

HERSTORY WRITERS WORKSHOP, THE HUMANITIES INSTITUTE AT STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY
THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN ON LONG ISLAND & BUILDING BRIDGES IN BROOKHAVEN PRESENT



TESTIFY: MEMOIR AS A TOOL FOR BUILDING A MOVEMENT

AN AFTERNOON OF LIFTING OUR VOICES TOGETHER

dedicated in memory of hate crime victim Marcelo Lucero
on the 11th anniversary of his death

FREEDOM FORUM 2019

Saturday, November 9

Charles B. Wang Center

At Stony Brook University

12:30pm– 6:00pm



**Featured readings by Herstory writers
and a town hall-style story-shaping meeting**



**Learn about The 100 Story Project
to change hearts, minds and policies**



Partner gallery for networking and coalition building

Refreshments will be provided ♦ Admission is free

**For more information write to
contactus@herstorywriters.org**

**WHERE OUR STORIES
HAVE THE POWER
FOR CHANGE**

Freedom Forums is presented in partnership with the National Parks of New York Harbor Conservancy at Federal Hall, in a statewide initiative for which Herstory is the Long Island representative. We thank W. Krotz Enterprises, Inc. & Dathonie Pinto -Co founder of Amelia's Way for the generous sponsorship that has helped to make this event possible.

FREEDOM FORUM 2019

Finding Our Common Ground

By Susan Perretti

As the Long Island representative of a three-year-old statewide movement to use literature to examine the cracks in the liberty bell in these turbulent times, Herstory once again will be partnering with the Humanities Institute at Stony Brook University to stage an afternoon of listening, sharing, envisioning and lifting our voices together for justice, one story at a time.

Additional partnering organizations are being sought and will be announced in the weeks ahead.

This year's Long Island Forum scheduled for Saturday, November 9, is being dedicated to the memory of Marcelo Lucero - and all other victims of hate crimes - on the anniversary of Marcelo's slaying 11 years ago in Patchogue. Among the work to be featured is the story of a young immigrant who like Marcelo made a perilous journey from her homeland to secure a safer life in the United States.

Can a grassroots literature produced by members of Long Island's most vulnerable and isolated populations help to heal the deep divides in our nation? And if so, how can we best use these first-person narratives of racism, poverty, addiction, incarceration, inequality and ultimately survival, to counter recent violations of our most basic human rights and create a movement of compassion and inclusion?

These are among the urgent questions we'll be examining - writers and organizational leaders, students and members of government, human services agencies, the arts and academia - as we come together to be inspired and empowered to discover a better way for all people.

We'll hear readings of new stories by Herstory writers from Long Island's "hidden" communities as well as from those who were stirred to activism by what they have witnessed. Hearing one another's stories, we not only grow in empathy - desperately lacking in our current political climate - but gain a glimpse into the lives of people we may never have gotten to know, thus dispelling myths and stereotypes and finding our common ground.

Paralleling the work of the newly revived Poor People's Campaign, with whom Herstory hopes to partner, we help change the narrative of separation and discord prevalent in our society today by first changing the narrators themselves, giving voice to those who have been profoundly impacted by the interlocking injustices first identified by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

After listening to this year's stories, members of the audience will be encouraged to find their own Page One Moments leading to stories needing to be told during a town hall-style community story-shaping experience led by Erika Duncan and Herstory facilitators.

The event will culminate in "A Call to Action," dedicated to collective brainstorming to imagine how the stories we've heard can build bridges of understanding and unity - in educational settings, as sermons in churches, mosques and synagogues, on websites, in online publications and local media, in interactions with legislators and human service providers or to support the justice work of advocacy groups, to name a few.

The theme of this year's Freedom Forum, passed along from Federal Hall of the Harbor Conservancy, is rights; those denied, deferred and in some cases delivered, by the hard work and sacrifice of people from all walks of life.

A Message from Renee Barnes of Federal Hall

In our work at Federal Hall, we believe debate both defines and defends our democracy and Freedom Forums is at the heart of this mantra. Not many people are aware that Federal Hall in New York City was where the guiding principles of our democratic republic, including the Bill of Rights were forged and Freedom Forums brings this legacy of the site into the present by engaging with communities on societal issues that are meaningful to their lives today.

Instrumental to this is our collaboration with Herstory Writers Workshop and other New York literary organizations in a multi-region effort that allows us to share some resources, and vitally serve our communities in diverse ways as befitting the need. Although we're not a literary organization, our hope is that Freedom Forums promotes reflection, incites dialogue, and inspires writing about issues of democracy today.

Writers are vital to Freedom Forums. We engage individuals at all stages of their writing journey as long as they have a sensitivity and commitment to social justice issues. Together, we strive to present high impact programs that encourage greater civic and cultural participation and create community conversations.

For 2019-2020, Freedom Forums is themed to rights; those denied, deferred and in some cases delivered, by the hard work and sacrifice of people from all walks of life. Here, our goal is to spark a meaningful dialogue about a few of the most relevant amendments to the U.S. Constitution that feature not only in the headlines, but daily on the streets of our neighborhoods. Our intent as always with Freedom Forums is to not only look backwards, but to challenge each other to engage with determining the future.



HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
AT STONY BROOK



Stony Brook University
College of Arts and Sciences

