



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Chloe Woodward, chloew@taproottheatre.org

Taproot Theatre presents a regional premiere play based on Margaret Chase Smith's defiance of McCarthyism

Joe DiPietro's *Conscience* closes out Taproot's 50th Anniversary

SEATTLE, WA — August 10, 2026 — Taproot Theatre presents a regional premiere of Joe DiPietro's *Conscience*. The final production of Taproot's 50th Anniversary Season, this powerful play based on the true story of Margaret Chase Smith's Declaration of Conscience runs **September 16–October 17, 2026**, in Taproot's **Jewell Mainstage Theatre** (204 N 85th St, Seattle, WA 98103).

Margaret Chase Smith was an American politician from Maine and the first woman to serve in both houses of the US Congress. A member of the Republican Party, she famously held her own party accountable, condemning Senator Joseph McCarthy's fear-mongering and "smear" tactics used to divide the nation.

Producing Artistic Director **Karen Lund** directs the regional premiere of *Conscience* by Joe DiPietro.

"Conscience tells the story of one ordinary woman who found the strength to speak out. Margaret Chase Smith's speech is at the center of this compelling play, and her example of great moral courage is a moment that deserves to be re-examined in our modern context and a story that needs to be re-told."

"True stories, based on real people, have been popular staples of our work," Lund said. In recent years, Taproot has produced *The Hello Girls*, about World War I telephone operators, *My Lord, What a Night*, about the friendship between Albert Einstein and Marian Anderson, and *Necessary Sacrifices*, about what might have been discussed at the historic meetings of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, among other stories.

Congruent with Taproot's production of *Conscience*, the theatre will display artifacts from the [Margaret Chase Smith Library](#) in the Kendall Center Lobby at all performances. Additionally, in partnership with [Citizen University](#) and [New Voters](#), Taproot's Teen Advisory Council will host a voter registration event for teens. More information to come.

Conscience stars **Alyssa Keene** as the fearless Senator Margaret Chase Smith and **Jonathan Swindle** as the aggressive Senator Joseph McCarthy. Rounding out the cast is **Christopher Clark** as William Lewis Jr. and **Kelly Karcher** as Jean Kerr, both returning after starring in Taproot's production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* last season.

Synopsis: Margaret Chase Smith stood alone on the Senate floor, summoning the courage to speak the truth. As McCarthyism gripped the nation, she issued her Declaration of Conscience—defying fear, rejecting silence, and holding her party publicly accountable. Though her stand came at a personal cost, her voice changed history forever. This powerful and quietly electrifying story still resonates today.

Performance Information:

Age Recommendation: 14+ (children under 5 are not admitted, including babes in arms)

Special Dates:

Previews: Wednesday, September 16 at 7:30 PM and Thursday, September 17 at 7:30 PM

Opening Night: Friday, September 18 at 7:30 PM

Pay What You Can: Wednesday, September 23 at 7:30 PM

Closed Captioned: Wednesday, October 14 at 2:00 PM

Ticket Information:

Online at taproottheatre.org/conscience

By phone at **206.781.9707**

By email at box@taproottheatre.org

In-person at **204 N 85th St, Seattle, WA 98103**

Price: \$35–\$74 (fees not included)

Discounts available for students, seniors, military, 25 & under, and TeenTix members.

For a full list of performance dates and more information, please visit taproottheatre.org/conscience.

Taproot Theatre Company is a professional, non-profit theatre company with a multi-faceted production program. Founded in 1976, Taproot Theatre serves the Pacific Northwest with Jewell Mainstage, Isaac Studio Theatre, touring productions, as well as Acting Studio camps, classes, and programs for youth and adults. Taproot Theatre Company is a member of Theatre Communications Group, Theatre Puget Sound, and the Phinney Neighborhood Association.

###