

**P.L.A.Y.**  
(Performance = Literature + Art + You)  
**Student Matinee Series**



**By Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee**  
**Directed by Skip Greer**

**Sponsored by**

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**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**  
**ST. JOHN FISHER COLLEGE**

Student Matinee  
2005-2006



**SEASON**

# Dear Educators,

When I discovered that Geva was producing *Inherit the Wind* I quickly picked up the script and reread the play. I had first read it when I was in high school. What I remembered most about the play was how quickly I found myself engaged in the story, transported to 1925 and riveted by every word of Drummond's and Bryan's courtroom speeches. Overall, I remembered *Inherit the Wind* as a thrilling debate of creation versus evolution. What I have learned in revisiting the play this spring is that it encompasses all of those elements and so much more.

Watching the play a few weeks ago, it spoke to me in an entirely different way. Suddenly the issues of science and religion fell into the background as other questions began to fill my mind. Why do I believe what I believe? How does the world around me influence those decisions? How do I stay committed to my beliefs while remaining open to the beliefs of others? *Inherit the Wind* has stood the test of time by exploring universal themes and by encouraging us to ask questions that have no clear answers.

We are thrilled to be offering *Inherit the Wind* to our student matinee audiences. This spring Geva's artist educators will visit over 2,500 students in classroom workshops to discuss the play, and over 5,000 students will join us to attend this production. We hope that the information provided in this guide will enrich your work in the classroom both before and after the performance. Included are a variety of resources that provide background information on the play as well as Geva's concept for this production. For questions about *Inherit the Wind* or any other Student Matinee program, please contact me directly at 232-1366, ext. 3058, or email [astoner@gevatheatre.org](mailto:astoner@gevatheatre.org).

We look forward to seeing you at the theatre.



Andrea Stoner  
Associate Director of Education



*Photo of Geva's production of Inherit the Wind with J.G. Hertzler as Henry Drummond, David Silberman as the Judge and John Pribyl as Matthew Harrison Brady. Photo by Ken A. Huth.*

*"Tell 'em, if they let my body out of jail,  
I'll lock up my mind?"*

Bertram Cates

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## Cast of Characters

Henry Drummond

Matthew Harrison Brady

E.K. Hornbeck

Rachel Brown

Bertram Cates

Sarah Brady

Judge

Mr. Meeker

George Sillars

Reverend Jeremiah Brown

Howard Krebs

Melinda Davenport

Mayor

Tom Davenport

Jesse H. Dunlap

Elijah

Mrs. Krebs

Jacob Bannister

Organ-Grinder

Junior

Mrs. McClain

Photographer

Phil

Esterbrook

Adela Cameron

## Synopsis

On a hot summer day in 1925, we meet the community of Hillsboro as they prepare for the arrival of Matthew Harrison Brady. A popular **orator** and **fundamentalist**, Brady has volunteered to serve as the prosecuting attorney in the trial of Bertram Cates, a biology teacher who has been arrested for teaching **evolution** in his sophomore science class. The people of Hillsboro expect that Brady's visit will put their small town on the map by bringing a great deal of attention to the trial.

E.K. Hornbeck, a newspaper reporter from Baltimore, is the first to arrive and announces that Henry Drummond is on his way to Hillsboro to lead the defense. Drummond, another powerful orator, is known for his success as a lawyer, his firm belief in science and his fight for the rights of the individual. Knowing the trial will be a clash of the titans, the community welcomes Brady showing their support for his cause as they prepare to become tomorrow's front page news story.

Meanwhile Bert's fiancée, Rachel Brown, struggles between both sides of the issue. Concerned that Bert will go to jail, she urges him to admit that he's wrong. As the daughter of Reverend Brown, the community's spiritual leader, she is confused by Bert's beliefs and hopes that the trial will end before it even begins. Bert, compelled to plead his case, explains his reasons for standing by his decision.

Henry Drummond arrives and the community packs into the Hillsboro courtroom. The jury is selected and the trial begins. Over the next 12 days the two great minds collide under the watchful eye of the townspeople. The outcome brings Hillsboro and the rest of the country to a new understanding of the issues at hand, and to an increased awareness of the changing world around them.

What is being suggested by the telephone pole on the set?

