

# THE PROGRESSIVE FORUM

Great Minds, Great Answers

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-*The Daily Show* “Senior Black Correspondent,” Larry Wilmore, February 25.

-T. Boone Pickens, March 29.

-Lester Brown, President of Earth Policy Institute, April 28.

-Theoretical physicist Brian Greene, September 29.

The Progressive Forum, Houston, will present Larry Wilmore, “Senior Black Correspondent” from *The Daily Show With Jon Stewart*, on February 25 at the Wortham Center at 7:30 to celebrate Black History Month. An Emmy and Peabody winner, Wilmore is releasing a new book, *I'd Rather We got Casinos And Other Black Thoughts* (Hyperion, 2009). He'll sign books and greet fans at the end of the program. Tickets start at \$14 for an orchestra level seat and are available at [www.progressiveforumhouston.org](http://www.progressiveforumhouston.org) or 832-251-0706. Physical box office sales are only at the theater on event night. (More on Wilmore below)

T. Boone Pickens, founder and chairman of BP Capital, will appear Sunday, March 29, at the Wortham Center, Brown Theater. Pickens has launched an ambitious, self-funded campaign to reduce America's crippling dependence on foreign oil and meet the potential threat of peak oil. His PickensPlan calls for major investments in renewable wind and solar energy which he outlines in his book, *The First Billion Is the Hardest* (Crown, 2008). His Mesa Power is planning the world's largest wind farm in the Texas Panhandle. And his company, Clean Energy, is advancing natural gas as a transportation fuel. Tickets start at \$14 and all attendees will receive a complimentary copy of his book. Purchase tickets at [www.progressiveforumhouston.org](http://www.progressiveforumhouston.org) or at 832-251-0706. Physical box office sales are at the theater only on event night. (More on Pickens below).

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Lester Brown will appear April 28 at the Wortham Center, Cullen Theater, at 7:30. He helped pioneer the concept of environmental sustainability by creating the first research institute in 1974 devoted to analyzing environmental issues on a global basis, Worldwatch Institute. He founded Earth Policy Institute in 2001 to provide modeling for sustainable economies. His most recent book is *Plan B 3.0: Mobilizing To Save Civilization* (Norton, 2008). He'll sign books and greet fans after the program. Tickets start at \$14 for orchestra level seats and are available at [www.progressiveforumhouston.org](http://www.progressiveforumhouston.org). Phone sales are at 832-251-0706. Physical box office sales are only at the theater on event night.

### **Larry Wilmore February 25**

Randall Morton, Progressive Forum president, said, "Larry Wilmore provides an honest conversation about race and diversity with something special, he's really funny. He's one of America's top stand up comedians, HBO is developing a sitcom on him. He's won an Emmy, Peabody, Humanitas, TV Critics, and NAACP Image Award.

"In his new book, Wilmore explores the current state of race relations in America, his book is as thought provoking as the man is funny."

Wilmore on Black History Month:

"The purpose is making up for centuries of oppression with 28 days of trivia. I'd rather we got casinos."

Wilmore on Africa:

"If I want to be around black people who talk different in an unbearably hot environment where my ancestors once roamed, I'll go to the check-cashing place."

Wilmore on Black Jesus:

"From the moment of the Immaculate Conception, the question of 'who the baby daddy' was already an issue."

Before his appearances on Comedy Central's *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, Larry Wilmore worked primarily behind the camera for more than 20 years as a television producer and writer. He was executive producer and creator of *The Bernie Mac Show* for which he won an Emmy and Peabody Award. He's written for shows such as *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, *In Living Color*, and *The Jamie Foxx Show*. He co-created the animated show *The PJs* with Eddie Murphy. He was a consulting producer and writer for *The Office* with on-camera appearances as Mr. Brown, diversity consultant.

Larry Wilmore is not only the "Senior Black Correspondent" of *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, he's the show's only black correspondent, a joke he plays to the hilt.

In 2001, Wilmore won a Peabody Award and Humanitas for his work on *The Bernie Mac Show*. And in 2002, for the same show, he won an Emmy in the category of Outstanding Writing for A Comedy Series.

Wilmore grew up a Catholic in suburban Los Angeles, his father was a doctor. He was a theater major at California Polytechnic University but dropped out to begin his career as a stand-up comedian. His brother Marc Wilmore writes for *The Simpsons*. He resides in Los Angeles with his wife and two children.

### **Lester Brown April 28**

Lester Brown will appear April 28. He has been described as "one of the world's most influential thinkers" by the *Washington Post*. The *Telegraph* of Calcutta called him "the guru of the environmental movement." The recipient of 24 honorary degrees, Brown has been honored with a MacArthur "genius" Fellowship, and the United Nations Environment Prize. In 1986, the Library of Congress requested his papers for its archives, noting that his writings "have already strongly affected thinking about problems

of world population and resources. He's published 50 books which have been translated into over forty languages.

