LEONARD PITTS JR.

Born and raised in Southern California, Pitts began writing while still a child and published his first magazine story at age 14. He entered college at 15 on a special honors program, graduating four years later with a degree in English from the University of Southern California. He spent almost the first two decades of his working life as a music critic for magazines, radio programs, and newspapers, including The Miami Herald, where, after a few years, he began writing his own column. Today millions of readers seek out that twice-weekly column, which examines the hopes, dreams, and experiences of a nation.

Called “the most insightful and inspiring columnist of his generation,” Pitts was awarded the 2004 Pulitzer Prize for commentary. He is a three-time recipient of the National Association of Black Journalists’ Award of Excellence, and was chosen as NABJ’s 2008 Journalist of the Year. The National Society of Newspaper Columnists named him its inaugural Columnist of the Year, and he has been recognized multiple times with the Atlantic City Press Club’s National Headliners Award and Society of Professional Journalists’ Green Eyeshade Award. In 2001 his column “We’ll Go Forward From This Moment,” an angry and defiant open letter to the terrorists of 9/11, circulated the globe, and has been set to music, reprinted on posters, and shared on television and radio.

In addition to his success as a columnist, Pitts is the critically acclaimed author of five books, most recently Grant Park, a compelling story about a black writer and a white editor. His nonfiction books include Becoming Dad, about black fatherhood and his own experience of growing up, and Forward From This Moment, a collection of his columns. Pitts’ 2009 novel Before I Forget, about a faded soul singer whose early onset Alzheimer’s disease reconnects him with his family, was called a “rare, memorable debut” by Publisher’s Weekly, and The Washington Post called his 2012 novel Freeman “a uniquely American epic.”

He currently makes his home in Bowie, Md., with his wife and family.
PROGRAM
Monday, Oct. 3, 2016, 8 p.m.
University of Puget Sound
Schneebeck Concert Hall

Introduction
Isiaah Crawford
President

Leonard Pitts Jr.

Questions and Answers

Reception following the lecture at Pierce Atrium in Wyatt Hall.

Please turn off all cell phones and pagers.
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The Susan Resneck Pierce Lectures in Public Affairs and the Arts series was named in honor of Susan Resneck Pierce, University of Puget Sound president from 1992 to 2003, in recognition of her years of outstanding service to the university. The lecture series annually brings to the University of Puget Sound campus and the wider community public intellectuals, writers, and artists of significant prominence.

2016—Marlon James
The Books That Made Me Write Books

2016—The Honorable Eric H. Holder Jr.
in conversation with Michael Reiss, J.D.
Principled Leadership: The Courage to Face Challenge

2015—Edwidge Danticat
Create Dangerously

Genealogy and Genetics

2014—E.J. Dionne
Our Divided Political Heart: The Battle for the American Idea in an Age of Discontent

2013—Junot Díaz
An Evening with Pulitzer Prize and New York Times Bestselling Author

2013—Wole Soyinka
Writing for Freedom

2012—Robert Reich
The Global Economy and the Future of Everything National

2012—Carlos Fuentes
From Law to Literature: A Personal Journey

2011—Kay Redfield Jamison
Minds on Fire: Mood Disorders and Creativity

2011—Spike Lee
America Through My Lens

2009—Suzan-Lori Parks
An Evening with Suzan-Lori Parks

2008—Twyla Tharp
The Creative Habit

2008—Cory Booker
An Evening with Cory Booker

2007—David Brooks
How Does Being American Shape Us?

2007—Philip Glass
An Evening with Philip Glass

2006—Cornel West
Democracy Matters

2006—Edward Albee
Improvisation and the Creative Mind

2005—Fareed Zakaria
The Future of Freedom

2005—Nina Totenberg
The Supreme Court and Its Impact on You

2004—Robert Pinsky
Poetry in the World

2004—Terry Tempest Williams
The Open Space of Democracy

2003—David Halberstam
The Children: The Unique Courage and Faith of Ordinary Citizens to Change America

2003—Anna Deavere Smith
Snapshots: Glimpses of America in Change

2002—Thomas Friedman
Global Economy and American Foreign Policy

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