**Set model of Inherit the Wind; courtesy of scenic designer Erhard Rom.**



**Orator:** A skilled public speaker.

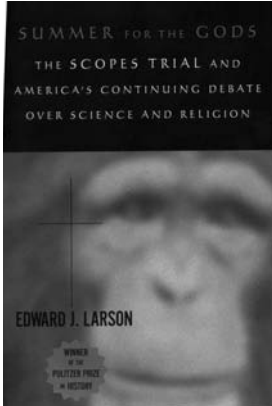
**Fundamentalist:** Belief of a literal interpretation of the Bible.

**Evolution:** In 1859 Charles Darwin published his book *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*. The book explained his theory that groups of organisms, as species, changed over time. Even though the changes from one generation to the next may be minimal, over many years it was possible for a species to change significantly. Darwin believed that those changes or adaptations that enabled a species to better survive would be passed on to succeeding generations. Adaptations that made a species more vulnerable would disappear as those who developed such weaknesses would fail to survive or produce descendants. Darwin called this process "natural selection."

*"He that troubleth his own house... shall inherit the wind."*

Matthew Harrison Brady quoting Proverbs 11:29

## Fact and Fiction



**Special Event! As a part of Geva's Theatre Insights lecture series, Edward J. Larson (Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Summer for the Gods*) will compare the dramatization of the court case with the actual events of the 1925 Scopes trial in Dayton, Tennessee. Mr. Larson will be presenting an encore lecture for educators on Thursday, March 23 at 4 pm. Please contact Stephen Bewlay at 232-1366, ext. 3035, for more information.**

*Inherit the Wind* is loosely based on the Scopes trial of 1925. The script opens with the following introduction from playwrights Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee:

*"Inherit the Wind is not history. The events which took place in Dayton, Tennessee, during the scorching July of 1925 are clearly the genesis of this play. It has, however, an exodus entirely its own."*

In taking a close look at the events that took place in 1925, we can see why the Scopes trial lent itself so well to dramatic interpretation. Because the play and its film adaptation are so well known, it becomes easy to confuse fact with fiction.

### The Law That Started it All

In the spring of 1925, Tennessee passed the Butler Act. The law stated that "it shall be unlawful for any teacher in any of the Universities, Normals, and all other public schools of the State which are supported in whole or in part by the public school funds of the State, to teach any theory that denies the story of the Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man has descended from a lower order of animals." Tennessee was the first state to pass such a law, but it was a subject that had been widely discussed in a number of state legislatures.

### Setting the Stage in Dayton

When the Tennessee legislature passed the Butler Act, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) – then a relatively new organization – was eager to put the law to the test. The ACLU was not interested in a debate between science and religion, however. Their focus was the defense of individual rights. They placed advertisements in every Tennessee newspaper offering to pay the court costs for anyone willing to be part of a test trial – a case that essentially was meant to test the constitutionality of the law itself. At the time Dayton, Tennessee was a town that had fallen on hard times and saw the trial as an opportunity to boost itself economically.

### Casting the Role

John Scopes was the town's high school football coach and substitute biology teacher. Dayton's town leaders, including school board president Fred Robinson (owner of the drugstore that served as a watering hole and informal gathering place), asked Scopes if he had used the standard textbook, *Hunter's Civic Biology* in his teaching. Scopes had. Then they asked Scopes if he would be willing to let himself be arrested and be the defendant in a trial that would test the new law. Again, Scopes said yes. After all, it would be good for the town. Little did any of them realize a firestorm was about to erupt.

### Where Fact Meets Fiction

In 1955 Lawrence and Lee transformed John Scopes into Bert Cates, a biology teacher persecuted for his views, and moved the trial to

**Who should get to decide what you are taught in school? What would you include in the curriculum for your school? What would you exclude and why?**

*"What're yuh skeered of? You was a worm once!"*

Howard Krebs

**The play is set in 1925. How is our world different today with the impact of the sometimes instant news media available 24 hours a day? What other trials were considered trials of the century?**

Hillsboro, Tennessee. They also created the character of Rachel, his fiancée, and gave her the difficult task of being torn between her feelings for Cates and the beliefs of her father, the spiritual leader of the community. The characters of Henry Drummond and Matthew Harrison Brady, on the other hand, are carefully drawn to closely resemble the two powerful figures of Clarence Darrow and William Jennings Bryan. In fact, Lawrence and Lee quote text from the trial in the play for some of Drummond's and Brady's speeches. Lawrence and Lee also borrowed from history when they put Matthew Harrison Brady on the witness stand. Darrow really did ask Bryan to testify in what still stands as one of the most famous courtroom events in history.

