

1996 Bughouse Square Debates

Saturday, July 27, 1996

Noon to 5 p.m.



Entertainment

Noon to 1:30 p.m.

Bughouse Square poetry by La Freem Keith Ramsey

Folk music by Wayne Howard

Poetry by Ed Two Rivers

Music by Jim "Jimmy T" Tomasello

Bughouse music by Allan Schwartz

Soapbox Sessions

1:30 to 2:45 p.m.

Soapbox 1

Does American Law Service Well?

Peter Baugher

Lawyer, Schopf and Weiss

Politics: A Rustbelt Industry?

Michael Silverstein

Samuel N. Harper Professor of Anthropology, University of Chicago

How the Media Kills the Poor

Steve Sewall

Chicago Civic Media Project

Soapbox 2

Corporate Menace to Healthcare

Quentin Young

Chair, Health and Medicine Political Research Group

The Real Population Problem

Christopher Check

Executive Vice President, The Rockford Institute

To Be Announced

Eugene Pincham

Retired Illinois Appellate Court Justice

Soapbox 3

The Trouble with Republicans

Jacob Weisberg

Political Columnist, New York Magazine, and native Chicagoan

Capital Punishment—What About Mistakes???

Seymour Simon

Attorney and former Justice, Illinois Supreme Court

America's War On Drugs

Jay Miller

ACLU of Illinois

Plaque Dedication

2:45 pm

Please move to the west side of the park.

Dedication of Bughouse Square Plaque

Charles Cullen

President and Librarian, The Newberry Library

Cindy Mitchell

Mayor of Bughouse Square

Main Debate

3:15 pm

Dole: Do we Deserve him? Who Should Lead the Country?

Jacky Grimshaw

Center for Neighborhood Technologies and Political Activist

vs.

Joe Morris

Lincoln Legal Foundation



The History of Bughouse Square

by Cindy Mitchell, Mayor of Bughouse Square

Chicago's famed Bughouse Square has a history dating back to the early 1840s. In 1840, the land now occupied by Washington Square Park was the neighborhood cow pasture. Residents of the area brought their cows here early in the morning, retrieving them in the evening and taking time to chat around the communal well. In 1842, Erasmus Bushnell bought a large tract of land, including this area, for a housing development. He donated the square to the city as its second public park. The neighborhood quickly became a desirable location and the new park was surrounded by lovely mansions and row houses.

This era was shortlived, however. By 1910, the area began to attract a "bohemian element" and the mansions were soon converted to rooming houses. By 1915, the park became the premiere forum for the freedom of speech in Chicago. The famous, infamous, and fanatical came daily to the park to mount the soapboxes and try to convert whoever would listen to any of a myriad of political and philosophical theories. Emma Goldman, Ben Heineman, and Clarence Darrow were only some of the well known personages who entertained the crowd. But the favorites were often the lesser known but equally convincing silver tongued orators, such as "One Armed Charlie" who quoted the Constitution by heart, or the "Bulgarian General," the self-proclaimed world expert on Russian military strategy. Throughout the summer evenings, up till the 1950s, the great and the amateurs filled the park in celebration of the freedom of speech. Now Bughouse Square is only a memory, celebrated yearly by the Newberry Library's annual Bughouse Square Debates. The Newberry invites Chicago notables and everyone interested in today's pressing issues for spirited debate in Washington Square Park.

Our sincere thanks to the 1996 Bughouse Square Committee:

Diane Ciral, Chair

Leon Despres

Keith Goetsch

Tom Joyce

Cindy Mitchell

Terry Sullivan

Lila Weinberg

The John Nuveen Company



With support from:

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