

Evening AT THE *Square* — 2025 —

MONDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2025

THE NELSON-ATKINS MUSEUM OF ART



Welcome!

Dear Friends,

Welcome to Evening at the Square 2025! We are thrilled to have you join us for this special event.

Tonight, we are honored to present former New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu in conversation with APS National Advisory Board Member Margaret Talev. This insightful discussion promises to shed light on the current state of our nation and its path forward.

We are also pleased to recognize APS Board Member and champion, Susan Seidler Nerman, with the prestigious Founder's Civility Award for her unwavering commitment to our mission since American Public Square's inception. Additionally, we are proud to introduce the William "Bill" Kort Volunteer of the Year Award in memory of our dear friend and long-time Board Member. Bill's dedication to APS will forever be remembered as we present this inaugural award to him in memoriam.

As we celebrate more than a decade of fostering meaningful dialogue and understanding, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to our Members and sponsors. Your support is the driving force behind our ability to provide a platform to build stronger, more connected communities through civil discourse, engagement, and education.

On behalf of the APS Board of Directors, our event Co-Chairs, and the entire APS Team, thank you for sharing this night with us. Your presence and support are invaluable to our mission.

Enjoy the evening!



AMB. ALLAN J. KATZ (RET.)
Founder and Board Chair



CLAIRE BISHOP
Executive Director and CEO

About American Public Square

American Public Square builds stronger, more connected communities through civil discourse, engagement and education. We champion the ideals of a civil society—where citizens engage respectfully, collaborate on shared challenges, and pursue their aspirations with purpose.

APS works to educate, connect, and empower our community through:

IN-PERSON & VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

Featuring expert panelists who unpack the complex social, political, and economic challenges shaping our nation.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Building meaningful connections, fostering local relationships, and inspiring civic engagement.

A DIVERSE MEMBER COMMUNITY

United by a shared commitment to the common good, practicing the values that drive our mission every day.

CIVICS EDUCATION

Empowering the next generation with the skills to navigate today's fast-changing information landscape and become active, informed citizens.

OUR VALUES:

CIVILITY.

We believe being civil to one another is paramount to our shared our American identity.

FACTS.

We believe facts are foundational to collaboration and we are committed to protecting the integrity of fact-based dialogue.

HONESTY.

We value honesty, even when it's uncomfortable.

ACTION.

We believe in the individual and collective value of facing our nation's biggest challenges.

PERSPECTIVE.

We value diverse and divergent perspectives, believing that solutions are created out of the deeper understanding of each other's viewpoints.

To learn more about American Public Square programming, visit AmericanPublicSquare.org/Events.

Evening at the Square 2025

AMERICAN PUBLIC SQUARE AND EVENT CO-CHAIRS,
DAVID & CYNTHIA WESTBROOK AND FRANK LIPSMAN & JANET MARK,
WELCOME YOU TO EVENING AT THE SQUARE 2025 HOSTED AT
THE NELSON-ATKINS MUSEUM OF ART

Featured Guest

CHRIS SUNUNU
Former New Hampshire Governor

Moderator

MARGARET TALEV
Kramer Director of the Syracuse University Institute
for Democracy, Journalism and Citizenship

Founder's Civility Award

SUSAN SEIDLER NERMAN

William Kort Volunteer of the Year Award

WILLIAM "BILL" KORT
in memoriam

Co-Chairs



DAVID AND CYNTHIA
WESTBROOK



JANET MARK AND
FRANK LIPSMAN

Roving Reporter



RYAN BERNSTEN
Director of Brand and Partnerships
American Public Square

Program Emcees



ALLAN KATZ
Founder and Board Chair
American Public Square



CLAIRE BISHOP
Executive Director/CEO
American Public Square



ALANA MULLER
Senior Advisor and
Board Member
American Public Square

Musical Entertainment



THE OPUS 76 QUARTET

The Opus 76 Quartet, founded in 2017, is praised for its "old-school European elegance," "unmistakably traditional sound, expressive clarity and warmth that harkens back to the golden age of quartet playing," and "interpretive depth reminiscent of the Amadeus Quartet" (Gramophone, The Strad, Bachtrack). Hailed as one of America's top string quartets, they've earned national acclaim through performances at major festivals, broadcasts, and venues—including a 2023 Carnegie Hall debut noted as their leap from "regional excellence to national recognition" (Gramophone). Visit Opus 76 online at Opus76.org.