Though the events have been simplified and manipulated for the sake of dramatic interpretation, the essential questions of the Scopes trial and of Lawrence and Lee's dramatization are the same: questions of fundamentalism versus modernism, of the rights of the individual versus the rule of the majority. They were meaningful to the townspeople of Dayton in 1925; they were meaningful to the audiences who first saw *Inherit the Wind* in 1955 and they are meaningful to us as we read the headlines in Rochester in 2006.

## America in the 1920s

America in the 1920s was anything but a **monolithic** culture. We had just come out of a brutal and costly world war, yet the promised sense of world peace had not been secured. Warren G. Harding, elected in 1920, could not have been more different than his stoic and idealistic predecessor Woodrow Wilson. Upon his election, Harding said that "America's present need is not heroics but healing; not **nostrums** but normalcy; not revolution but restoration; not surgery but serenity." It was the age of Freud and Einstein, of F. Scott Fitzgerald and **flappers** – at least in the cities. Radio broadcasting exploded and in 1924, 2.5 million American households had a radio (compared with mere hundreds just five years earlier). **Prohibition** was the law of the land, but in the urban **speakeasies** and clubs, the jazz age was born. Small town America, however, remained largely untouched by these cultural and technological influences, and the economics of agriculture, textiles and mining never recovered from the technological downturn of 1920-21.

In American religious life, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the beginning of the split between fundamentalists and modernists. Put simply, fundamentalists were those who believed in a literal reading of the Bible and who believed that moral absolutes of right and wrong were handed down directly by God. Modernists, on the other hand, viewed the Bible as instructive by metaphor and through literary interpretation, and believed that spiritual redemption was a personal journey. The division between fundamentalism and modernism, and between big city and small town America was **palpable**, and those **schisms** played a role in the actual trial and in Lawrence and Lee's dramatization.

**Monolithic:** *Massive uniform and unchanging.*

**Nostrum:** *A medicine of doubtful effectiveness and often secret ingredients; a quack remedy.*

**Flappers:** *Young women of the 1920s who did not follow conventional dress or behavior.*

**Prohibition:** *A period of time between 1920 and 1933 during which a ban on the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages was in effect in the United States.*

**Speakeasies:** *A place for the illegal sale of alcoholic drinks, especially during Prohibition.*

**Palpable:** *Obvious*

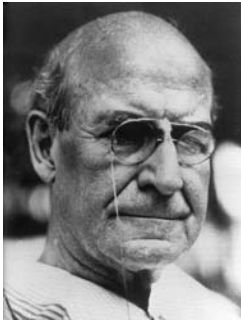
**Schisms:** *A separation or division into opposing groups.*

**What other historic events have inspired plays? What historical or current events do you think would make good stage plays?**

*"Why can't you be on the right side of things?"*

Rachel Brown

## Who's Who



**William Jennings Bryan** (1860-1925) Born and raised in the Midwest, Bryan attended Illinois College and then studied at Union College of Law in Chicago. He went on to represent the

state of Nebraska in the U.S. House of Representatives for two terms and also ran three times (unsuccessfully) as the Democratic nominee for president. Although Bryan was a well known religious fundamentalist, he was also a liberal democrat who fought for women's suffrage and the rights of the working man. Though he was unsuccessful in his bid for president, he was extraordinarily popular with the American people who hailed Bryan as "the Great Commoner."



**H.L. Mencken** (1880 - 1956) Mencken, a nationally syndicated columnist for *The Baltimore Sun*, traveled to Dayton to record his impressions of the trial. He made no

secret of his likes and dislikes and was well known for his sharp wit. Mencken coined the phrases "Monkey Trial" and "Bible Belt" in his coverage of the trial. He also authored many books, his most famous being *The American Language* in 1919.