Lester Brown started his professional career as a farmer in southern New Jersey, his native state, when it was still the garden state. In 1958, he and his younger brother were marketing a million and a half pounds of tomatoes a year. After obtaining a degree in agricultural science from Rutgers in 1955, he spent six months living in rural India where he became familiar with food and population issues. Brown earned a masters degree in agricultural economics from the University of Maryland and in public administration from Harvard. In 1964, he became a foreign policy advisor to Secretary of Agriculture, Orville Freeman, and two years later, administrator of the department's International Agricultural Development Service.

In 1974, he founded Worldwatch Institute, the first research institute devoted to analyzing environmental issues on a global basis. During his time there, he launched the World Watch paper series, the Worldwatch book series, *State of the World* reports, *World Watch* magazine, and *Vital Signs: The Trends That Are Shaping Our Future*.

### **T. Boone Pickens March 29**

Called the "Oracle of Oil" for his ability to predict oil and gas prices, 80 year old T. Boone Pickens manages more than \$4 billion through his company, BP Capital. He built Mesa Petroleum into one of the largest independents from an initial investment of \$2,500, according to his book, *The First Billion Is the Hardest*. Now he's launched an ambitious, self-funded campaign to reduce America's crippling dependence on foreign oil and meet the potential threat of peak oil. Called the PickensPlan ([www.pickensplan.com](http://www.pickensplan.com)),

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he calls for major investments in renewable energy such as wind and solar as well as investments in domestic natural gas as a cleaner burning, more efficient transportation fuel. His company, Mesa Power, is planning the world's largest wind farm in the Texas Panhandle. At publishing time for *The First Billion*, he was planning an investment of \$10 billion with a wind farm stretching over five counties, Carson, Gray, Hemphill, Roberts, and Wheeler. His company, Clean Energy (CLNE), went public in 2007. According to his book, the company was fueling over 15,000 vehicles a year at 185 stations and building 20 to 40 stations a year. It was operating in 11 states as well as in Canada and Peru. Market capitalization was \$625 million.

### **Brian Greene September 29**

The Progressive Forum has also confirmed speakers for the fall of 2009. They include theoretical physicist Brian Greene on September 29, 2009, at the Wortham. He's author of the bestseller, *The Elegant Universe* which was a Pulitzer Prize finalist. It was turned into PBS *Nova* series which Greene hosted. Greene has made breakthroughs in his research on string theory science. He provides an inspiring program using a big-screen on the wonders of science and the cosmos. He's a frequent guest on *The Colbert Report* and *David Letterman*. He is founder of the annual New York City Science Festival held in June attended by 120,000 people.

The Progressive Forum is a nonpartisan, nonprofit 501(C)(3) civic speaker organization presenting five to seven events a year at The Wortham Center. It's the only civic speaker organization in the nation dedicated expressly to progressive values. Its purpose is to enrich our democracy and culture by striving to present the greatest minds

from all the fields of human endeavor, the sciences and the humanities as well as politics and public affairs, great minds it believes are advancing the success of individuals, our species, and life on the earth.

This year of 2009 marks the fourth full season of The Progressive Forum. Past speakers include Al Gore who launched *An Inconvenient Truth* at The Progressive Forum, his first U.S. book event for that title. Others have included Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. Jared Diamond, Seymour Hersh, Molly Ivins, George Soros, Edward O. Wilson, Frank Rich, Garrison Keillor, Joe Klein, Tim Flannery, Anna Deavere Smith, Gloria Steinem, James Hansen, Ken Burns, George Lakoff, Robert Redford, Bill McKibben, and Elizabeth Edwards.

All Progressive Forum events are carbon neutral through a donation from DrivingGreen.com which offsets 51 tons of greenhouse gasses per event including the speaker's air and ground transportation, venue air conditioning and power, and audience driving to and from the theater.

The Progressive Forum originated a new model in the field of public affairs in Houston to deliver a higher quality experience to much larger audiences that typically attends speaking events. The Progressive Forum operates as a performing arts company by using the finest theaters, paying speaker fees to top intellectual stars, and marketing throughout the region. It offers convenient box office services through its website allowing ticket buyers to print tickets at their computer, in addition to traditional phone sales.

The Progressive Forum premiered on June 13, 2005, with Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and Houston Mayor Bill White in a program called our "Environmental Challenges."

Founder and president, Randall R. Morton has owned Randall Morton International, Inc. for 33 years, an advertising and public relations agency whose clients have included leading oil equipment companies in the U.S., Japan, Mexico, and Europe. Morton created and hosted the Oilfield Breakfast Forum, the largest speaker platform in the oil industry whose surplus went to Houston's SEARCH Homeless Project. While earning a degree in government from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., he served as an issue writer for the Democratic National Committee.

