

RIT

Osher Lifelong
Learning Institute

Winter 2024

Lecture Series



**A Learning Community
for Adults Age 50+**
rit.edu/osher

Register: Go to our calendar (www.rit.edu/osher/calendar) then click the lecture title on the date it takes place. Click the registration form link, and fill out and submit it to get Zoom info emailed to you.

Week One: January 18
Let Our Children Soar!



Bolgen Vargas, Ed.D., Author & Former Rochester City School District (RCSD) Superintendent

Dr. Bolgen Vargas' life began in the Dominican Republic where he walked barefoot to school. On a lucky day he rode a donkey. As a teenager without any knowledge of English, he moved to New York City to join his older siblings and his mother who fiercely believed immigrating would assure her children's success. Young Bolgen would beat the odds by graduating from high school, SUNY Brockport, and the University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education. He became Superintendent of the RCSD and the Manchester, NH School Districts. His own story instilled in him the desire to help other ESL students succeed. **A book signing follows the lecture.**



Week Two: January 25
The Eclipse Is Coming! The Eclipse Is Coming!



Dan Schneiderman, Eclipse Partnerships Coordinator, Rochester Museum & Science Center (RMSC)

Dan Schneiderman is the Eclipse Partnership Coordinator at the RMSC and co-chair of the Rochester Eclipse Taskforce. He has over 10 years of experience producing STEAM-based events around Rochester and NYS. He currently sits on subcommittees for the American Astronomical Society (AAS) National Eclipse Committee and hosted the October 2022 AAS Eclipse Planning Workshop. Dan is working towards making sure that, literally, everyone under the sun has a chance to experience the 2024 total solar eclipse.



Week Three: February 1
Taking Charge of Change: The Rochester Area Community Foundation



Simeon Banister, CEO & President, Rochester Area Community Foundation (RACF)

Founded in 1972 RACF administers more than 900 permanent endowment funds created to carry out the charitable giving interests of individuals, families, and organizations. As a catalyst for community change, RACF brings passionate philanthropists together with those organizations and individuals who can most effectively restore hope, create opportunity, and improve the quality of life for others.



Week Four: February 8
It's More than a Theatre: Geva's "Sticky Connectivity"



Rachel Y. DeGuzman, Director of Engagement, Community Partnerships, & Public Curation, Geva Theatre

Geva's curatorial team works on all programming at the theatre, connecting with countless artists and organizations to commission, develop, program, and produce work across Geva's spaces and beyond. Engagement at Geva's overarching objective is to connect more people and organizations with the productions presented on the theatre's stages. Programs such as Geva *Insights*, Mondays at Geva, the Essie Calhoun Diversity in the Arts Awards, and various symposiums strengthen relationships with existing patrons and partners and help in forming new connections—the kind of sticky connectivity that endures.



Week Five: February 15

Susan B. Anthony: On the Road Again!?



Deborah L. Hughes, President & CEO, National Susan B. Anthony Museum & House

For several years the Anthony Museum & House has been planning a campus expansion that will expand the outreach and impact of Susan B. Anthony's story. With more than \$15.8 million raised for this capital project, the vision is becoming a reality. Deborah L. Hughes will share the vision, progress, and design concepts for the new interpretive center which will be transformative for the community.



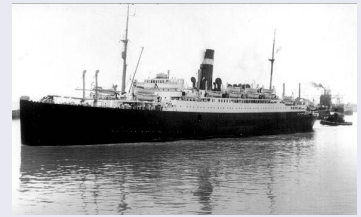
Week Six: February 22

The Sinking of the SS Athenia



Doris Adamek, Daughter of Survivor

On September 3, 1939 the first sea battle of World War II occurred when a German U-boat mistakenly sunk a British passenger ship, the SS Athenia. Rochesterian John Garland survived the sinking, and his daughter, Doris Adamek, shares her father's story based on his harrowing first-hand account of this prelude to WWII. Doris, a lifelong Rochesterian, nursed in the 50s, raised children in the 60s and 70s, and currently is a leader of innovative programs for seniors.



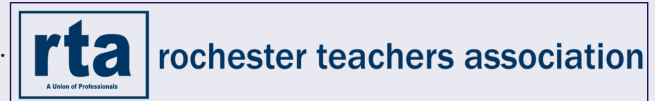
Week Seven: February 29

The Future of Urban Education



Adam Urbanski, President of the Rochester Teachers Association (RTA)

Dr. Adam Urbanski, originally from Poland, is an influential figure in American education reform. As the president of the RTA and the vice-president of the American Federation of Teachers, he has actively championed change. His initiatives include an internship program for new teachers, a peer-review plan, and a homework hotline for students. Founder of Teacher Union Reform Network and recipient of the Phi Delta Kappa Leadership in Education Award, Dr. Urbanski has served on numerous prestigious boards and appeared on various national TV programs, and his work has been featured in major publications.



Week Eight: March 7

History Co-Existing with the Present Day: Preservation Is a Responsibility for Revitalization



Wayne Goodman, Executive Director, Landmark Society of Western New York

Since 2011 Wayne Goodman has been the Society's Executive Director—only the fourth in its 74-year history. He previously was director of Indiana Landmarks' Eastern Regional Office where he made a reputation as a specialist in preservation planning and long-term partnerships. The Society is one of the nation's oldest and most active historic preservation organizations. It is a not-for-profit membership organization that serves nine western NY counties and is dedicated to helping our region's communities preserve and capitalize on their rich architectural, historical, and cultural heritage.



Week Nine: March 14

Living in Afghanistan Before and After the Taliban Takeover and Adjusting to a New Life in the US



Sadaf Kohistani, Afghan Immigrant

The fourth of six children, Sadaf Kohistani and her family moved from the countryside to Kabul for educational opportunities. As a graduate of Afghanistan's Alberoni University with a degree in English, she worked at the American-sponsored Lincoln Learning Centers of Kabul. When the Americans withdrew and the Taliban entered, the family's lives changed. She will speak about her childhood, her escape from Afghanistan, her arrival in the US, and what has happened to her family and country since the Taliban takeover.

Week Ten: March 21

Leading the Mental Health Revolution Through Support, Education, and Advocacy



Donna Leigh-Estes, Executive Director, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Rochester

The Rochester Affiliate of NAMI provides support, education, and advocacy to individuals and families of all cultural backgrounds who are living with mental illness. Through countless classes, groups, workshops, and events, NAMI provides strength, inclusivity, and companionship through community, and thus its work is invaluable in the fight for mental health. Donna Leigh-Estes' mission is to grow NAMI Rochester's connections in the community and to further the understanding that mental illness is treatable, and mental health is attainable.

