

“Freedom of Speech is the cornerstone of democracy.” – Credo of the International Platform Association

America’s Oldest Lyceum

The English word lyceum comes from the Greek word lykeion which means a hall for public lectures or discussions. According to the Merriam-Webster New Collegiate Dictionary, the English word also means, “an association providing public lectures, concerts, and entertainments.”

The first Lyceum in the United States was founded in 1826 in Milbury, Massachusetts, by the most famous orator in American history, Daniel Webster. Webster, who served as secretary of state under three presidents, promoted the growth of lyceums all over the country and in 1831 he founded the American Lyceum Association. In 1903, the organization was renamed the International Lyceum Association and was renamed again in 1952 as the International Platform Association.

“We look forward to a world founded upon four essential freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression – everywhere in the world.” – Franklin D. Roosevelt, Message to Congress on January 6, 1941

“No other medium can compare with the platform.” – Lowell Thomas

“There are many objects of great value to man which cannot be attained by unconnected individuals, but must be attained, if at all, by association.” – Daniel Webster

“I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it” – Francois Marie Arouet Voltaire (1694-1778)

An active booster of the Lyceum movement in America was Boston journalist James Redpath, whose first lecture bureau promoted tours by Charles Dickens, Mark Twain, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Julia Ward Howe, Josh Billings, Henry Ward Beecher, P.T. Barnum, and other famous figures of the nineteenth century. IPA forums also featured Abraham Lincoln.

IPA is a non-profit corporation and is tax exempt. The IPA Annual Convention held in Washington, D.C., every summer, is the high point of the IPA calendar and is open to members only. For the last several years, many IPA speakers and events have been covered extensively by various news organizations and sessions have been broadcast live on C-SPAN, the nation's public affairs network for cable television. The convention also includes special training seminars for IPA members who wish to improve their public speaking skills. Other convention highlights include art exhibits, poetry readings, speaking and monologue competitions, and sessions devoted to story telling.

Your invitation to join the International Platform Association is a chance to become part of one of America's oldest democratic traditions and have fun at the same time. IPA speakers are both serious and entertaining, but they are never dull. It's true that you can watch speeches on television or read them in print. But there is no substitute for being part of a live audience where you have a chance to ask your unique question and meet famous speakers on an informal basis.

IPA members are leaders from many different walks of life. At our annual conventions, IPA members practice good citizenship at the highest national level, and in so doing, help to weave the tapestry of America's living history.

Whether you are liberal or conservative, Republican, Democratic, or independent, your ideas, your participation and representatives for your viewpoint are welcome at the IPA forum.

As you will see from the names listed below, IPA takes pride in playing host to distinguished men and women, liberals and conservatives, pillars of the government and severe social critics. IPA has never shied away from controversy and welcomes responsible spokespersons from a wide variety of viewpoints.

In the twentieth century, the IPA platform has played host to 13 men who became president of the United States including Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, Woodrow Wilson, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard N. Nixon, Gerald Ford, and Jimmy Carter. IPA speakers who became their party's nominee for president have included Barry Goldwater, Hubert Humphrey, George McGovern, and Walter Mondale. Other IPA speakers who once ran as serious candidates for either president or vice president include Robert Taft, Stuart Symington, Nelson Rockefeller, George Romney, Edmund Muskie, Eugene McCarthy, George Wallace, Ross Perot, Jesse Jackson, Robert Dole, Philip Crane, Henry Jackson, Pat Buchanan, Howard Baker, Lowell Weicker, and Donald Rumsfeld.

IPA political and civic speakers have included Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Henry Kissinger, Dean Rusk, W. Averell Harriman, Gen. Colin Powell, Ralph Nader, Arthur J. Goldberg, Betty Friedan, Phyllis Schlafly, Anita Hill, Edwin Meese, Sarah Weddington, Sen. Strom Thurmond, Caspar Weinberger, Alexander Haig, Dick Cheney, Julian Bond, Zbigniew Brezinski, Shirley Chisholm, Anna Chennault, Joseph Califano, Sen. Frank Church, Dick Gregory, Eleanor Smeal, Gov. Mario Cuomo, G. Gordon Liddy, Sen. William Proxmire, Rep. Pat Schroeder, Arthur B. Laffer, and CIA Director William Webster.

