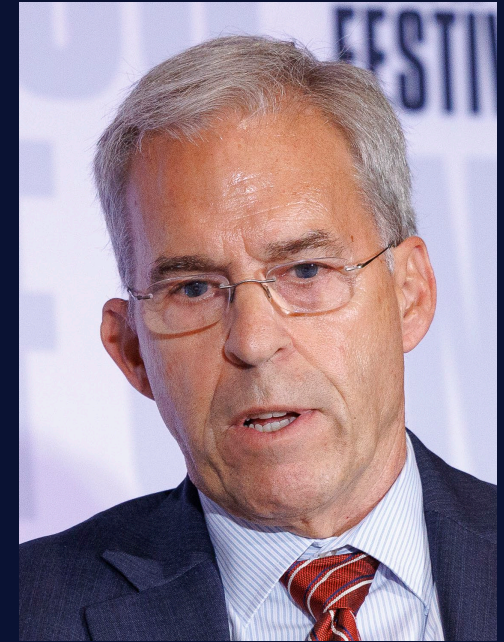


Wednesday, November 4

Rick Atkinson

“From the Revolution to World Wars, the Battles That Defined America”

Rick Atkinson is one of America's preeminent military historians. He won the Pulitzer Prize for his masterwork, “An Army at Dawn” and has produced definitive histories of World War II and the Revolutionary War. His “Liberation Trilogy” is considered among the most authoritative accounts of the Western Allied campaign in World War II. A former Washington Post reporter, he brings narrative history to vivid life.



Sponsored by:



Monday, November 9

Sarah Botstein and David Schmidt

“The Producers Behind Ken Burns’ Award-Winning PBS Documentaries”

Sarah Botstein and David Schmidt are acclaimed documentary filmmakers, and part of the producing team behind Ken Burns' award-winning documentary legacy — responsible for some of the most celebrated historical documentaries in American television, including *The Civil War*, *Baseball*, *Jazz*, *The Vietnam War*, and many more. Their work has redefined how Americans understand their own history through the medium of film.



Tuesday, November 10

Michael Smerconish

“The Mingle Project: Restoring Civility in Our Society through Gathering”

Michael Smerconish is the host of Smerconish on CNN and a nationally syndicated radio host on SiriusXM. A Philadelphia lawyer turned media personality, Smerconish is widely recognized for his independent, centrist perspective in an era of political polarization. He is a bestselling author and a consistent voice for civil, evidence-based political discourse.



Thursday, November 12

Ambassador Nikki Haley

“America’s Greatest Challenges at Home and Abroad”

Ambassador Nikki R. Haley served as the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations and as a member of President Donald Trump’s Cabinet after serving two terms as Governor of South Carolina. As governor, she led a period of significant economic growth, helping attract major international investment and the creation of more than 85,000 jobs across all 46 counties while achieving a 15-year low in unemployment. Haley also guided South Carolina through several defining moments, including the aftermath of the tragedy at Charleston’s Emanuel A.M.E. Church, the removal of the Confederate flag from Statehouse grounds, and the state’s historic 2015 flooding. The daughter of Indian immigrants and a graduate of Clemson University, Haley rose from working in her family’s small business to become one of America’s most prominent political leaders and voices on international affairs.



Monday, November 16

Anne Applebaum

“The Author of ‘Autocracy Inc.’ on How Dictators Are Working Together to Run the World”

Anne Applebaum is one of the world's leading authorities on authoritarianism, democracy, and the history of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. She won the Pulitzer Prize for “Gulag: A History and is the author of Twilight of Democracy and Iron Curtain.” A staff writer at The Atlantic and a Senior Fellow at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, her work illuminates the fragility of liberal democracy.



Thursday, November 19

Michelle Obama

A Moderated Conversation with Michelle Obama

Growing up on the South Side of Chicago, Michelle Obama never imagined that she'd become First Lady of the United States. She never imagined that one day, she would inspire people all around the world and drive historic change. As the daughter of a city water-pump operator and a stay-at-home mom, girls like her aren't supposed to do any of that.

But Michelle Obama has spent her life challenging us to reconsider where that "supposed to" comes from — and who determines it. Her life shows us that you don't have to look a certain way or act a certain way to fit in; you don't have to make a lot of money or come from a certain group or class or faith in order to matter. Each of us can write our own story. And when we share those stories with one another, we can lift each other up along the way.

That's why, as an author, Michelle speaks candidly about her experiences as a wife, mother, Black woman, and First Lady of the United States, telling her story in a way that empowers others to see the beauty in their own. Through her advocacy work, she strives to help young people see the power of their voice and the boundless promise inside of them.

*Moderator TBD

CONFIDENTIAL



Monday, October 12

LECOM HEALTH

2025 Sponsors



Bruce and Sarah McWilliams



Wealth Management



BRITH SHOLOM CONGREGATION