Special Acknowledgments

ERIN COOK BARTENDING SERVICES
HOTEL KANSAS CITY
(Alex DeChagas and Claudia Bobig-Dowdy)

J&J PRINTING
(Jim Gilroy)

LIVELY KC
(Sergei Shapoval and Logan Tritt)

THE NEIGHBORLY STUDIO
(Ryan Bernstein, Avery Kuiper,
and Nathanio Strimpopulos)

THE NELSON-ATKINS MUSEUM OF ART
(Karly Enright and Tim Harte)

THE RUSSELL

RYAN BRUCE PHOTOGRAPHY

SHOOK, HARDY & BACON L.L.P.
(Emily Bannwarth)

WYATT'S CATERING

zTRIP

Tonight's Honorees



Founder's Civility Award

SUSAN SEIDLER NERMAN

The Founder's Civility Award is intended to honor the accomplishments of a remarkable leader who has demonstrated a commitment to bringing together Kansas City's diverse community to engage in civil, fact-based dialogue.

Susan (Sue) Seidler Nerman exemplifies the spirit of civic engagement and community leadership that American Public Square celebrates. Her strong belief in the values of truth, education, and civil expression made her one of the founding Members of American Public Square, where she has served on the Board of Directors and Evening at the Square Host Committees.

Sue's leadership extends across numerous organizations that strengthen our community. She is entering her 16th year as a Trustee for the Kansas City Art Institute, is a former Board Chair, and co-chaired KCAI's \$25 million capital campaign for the campus extension completed during Covid.

Her additional philanthropic work includes serving as a Lead to Read volunteer at the Academy for Integrated Arts, and involvement with the Jewish Federation of Greater Kansas City, The Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Harvesters, and Johnson County Community College. Sue also serves as vice chair for her family business board of directors and co-leads her family foundation.

As Amb. Allan Katz (ret.), for whom the Founder's Civility Award is named, observes, "Sue gives generously of her time, talent, and treasure to causes she cares deeply about. She jumps in and intentionally seeks to make a marked difference for people and for the community." The Founder's Civility Award recognizes her embodiment of the values that make democratic discourse possible.



William Kort Volunteer of the Year Award

WILLIAM "BILL" KORT, IN MEMORIAM

Earlier this year, American Public Square lost its dear friend and long-time champion, Bill Kort. Bill's life reflected a rare combination of qualities: Service to country, professional excellence, commitment to historical memory, and a lifelong dedication to strengthening Kansas City.

To honor Bill's legacy, American Public Square has established the William Kort Volunteer of the Year Award. The award celebrates individuals and organizations whose sustained civic leadership and volunteer service embody Bill's spirit by:

- Inspiring collaboration and mobilizing others to create or sustain vital community institutions;
- Contributing time, expertise, and perspective over many years in ways that leave a lasting civic impact; and
- Carrying forward the values of service, a sense of humor, and integrity that defined Bill's life.

This year's inaugural recognition is presented, of course, to Bill Kort, in memoriam. Though he is no longer with us in person, Bill's legacy lives in spirit through this permanent award that will be presented each year at Evening at the Square, an event that was important and personal to him.

Featured Guest and Moderator



Featured Guest

GOVERNOR CHRIS SUNUNU

Christopher T. Sununu served four terms as the 82nd Governor of the State of New Hampshire, and after choosing not to seek a fifth term, he returned to the private sector in January 2025.

As one of the most popular governors in the country and host of the first-in-the-nation presidential primary, he is recognized as a national leader in his common-sense approach to government and balanced political navigation of otherwise polarized political waters.

Governor Sununu has appeared in over 1,000 nationally televised interviews, including multiple appearances on shows like The View and Real Time with Bill Maher. He has spoken to hundreds of organizations across the country, including corporations, think tanks, universities, conferences, and political organizations. Governor Sununu worked closely with both the Trump and Biden administrations.

Under his leadership, his state was ranked as one of the best states for business and growth in the United States, #1 state in the country for both personal and economic freedoms, and most notably, #1 for best return on taxpayer investment – the most efficient government in America.

Chris grew up in Salem, NH. He graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.) with a BS in Civil/Environmental Engineering in 1998. Chris completed a five-month through-hike of the Appalachian Trail from Maine to Georgia. He lives in Newfields, NH, with his wife, Valerie, and their three children.



Moderator

MARGARET TALEV

In 2023, following a 30-year career covering American politics and the White House, Margaret Talev became Kramer Director of the Syracuse University Institute for Democracy, Journalism and Citizenship. She is based in Washington, D.C.

A graduate of the University of Maryland at College Park, she served as senior White House correspondent for Bloomberg News and McClatchy Newspapers, where she won the Scripps Howard Raymond Clapper Memorial Award as part of a team that exposed the politicization of the Justice Department.

As a White House correspondent, she covered President Trump, Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign, and Barack Obama's campaigns and presidency.