Others have included tax revolt leader Howard Jarvis, CIA Director William Colby, Sen. J. William Fulbright, Sen. Charles Percy, Mayor John Lindsay, Alice Roosevelt Longworth, John Mitchell, Charles Evers, Barry Commoner, Sen. Sam Ervin, William Rusher, Orville Freeman, Sen. Jesse Helms, Gen. John Singlaub, Admiral Stanfield Turner, John W. Gardner, Sen. Richard Lugar, Sol Linowitz, David Stockman, Joan Mondale, and dozens of senators, representatives, mayors, and members of the Cabinet.

From the world of entertainment and the arts, IPA conventions since 1960 have been addressed by Bob Hope, Johnny Cash, Dinah Shore, Art Linkletter, Norman Lear, Victor Borge, Gloria Swanson, Danny Kaye, Frank Capra, Jose Greco. Douglas Fairbanks Jr., Rudy Vallee, Edgar Bergen, Eddie Albert, Nanette Fabray, Polly Bergen, Hal Holbrook, Jack Valenti, Mitch Miller, Otto Preminger, Liv Ullmann, Ted Mack, Minnie Pearl, John Denver, Rod McKuen, magician Harry Blackstone, band leader Artie Shaw, and comedians Phyllis Diller, Shelly Berman, Pat Paulsen, Yakov Smirnoff, Mark Russell, and many others.

From the world of literature and nonfiction, IPA has hosted authors Herman Wouk, Seymor Hersh, George Plimpton, Isaac Asimov, William F. Buckley Jr., William Manchester, William Safire, F. Lee Bailey, and many others including Pulitzer Prize winners.

IPA has featured America's top journalists, columnists, television reporters, commentators, producers, and media critics including Tom Brokaw, David Brinkley, Sam Donaldson, Barbara Walters, Jim Lehrer, Larry King, Jeff Greenfield, Robert Novak, David Gergen, Edwin Newman, Mark Shields, John McLaughlin, Pat Buchanan, Bernard Shaw, David Broder, Jack Anderson, Ted Turner, Tom Braden, Dick Cavett, Sander Vanocur, Erma Bombeck, Art Buchwald, Georgie Anne Geyer, Irv Kupcinet, Ann Landers, Reed Larson, Marianne Means, Ron Nessen, Bill Plante, James J. Kilpatrick, Ben Wattenberg, William A. Rusher, Abigail Van Buren, and others. Also the late Lawrence Spivak, Peter Lisagor, Drew Pearson, Lorvell Thomas, Douglas Edwards, Eric Sevareid, and Harry Reasoner.

From the world of science, speakers have included Dr. Werner Von Braun, Admiral Hyman Rickover, Dr. Carl Sagan of Cornell, Dr. Henry Heimlich, Dr. Michael DeBakey, Nobel Prize-winning physicist Dr. Glenn Seaborg, Dr. Stephen J. Gould of Harvard, Astronaut Edgar Mitchell, and others.

IPA has also featured American business leaders including Malcolm Forbes Jr., American Express President James D. Robinson, 3-M Corporation Chairman Lewis W. Lehr, William E. Simon, J. Peter Grace, U.S. Chamber of Commerce President Richard Leshner, Bert Lance, J.W. Marriott, Economist Arthur B. Laffer, Kellogg President William La Mothe, Justin Dart, Bethlehem Steel President Lewis W. Foy, Eaton Corporation Chairman E. Mandell de Windt, Mary Cunningham of Bendix Corp., Frank Cappiello, former World Bank President Barber Conable, and Koppers Chairman Fletcher Byron.

For further information, write the IPA at the address on the back of this brochure.