**Clarence Darrow** (1857 - 1938) Darrow was born in Kinsman, Ohio and attended Allegheny College for one year before moving on to study at the University of Michigan Law

School. Darrow was America's leading defense attorney at the time of the Scopes trial. He campaigned for Bryan during his first presidency but soon after the two went their separate ways. Bryan believed in the majority rule and Darrow was an unshakable believer in the rights of the individual. Darrow was also a noted agnostic. In addition to the Scopes trial, Darrow is also known for winning two life sentences (rather than the death penalty) for Leopold and Loeb, two teenage murderers, in Chicago in 1924.



**John Scopes** (1901-1970) Scopes moved to Dayton in 1924 where he took a job as the High School's football coach and also served as a substitute teacher. Scopes was approached by leaders in the community

to answer a newspaper ad placed by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). The ACLU was looking for someone who would serve as the defendant in a test case challenging the constitutionality of the Butler Act which had recently been passed by the state legislature. Scopes agreed and soon became front page news across the country. He wrote an autobiography in 1967 called *Center of the Storm: Memoirs of John T. Scopes*.



**What is the difference between a moral and an ethical debate?**

**What current issues are argued in our society? Where do you think each of these real life people would fall?**

*"Can you buy back his respectability by making him a coward?"*

Henry Drummond

## After the Trial

**Lawrence and Lee wrote *Inherit the Wind* to combat McCarthyism in the 1950s as did Arthur Miller in his play *The Crucible* set during the Salem Witch trials. Why did these playwrights choose different historical settings to explore the same political issue?**

Upon completion of the Scopes trial, Clarence Darrow and the ACLU immediately filed an appeal with the Tennessee Supreme Court. The court overturned the conviction on a technicality (the judge imposed the sentence, not the jury). The Butler law, however, remained on the books until the late 1960s. Darrow spent the remainder of his years in semi-retirement from courtrooms although he did remain a prolific writer, lecturer and debater until his death in 1938 at age 81. He is still considered one of the greatest legal minds in American history.

William Jennings Bryan, met with a much quicker fate. He died just a few days after the trial's conclusion. Some believed that the stressful trial played a role in his death. Others point out that he had been a diabetic in ill health for some time. Bryan's death was met with great public sadness as he had long been considered a champion of common people.

John Scopes left Dayton immediately after the trial. He accepted a scholarship offer from the University of Chicago and received a Master's degree in geology. He moved to Venezuela to work for Gulf Oil, eventually returning to the University of Chicago to work on a Ph.D. but was refused a fellowship due to his continued belief in evolution. He returned to the oil industry until his retirement in 1963. Scopes passed away in October 1970.

Although the Scopes trial ended in 1925, the reverberations have been a point of discussion ever since – and *Inherit the Wind* allows us to continue the conversation. The case, and the play, have often been overshadowed by the inherent friction between science and religion. This debate often seems never – ending and continues on to this day. Some turn to faith to seek guidance in bridging this gap – many believing in a fundamentalist understanding of the Bible. Some take an approach more rooted in modernism, seeing the Bible as something open to many interpretations. There are still others who dismiss the Bible entirely. This leads us to enduring debates about the rights of the individual and his responsibilities to the majority, the tensions between personal freedom and public good. There are questions of morals and ethics, subjective concepts to be sure. Who decides what is moral? Whose definition of ethical? Then, as now, the several sides often seemed incompatible – making discussions of them as important today as they were over 80 years ago in Dayton, Tennessee.



**Photo of the jurors being sworn in at the Scopes “monkey” trial in 1925.**

**What do you think happened to all the characters after *Inherit the Wind*? Did Rachel and Bert get married? What did Mrs. Brady end up doing? Where did Henry Drummond travel to next? What happened to the town of Hillsboro?**

*“I’m not sure. Did I win or did I lose?”*

Bertram Cates

## Interview with the Director, Skip Greer



**Skip Greer serves as the Director of Education and the Artist in Residence at Geva Theatre Center. Skip played the ghost in last season's performance of *Hamlet*.**

*Can you tell us about your concept and why you decided to use the Rochester community as jurors for this production?*

The reason I wanted to do *Inherit the Wind* was born of a desire to stand side by side with others and discuss complex, meaningful, philosophical issues. My hope is that we are able to transform our theatre into a kind of town hall to accomplish just that. To encourage that conversation, we decided to use members of the Rochester community as jurors in the play. I hope having them on stage with us, and the actors in the house with the audience, will spur conversations. I believe we must learn to argue for each other, side by side, instead of going toe to toe.