She has held positions at the Los Angeles Times, the Sacramento Bee, and the Tampa Tribune. She is a past president of the White House Correspondents' Association and the Washington Press Club Foundation, and taught at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. Most recently, Talev was managing editor for politics at Axios where she is now a senior contributor. Talev is also a CNN political analyst and serves on the American Public Square National Steering Committee.

Thank You, Sponsors!

PRESENTING SPONSORS

McDonnell Foundation
Susan Seidler Nerman
Lee & Christy Smith³
David & Cynthia Westbrook³
Jack and Glenna Wylie Foundation

PRESENTING PARTNER

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

PLATINUM SPONSORS

Michelle Bartlett³
DeBruce Foundation
Lewis Nerman²
Stacy & William Pratt
Leslie M. Westbrook & Paolo Frigerio

GOLD SPONSORS

545 Group at Morgan Stanley Private
Wealth Management²
Bud & Jennifer Bacon
Ann Baum – Kenneth G. and Ann Baum
Philanthropic Fund
Cathi & David Brain
Creative Planning Foundation
Cunningham Mendolia Tuteria Family²
Dentons US LLP
ECCO Select³
Enterprise Bank & Trust
Peter Gattermeir
Health Forward Foundation
Irv & Ellen Hockaday⁵
Jenny & John Isenberg
Jackson County Legislator Manny Abarca IV –
1st District
Jackson County Legislator DaRon McGee –
4th District (Legislative Chairman)
Howard & Ro Jacobson, Richard & Alix
Jacobson, Sherri & Jonathan Jacobs²

GOLD SPONSORS (CONTINUED)

Amb. Allan J. Katz (ret.) & Nancy Cohn³
Ward & Donna Katz
Kemper Family Foundations
The William Kort Family¹
Jan & Tom Kreamer
Frank Lipsman & Janet Mark⁴
John & Diane Phillips
Jim and Becky Pruett
Fred and Jami Pryor Foundation⁵
Resurrection, A United Methodist Church
Rubin, Turnbull & Associates Inc.³
The Seidler Foundation²
Shook, Hardy & Bacon, L.L.P.
Anonymous³

SILVER SPONSORS

Evelyn & Dick Belger
Mary & Tom Bloch⁵
City of Kansas City, Missouri
Katherine DeBruce
Joseph L. Falk³
Judge Jon Gray (ret.) & Dr. Valerie Chow, M.D.
Nancy & Rick Green
The Guerin and Jacob Family
Rev. Adam & LaVon Hamilton
Jill Ingram Reynolds¹
Howard Lubow
Lynne & Mark O’Connell
Ann & Bob Regnier
Ray Smith’s Posse
Kent Sunderland Charitable Fund⁵
Swope Health
University of Saint Mary
Jerry White & Cyprienne Simchowitz

Sponsor listing as of November 30, 2025
1 Denotes gift in memory of Bill Kort

2 Denotes gift in honor of Susan Seidler Nerman
3 Denotes gift in honor of Amb. Allan J. Katz Internship Fund

BRONZE SPONSORS

Sarah & Jon Baum
Christopher Beal & Tim Van Zandt¹
Irv Belzer & Sue McCord Belzer⁴
Dr. Loren & Marilyn Berenbom⁴
Berkowitz Oliver LLP
Ryan Bernsten & Chad Staatz
Leonard and Irene Bettinger Philanthropic Fund⁴
Claire & Denton Bishop
Phil Blank³
Blue KC
Stevi & Jeffrey Brick
Pete Browne & Julie Walker Browne¹
Herb & Bonnie Buchbinder⁴
Pati Chasnoff
Bunni & Paul Copaken
Rebecca & Harper Coulson
Peggy & Terry Dunn
Sandi & Ed Fried⁴
Bill & Christy Gautreaux
George Family Fund⁵
Mike Gerken & Debra Schmidt Gerken
Dr. Wayne & Sue Giles
Donna Gould Cohen⁵
Pam & Gary Gradinger^{1 2}
Dr. Allen and Mrs. Gail Gutovitz^{1 4}
Joe & Cathy Hiersteiner
Liz & John Hjalmarson¹
Sharon & John Hoffman
Jack & Karen Holland
Howe Street Group
Husch Blackwell LLP
Kay Johnson & Bill Koenigsdorf
Linda & Topper Johntz, Jr.¹
Ronald & Nancy Jones⁵
Mary & Mark Jorgenson⁵
Harvey & Michele Kaplan
Marli Klumb
Rachel Krantz & Edward Goldstein⁴

4 Denotes philanthropic funds from the Jewish Community
Foundation of Greater Kansas City

BRONZE SPONSORS (CONTINUED)

