



Press Release: December 16, 2020

Contact: 301-641-9358,
press@floridarrc.org

Voting Rights Activist Desmond Meade Recipient of 2020 Puffin Prize for Creative Citizenship

President of Florida Rights Restoration Coalition to be honored for work restoring voting rights during virtual gala with activist/ musician John Legend

ORLANDO, FL — December 16, 2020 Desmond Meade, President of the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition (FRRC), will be joined by fellow activist and multi-award-winning artist John Legend to receive the Puffin Prize for Creative Citizenship and discuss the right to vote, justice, and hope for our democracy in 2021.

“I am both humbled and extremely grateful to be the recipient of this year’s Puffin Prize. This year, voting in local, state and national elections was front and center like never before,” Meade said. “This work is not about me but about us - each and every one of us to have the ability to lift our voices, support our communities, and strengthen our democracy.”

The Puffin Foundation Ltd. and Type Media Center are the mutual sponsors of an annual \$100,000 award given to an individual who’s challenged the status quo through courageous, distinctive, and socially responsible work. The prize is intended to encourage the recipients to continue their work, and previous winners have included Colin Kaepernick, Amy Goodman, the Sunrise Movement, and the Parkland students who founded March for Our Lives.

During the evening ceremonies, which will take place at 6:30 pm EST virtually, Legend will engage with Meade in a discussion of voting rights, the criminal justice system, and the state of democracy, along with the evening’s host and moderator Josie Duffy Rice, president of The Appeal, a criminal-justice-focused website and co-host of the “Justice in America” podcast.

Meade, author of *Let My People Vote*, led the FRRC to a historic victory in 2018 with the successful passage of Amendment 4, a citizen initiative which restored voting rights to over 1.4 million Floridians with past felony convictions. Amendment 4 represented the single largest expansion of voting rights in the United States in half a century and brought an end to 150 years of a Jim Crow-era law in Florida. Meade, who had testified at United Nations and Congressional hearings, presently leads efforts to



empower and civically re-engage local communities across the state, and to reshape local, state, and national criminal justice policies.

About The Florida Rights Restoration Coalition

FRRC is a grassroots, membership organization run by Returning Citizens (Formerly Convicted Persons) who are dedicated to ending the disenfranchisement and discrimination against people with convictions and creating a more comprehensive and humane reentry system that will enhance successful reentry, reduce recidivism, and increase public safety. For more information, visit <https://floridarrc.com/>.

For further information contact Erin Uy at euy@spitfirestrategies.com, press@Floridarrc.org or their phone number, 301-641-9358.

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