

FUNDAY: Greetings from President Michael E. Hill

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Chautauqua never fails to inspire me, whether in the summer sunshine or under a glorious blanket of snow (which is what I see on Bestor Plaza at this writing!).

As I walk our beautiful, frosted grounds, I feel so deeply proud of all our community accomplished in this sesquicentennial year. Chautauqua truly lived up to its remarkable history, offering hundreds of performances, dialogues, and enriching experiences. Consider just this small snapshot: Presidential historian Jon Meacham, a Chautauqua Lecture Series favorite,

opened this anniversary season, reminding us to look to history as a guide toward the then-upcoming U.S. elections. The Paul Taylor Dance Company electrified audiences and pushed our emotional boundaries without words. And Chautauqua Theater Company's production of Kate Hamill's *The Light and the Dark* made the leap from the grounds to an off-Broadway premiere, reminding us all that Chautauqua is called illuminate important issues here and to transcend our grounds to make an even larger impact beyond our gates. Through these and so many other moments, we welcomed countless visitors who experienced Chautauqua for the first time, and we look forward to their return.

These are but a few of the countless moving experiences that illuminated this historic summer season.

One of the great joys of serving as Chautauqua's president is hearing the ways our mission impacts all those who encounter it. I'm grateful for the letters, the phone calls and the personal visits, all those moments where you shared examples of the ways your life has been enriched by Chautauqua and how it has changed the way you look at the world. You have offered uplifting stories about the lifelong friends you have made through Chautauqua, and how you have been awakened by the beauty of dance, music, and theater. And you've recounted what it has meant to you to simply look across the lake, taking time for quiet reflection in a world that's full of clutter. I cannot tell you how gratifying these and so many other stories are to hear, not only for knowing how much these moments mean to you but because it affirms my own experience of this remarkable place and movement. Like you, my Chautauqua cup runneth over, again and again and again.

This kind of transformation is at the heart of what we strive for every year at Chautauqua.

Whether your passion is art, theater, dance, spirituality, global issues, or the natural world,

Chautauqua brings it to life in powerful ways. These moments not only enrich our community but also affirm how we see ourselves and engage with the world around us. I know Chautauqua will play an even more important role this year, as we bring people together in community to grapple with great changes ahead for our country and our world.

As you can imagine, it is a herculean effort to bring Chautauqua's offerings to our community each year. Gate fees cover only part of what it takes to present our season — it is the generosity of our community that makes it all possible. Your support breathes life into Chautauqua, and we count on your generosity to animate our mission.

As we look beyond our sesquicentennial season, will you invest in the Institution's future success with a Chautauqua Fund gift today? Your contribution will help bring world class presenters to our grounds, nurture young artists, maintain the beauty of our magical grounds and enhance every aspect of your summer experience. A gift today honors our past and ensures our 2025 season will delight and enthrall.

In this season when we reflect on our blessings, I am grateful for you and your commitment to Chautauqua. Your belief, support and presence make our work come alive. As our Chautauqua friend and maestro Wynton Marsalis once said in response to uncertain times, "Participation is the way to honor all of the sacrifices of our ancestors and to create the world we would like to bequeath to our descendants. Let's be present." That is my wish for us all—to be full participants in the incredible mission of Chautauqua through your gifts of time, talent and treasure.

As you gather with loved ones for the holidays, I wish you a season of joy and peace, and a bright and successful new year.

With gratitude,

Michael E. Hill

Michael E. Hill, Ed.D.

President

Chautauqua Institution



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Chautauqua Institution · PO Box 28 · 1 Ames Avenue · Chautauqua, NY 14722-0028 · USA