

## MELIORA WEEKEND 2018

# Set Your Calendar for Meliora Weekend

Award-winning journalists, authors, analysts, and musicians headline the lineup for Meliora Weekend 2018.

By Kristine Thompson

Soledad O'Brien, award-winning journalist, speaker, and author, will be the keynote speaker for Meliora Weekend, one of several acclaimed guests scheduled for the 18th edition of the four-day celebration in October.

O'Brien headlines a lineup that includes Pulitzer Prize-winning author Ron Chernow, former Republican National Committee Chair Michael Steele, comedian Nasim Pedrad, and the genre-hopping musical ensemble Pink Martini.

The weekend kicks off Thursday, October 4, and continues through Sunday, October 7.

"Over the last three years, we have redesigned Meliora Weekend to make it more fun and social while keeping true to the academic and intellectual traditions that in many ways define the University of Rochester," says Thomas Farrell '88, '90W (MS), senior vice president for University Advancement.

## University Symposium

### Ron Chernow

Friday, October 5

Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Alexander Hamilton*, Chernow will talk about *Grant*, his *New York Times* best-selling biography of President Ulysses S. Grant. The book is the latest of his biographies of pivotal people and families in American history. His life of founding statesman Alexander Hamilton inspired the Tony Award-winning musical *Hamilton*. A frequent contributor to the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, he received a Pulitzer Prize for *Washington: A Life*, his biography of George Washington.

## Eastman Presents

### Pink Martini

Friday, October 5

Drawing inspiration from music from all over the world and crossing genres of classical, jazz, and old-fashioned pop, Pink Martini features a dozen musicians who perform a multilingual repertoire.

## Keynote

### Soledad O'Brien

Saturday, October 6

As CEO of Starfish Media Group, a multiplatform media production

**KEYNOTE CAREER:** Television anchor, producer, and writer Soledad O'Brien, who is also the CEO of her own multiplatform media company, will deliver the keynote address at this year's Meliora Weekend in October.

company, O'Brien is known for telling stories about pressing social and global issues. She also anchors and produces the Hearst Television political magazine program *Matter of Fact with Soledad O'Brien* and reports regularly for HBO's *Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel* and *PBS NewsHour*.

In addition to appearing as an anchor or contributor on major networks, she is philanthropy editor of *Worth* magazine, and is a frequent author of op-eds for the *New York Daily News* and the *Huffington Post*. She is also the author of two books: her memoir, *The Next Big Story*, and *Latino in America*. In 2011, O'Brien and her husband, Brad Raymond, created the PowHERful Foundation, an organization to help young women get to and through college.

## Conversations

### Michael Steele

Saturday, October 6


When he was elected lieutenant governor of Maryland in 2003, Steele made history as the first African American elected to statewide office. He made history again in 2009 with his chairmanship of the Republican National Committee. Currently, Steele is president and CEO of The Steele Group, cohost of the *Steele & Ungar* radio show, and a political commentator

for MSNBC. He has been a frequent contributor on the Fox News Channel and a guest on *Meet the Press* and *Face the Nation*, among other news programs. His writing on law, business, and politics has appeared in such major media outlets as the *Wall Street Journal*, *Politico.com*, and *BET.com*.

## Comedy

### Nasim Pedrad

Saturday, October 6

Nasim Pedrad, best known for her work on *Saturday Night Live*, will provide the laughs during an interactive comedy show. Joining *SNL* in 2009, Pedrad was a cast member for five years. Her recent television credits include appearances on the FOX series *New Girl*, TBS's *People of Earth*, and the 2017 return of HBO's comedy *Curb Your Enthusiasm*. She is now filming Disney's live action remake of *Aladdin*, set to hit theaters in 2019. 

## Get Ready to Register

Registration will begin at noon on Wednesday, July 25. For more, visit [Rochester.edu/melioraweekend](http://Rochester.edu/melioraweekend). Email [alumni@rochester.edu](mailto:alumni@rochester.edu) or call 877.MELIORA (877.635.4672). The website will be updated as more information about guests and other programming becomes available.





**HISTORIC FIGURES:** Author Ron Chernow, whose work has included biographies of Ulysses S. Grant, George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, and other pivotal American figures and families, will be the guest for this fall's University Symposium.



**MEDIA MOVERS:** Michael Steele, the first African American to chair the Republican National Committee and now a nationally syndicated political commentator, will be a featured speaker as part of the weekend's events.

**MUSIC & LAUGHTER:** The genre-hopping musical ensemble Pink Martini (above), whose repertoire crosses jazz, classical, and pop music, will headline the annual Eastman Presents concert, and *Saturday Night Live* alumna Nasim Pedrad (below) will present an interactive comedy show during the weekend.