Benny & Edith Lee
Beth & Michael Liss
Cathy & Terry Matlack
Tricia & Josh Maxfield
Vicky & Howard Mayer⁴
Alana Muller & Marc Hammer^{3 4}
Charlene & Max Muller^{1 3}
Joyce & Dee Pack
Pishkesh Market
Mary & Terry Putney
Patty & Jerry Reece¹
Rosanne & Howard Rosen
Rowland Family Fund of the Douglas County
Community Foundation²
Lisa & Charles Schellhorn
Lynn Schweig¹
Juliette Singer & Ian Spinks^{1 5}
Deborah Smith & Dr. Mark Myron¹
Betsey & Rick Solberg
Charlie & Jeanne Sosland²
Susan Stanton
Benjamin & Jessica Stone¹
Michele & Jim Stowers
Jeannine Strandjord
Howard Trilling
Lynne & Carl Weilert¹
Marie Woodbury & Dan Claiborn
Dr. and Mrs. John Yungmeyer¹
Karl & Beth Zobrist
Anonymous¹

IN-KIND SPONSORS

Hotel Kansas City
zTrip

SPECIAL EVENT HOSTS

Irv Belzer & Sue McCord Belzer
Benny & Edith Lee
Shook, Hardy & Bacon, L.L.P.

5 Denotes philanthropic funds from the Greater Kansas City
Community Foundation

American Public Square Leadership and Staff

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Amb. Allan J. Katz (ret.), Chairman	Rev. Adam Hamilton	Sue Seidler Nerman
Azzie Amani-Taleshi	Larry Jacob	Greg Orman
Rebecca Coulson	Mary Jorgenson	Bill Pratt
McClain Bryant-Macklin	Ward Katz	Mary Sanchez
Esther George	Regina Kort	Shaun Stallworth
Judge Jon R. Gray (ret.)	Tom McDonnell	Jamila Weaver
	Alana Muller	

NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

Sally Bradshaw, business owner and conservative political advisor
Jason Kander, former Missouri Secretary of State, veterans advocate
Kevin Madden, political and campaign strategist
Colleen Nelson, journalism executive
Terry Nelson, campaign and media strategy expert
Deval Patrick, former Governor of Massachusetts
Jean Peters-Baker, former Jackson County Prosecutor, attorney, and Kansas City community leader
Ron Sachs, communicator, strategist, journalist, author, and founder of Sachs Media
Margaret Talev, veteran journalist and professor

STAFF

Claire Bishop, Executive Director and CEO
Tricia Maxfield, Program Director
Ryan Bernsten, Director of Brand & Partnerships
Erinn Skepnek, Operations Manager
Maleah Grigsby, Event Production Coordinator
Carolyn Franano, Civic Education Fellow
Brighton Wolverton, Intern, William Jewell College – Political Science Major
Alyssa Engle, Intern, William Jewell College – Oxbridge Institutions and Policy, International Relations
Elliott Labeth, Intern, William Jewell International Student & Athlete (France) – Political Sciences and International Relations

Our 2026 Season

Evening at the Square serves as a launch point for American Public Square's ambitious 2026 season! Visit americanpublicsquare.org/events to learn more and mark your calendars for a monumental program lineup which will explore topics such as affordability, immigration and I.C.E., and the legacy of the Declaration of Independence, culminating in APS's first-ever national conference exploring the future of the Democratic and Republican Parties.

Our Members will continue to have access to exclusive VIP receptions, author talks, Members-only dinners, and new opportunities such as our new monthly Book Club with Rainy Day Books and a chance to join our annual trip to Portugal led by our founder, Ambassador Allan Katz.

APS Membership

WHY BECOME A MEMBER?

American Public Square Members join a community that finds value in engaging in fact-based, civil discourse about issues important to American communities. Membership directly supports APS's efforts to offer free programming showcasing fact-based insights and exposure to diverse and divergent perspectives.

Ready to join or renew?

Buy a Membership today and you get to gift another Membership to a friend for free!

Already a Member?

We'd be so grateful for a tax-deductible contribution to support free student Memberships for local high schoolers through our Civics Education Program.

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

Is your organization interested in supporting the mission of American Public Square? Corporate Members receive annual Memberships for their staff, access to Members-Only programs, and special branding opportunities on our digital and print marketing materials. To learn more, please contact APS Director of Brand & Partnerships, Ryan Bernsten at ryan@americanpublicsquare.org.



Join today at americanpublicsquare.org/membership or use your smart phone to scan the QR code.



American
Public
Square

THE OFFICES AT PARK 39
300 E. 39TH STREET, #2S
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI 64111
(816) 601-1001
AMERICANPUBLICSQUARE.ORG