*What types of research did you need to do to prepare for directing this play?*

Because the play is based loosely on the Scopes trial, I found it important to understand the details of the actual events and the people involved. I found it just as important, after learning the history, to let the history go, and work on the play that Lawrence and Lee have left us. The history is informative, but can get in the way of the drama. (Example? Bertram Cates is persecuted in the play; John Scopes was not. He volunteered to be arrested and put on trial.) I read books on Darrow, Bryan and the trial. The transcripts were also very useful. I watched footage from the trial and listened to the voices of Bryan and Darrow. I also studied Darwin, Creationism and Intelligent Design to get an understanding of the current dialogue today.

*There is a combination of live and recorded music in this production. Can you tell us about those choices?*

I felt it was vital to have live music to reflect the passion of the church community in Hillsboro. We also wanted to use some of the recorded music that was written in 1925 about the trial. Other music in the show helps us to put a human face on this epic American classic.

*What have you enjoyed most about this process?*

What I have enjoyed most has also surprised me the most. I have reexamined my own faith, and reconnected with my own ideas about who we are, where we come from and where we are going. I've found this invigorating. In the play Drummond says to Cates "Tomorrow it'll be something else – and another fella will have to stand up. And you've helped the next fella." I feel like we are "helping the next fella" by doing *Inherit the Wind*.

**What are the key elements necessary in courtroom drama? Why have they remained so popular over the years?**

*"If the enemy sends its Goliath into battle,  
it magnifies our cause."*

Matthew Harrison Brady

## About This Production

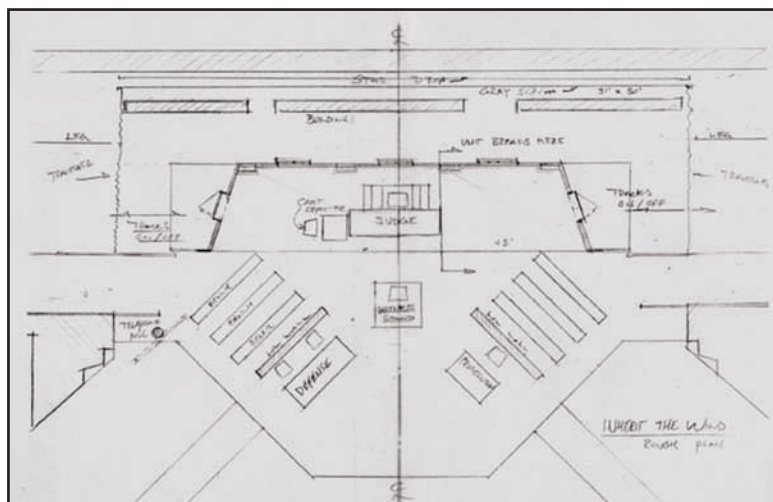
As we worked on Geva Theatre Center's production of *Inherit the Wind*, there were some central images and ideas that formed the foundation of our collaboration and influenced our design decisions. One was the image of community. We hope that you will feel that you are a part of the community that is wrestling with the questions in the play. We have even asked people from the Rochester community to join us as jurors on the set, and the set has been designed in a way that blurs the lines between audience and performers.



**Picture of downtown Dayton clothier J.R. Darwin storefront. The owner took advantage of his last name to attract customers to his shop with banners and signs saying "Darwin's Big Sale" and "Darwin is right inside." He joked that his clothes were the fittest, a play on the concept of the survival of the fittest underlying Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution.**

**Which side of the evolutionary debate do you think the play lands on? Which side do you land on?**

A central visual image is the sky full of stars that twinkle above the town in our set. As we began rehearsals, director Skip Greer asked us all to remember a time when we stood in a dark field and looked up at the stars in the sky. Can you picture it? When you look up at that dazzling night sky, do you see God . . . or do you see science . . . or do you see both? And does what you see up there begin with whatever you carried in your heart when you stepped onto that field? When you look up, are you searching inward? And how does what you see in the night sky affect what you carry in your heart as you walk away? When you leave the theatre after tonight, will you be the same person who walked in just a few hours earlier, or will you view the world a little differently?



