



J. Robert Oppenheimer Memorial Committee

Former U.S. Ambassador to Russia Is Next JROMC Speaker



The Honorable Dr. Michael McFaul will deliver the 2018 Oppenheimer Memorial Lecture.

We are pleased to announce our speaker for 2018, Dr. Michael McFaul. He is a well-known scholar, diplomat, political commentator, and former U.S. ambassador to Russia. The date of his lecture will be announced in early 2018.

Dr. McFaul is Professor of Political Science at Stanford, Director and Senior Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, and the Peter and Helen Bing Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution. He is also an analyst for NBC News and a contributing columnist to *The Washington Post*.

Dr. McFaul was born and raised in Montana. He received his B.A. in International Relations and Slavic Languages and his M.A. in Soviet and East European Studies from Stanford University in

1986. As a Rhodes Scholar, he completed his D. Phil. in International Relations at Oxford University in 1991.

Dr. McFaul served for five years in the Obama administration, first as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Russian and Eurasian Affairs at the National Security Council at the White House (2009-2012), and then as U.S. Ambassador to the Russian Federation (2012-2014).

He has authored several books, including *Advancing Democracy Abroad: Why We Should, How We Can*; with Kathryn Stoner, *Transitions to Democracy: A Comparative Perspective*; with James Goldgeier, *Power and Purpose: American Policy toward Russia after the Cold War*; and *Russia's Unfinished Revolution: Political Change from Gorbachev to Putin*. His current research interests include American foreign policy, great power relations, and the relationship between democracy and development. (http://fsi.stanford.edu/people/michael_a_mcfaul)

Student Scholarship Reception

By Chris Hazard, Vivien Chen, Carolyn Mangeng, Alison Pugmire

In the absence of the 2017 Memorial Lecture and the traditional dinner for our guest lecturer and scholarship winners, the JROMC honored our scholarship awardees and supporters/donors at a special, one-time event entitled "Honoring Oppenheimer's Legacy." A reception was held on August 10th at Cottonwood on the Greens with light refreshments served and over 50 people participating. The event featured eleven locally renowned scientists from a variety of disciplines and areas of expertise. Nine of the eleven JROMC

scholarship winners attended, along with special guest Charles Oppenheimer, the grandson of J. Robert Oppenheimer, and his family.

The event was designed to maximize opportunities for the students to interact with our scientist speakers and learn the breadth of opportunities that lie ahead. The students were randomly assigned three different topics at designated tables. They spent thirty minutes at each table, engaging with the speakers about their work, cutting-edge research, and professional experiences. The students then rotated to a different table, allowing them to interact with multiple scientists from different disciplines.

The reception was extremely successful. Everyone in attendance, including students, donors, scientists, committee members, and special guests, enthusiastically participated and provided positive feedback. Given the overwhelming response to this special reception, the Committee is considering hosting similar events in the future.

Efforts to Clear J. Robert Oppenheimer's Name

By Mary Louise Williams

Background Information

On June 29, 1954, the Atomic Energy Commission announced its decision not to renew the security clearance of J. Robert Oppenheimer, having made an erroneous determination that he was a security risk. In 2004, Martin Sherwin and Kai Bird, authors of the Pulitzer Prize-winning book *American Prometheus: the Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer*, contacted the JROMC asking for our help in clearing Oppenheimer's name. Their careful research into the misdeeds by the AEC chair Lewis Strauss convinced us to join in this effort.

A legal remedy was first explored with the prestigious D.C. law firm Arnold & Porter. Their

pro bono study to determine the viability of a legal remedy was led by Jim Fitzpatrick, a senior partner who lives part time in Tesuque. They found little hope of a court settlement.

A legislative solution was then sought through Senator Jeff Bingaman's office. The Senator had been advocating on behalf of Oppenheimer for some years. He gave a talk in Los Alamos on June 26, 2004, entitled "Oppenheimer Reconsidered" on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Oppenheimer's birth, and had introduced Senate Resolution 321 requesting that "*the United States Government declare null and void the June 29, 1954, decision of the Atomic Energy Commission not to renew the security clearance of J. Robert Oppenheimer.*"

Sam Fowler, Chief Counsel for the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of which Bingaman was chair, alerted us that further progress would require an Executive Branch solution, specifically from the Department of Energy (successor agency to the former AEC where the decision had originated). Sam explained that his office had drafted a twenty-page request to Energy Secretary Chu, signed by Senator Bingaman. By January 2014, there was still no DOE resolution and the terms of retiring Senator Bingaman and Secretary Chu ended. However, newly elected Senator Heinrich's Outreach Director, Michael Sullivan, contacted us in early 2014 saying he wanted to continue this effort.

An executive branch solution was now the only route forward. An appeal to Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz was made through Senator Heinrich's office. We solicited letters of support from former LANL Directors, prominent researchers, Lab Fellows, and academics from around the nation. However, rather than voiding the original clearance determination, on January 18, 2017, Secretary Moniz announced a DOE pilot program that would be renamed "The Oppenheimer Science and Leadership Program" to honor "leadership qualities [that] we seek to

identify and nurture in this initiative.” Briefly revisiting the security clearance controversy, Moniz acknowledged Oppenheimer’s influence in “shaping today’s DOE and its national laboratories” with “his legacy of science serving society.”

Conclusion

Thus, the thirteen-year JROMC effort to clear Oppenheimer’s name ended with much less than hoped for. We join Martin Sherwin and Kai Bird in this disappointment but will always be grateful to them for further raising the nation’s and our appreciation of this great man, J. Robert Oppenheimer.

Doctor Atomic Is Coming!

By J. Arthur Freed

One of its most requested operas will be performed for the first time by the Santa Fe Opera during its 2018 season: a new production of John Adams’s *Doctor Atomic*, with libretto and stage direction by Peter Sellars.

The opera takes place in Los Alamos and at the Trinity Site near Alamogordo during June and July 1945 as preparations proceed for the first detonation of an atomic device.

As noted by the company, “...while the opera is set against an historical background, the true subject is moral obligation and ethical conflict.” Major figures portrayed include Robert Oppenheimer, Kitty Oppenheimer, Edward Teller, General Leslie Groves, and Robert Wilson.

The opera was first performed in 2005 by the San Francisco Opera. It has since been staged in three other cities in the United States and in Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

When Dr. Charles F. McMillan, Director of Los Alamos National Laboratory, was asked to speak at the Santa Fe Opera about *Doctor Atomic*, he concluded, “I look forward to next year’s

performance of *Doctor Atomic* here in the community we share. The opera explores themes that played here in New Mexico 75 years ago and have echoed across the world stage since. What started here changed the world. What better place for that exploration to continue?”

For current information consult the Santa Fe Opera’s website, SantaFeOpera.org.

The JROMC Invites Your Support

The JROMC is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization that was established in 1971 and is dedicated to promoting the memory and spirit of J. Robert Oppenheimer through annual lectures, scholarships, and other community activities. ***These events are funded primarily through endowments and individual contributions and would not be possible without your generosity.***

If you are interested in supporting the JROMC scholarship program, contributions may be sent to:

JROMC
P.O. Box 220
Los Alamos, NM 87544

Thank you in advance for any support you can provide. All contributions are tax deductible.

For more information on the JROMC, visit our website at www.jromc.org.

“We know that our work is rightly both an instrument and an end. A great discovery is a thing of beauty; and our faith—our binding, quiet faith—is that knowledge is good and good in itself. It is also an instrument; it is an instrument for our successors, who will use it to probe elsewhere and more deeply; it is an instrument for technology, for the practical arts and for man’s affairs. “

—J. Robert Oppenheimer