**Floor plan of the trial for *Inherit the Wind*; courtesy of Erhard Rom.**

**"Ahhhh, Hillsboro - heavenly Hillsboro  
The buckle on the Bible belt."**

**E.K. Hornbeck**

## Glossary of Terms

**Repast** - *A meal or the food eaten or provided at a meal.*

**Venireman** - *A person summoned to be a potential juror.*

**Heretic** - *A person who holds beliefs or opinions that are different from the accepted beliefs or opinions of a church or a political party.*



**Photo of Geva's *Inherit the Wind* production with J.G. Hertzler as Henry Drummond and John Pribyl as Matthew Brady. Photo by Ken A. Huth.**

**Agnostic** - *One who believes that it is impossible to know whether there is or is not a God.*

**Atheist** - *One who disbelieves or denies the existence of God or gods.*

**Chautauqua** - *An institution in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries providing popular education combined with entertainment in the forms of lectures, concerts and plays often presented outdoors or in a tent.*

**Pariah** - *A person who has been excluded from society; an outcast.*

**Fanaticism** - *Unreasonable or excessive enthusiasm or devotion.*

**Howard, a young boy, is called to the witness stand to testify against his teacher. How would you react in his position?**

## Tell Us What You Think

We love to get letters from students about the plays they see at Geva. Tell us what you thought of the play, the production, the direction, the acting. Send your letters to Andrea Stoner, Associate Director of Education, c/o Geva Theatre, 75 Woodbury Boulevard, Rochester, NY 14607 or email them to [astoner@gevatheatre.org](mailto:astoner@gevatheatre.org).

- How did the production elements – lights, costumes, set and sound – support or detract from the play? What would you have done differently? Why?
- What was useful in this Study Guide? Did any of this guide help you understand or enjoy the play?
- Did you have a favorite scene or moment in the play? Which was it and why?
- In your opinion, what is *Inherit the Wind* about? Would you recommend it to someone who hasn't seen it?

*“Which is hungrier - my stomach or my soul?”*

E.K. Hornbeck

## Resources

### Staff

**Skip Greer**  
Director of  
Education/Artist  
in Residence

**Andrea Stoner**  
Associate Director  
of Education

**Stephen Bewlay**  
Education  
Administrator

**Arthur Brown**  
**Christopher Gurr**  
Conservatory  
Associates

**Tim Goodwin**  
**Jack Langerak**  
**Brigitt Markusfeld**  
*Inherit the Wind*  
Artist Educators

**Marge Betley**  
Literary Manager

**Amy Jensen**  
Literary Fellow

**Eric Evans**  
Assistant Box  
Office Manager

**Mark Cuddy**  
Artistic Director

**John Quinlivan**  
Managing Director

**Nan Hildebrandt**  
Executive Director

### Suggested Reading

- Bryan, William Jennings. *Bryan's Last Speech: Undelivered Speech to the Jury in the Scopes Trial*. Oklahoma City: Sunlight Publishing Society, 1925.
- Caudill, Edward, Larson, Edward and Mayshark, Jesse. *The Scopes Trial: A Photographic History*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2000.
- Darrow, Clarence. *The Story of My Life*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1996.
- Darwin, Charles. *On the Origin of Species*. New York: Modern Library, 1962.
- Larson, Edward J. *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate Over Science and Religion*. New York: Basic Books, 1997.
- Mencken, H.L. *Thirty-Five Years of Newspaper Work*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1994.
- Scopes, John T. and Presley, James. *Center of the Storm: Memoirs of John T. Scopes*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967.

### Websites

**American Experience: The Monkey Trial:**  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/monkeytrial/index.htm>  
Companion website to the PBS American Experience documentary

**American Civil Liberties Union:** <http://www.aclu.org>

**Famous Trials in American History:**  
<http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/scopes/scopes.htm>  
A very thorough website for the Scopes trial

**Geva Theater Center**  
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*Inherit the Wind in the Classroom*

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*"The man who has everything figured out is probably a fool."*

Henry Drummond

# Tickets Still Available for Public Performances



**March 14 through 17, 24 & 31 @ 8 pm,  
March 18, 25 & April 1 @ 4 pm and 8:30 pm  
March 19 @ 2 pm and 7:30 pm  
March 26 & April 2 @ 2 pm  
Recommended for ages 12+**

**Tickets available by calling (585) 232-Geva (4382)  
or online at [www.gevatheatre.org](http://www.gevatheatre.org)**



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