

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

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Paul Newman's Recently Published Memoir Will Be Discussed at Westport Country Playhouse, Hosted by Barrett Bookstore

Newman's daughter, Melissa Newman, and Playhouse associate artist Anne Keefe, will celebrate the release of "The Extraordinary Life of an Ordinary Man"

"The Extraordinary Life of an Ordinary Man," a newly published memoir by Paul Newman, will be the topic of a book discussion, "An Afternoon with Melissa Newman," at Westport Country Playhouse, on Sunday, November 20, at 3 p.m., presented by Darien's Barrett Bookstore.

Newman's daughter, Melissa Newman, who wrote the foreword for the book, will converse about the book with Anne Keefe, Westport Country Playhouse associate artist, who past served as Playhouse co-artistic director with Joanne Woodward. An audience Q&A will follow the talk.

Tickets are \$45, and include a copy of the book. Seating is reserved. For tickets, contact the Playhouse box office at (203) 227-4177, or online at [westportplayhouse.org](https://www.westportplayhouse.org). Westport Country Playhouse is located at 25 Powers Court, off Route 1, Westport. For updates on Covid-19 health and safety protocols at the Playhouse, visit <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/visit/covid19safety/>

"The Extraordinary Life of an Ordinary Man" is a raw, candid memoir of the American icon, edited by David Rosenthal, with afterword by Newman's daughter Clea Newman Soderlund. The book is set for October 18, 2022 release by Penguin Random House.

In "The Extraordinary Life of an Ordinary Man," Newman writes of his traumatic childhood; his teenage insecurities; his early failures with women; his first marriage; his early rivals (Marlon Brando and James Dean); and his rise to stardom. He also reflects on his greatest roles; his philanthropy; the death of his son Scott; his drinking; his innermost fears, passions, and joys; and his strong desire for his daughters to know and understand the truth about their father. Perhaps the most moving material in the book centers on his relationship with Joanne Woodward—their love for each other, his dependence on her, and the way she shaped him intellectually, emotionally, and sexually.

Newman began the project in 1986 with his close friend, screenwriter Stewart Stern ("Rebel Without a Cause"; "Rachel, Rachel"). For five years, Stern compiled an oral history of the actor's life, talking with Newman's family, friends, those who worked closely with him, and Newman himself. Culled from thousands of transcript pages, Newman's words are powerful, sometimes funny, sometimes painful, always meeting that high standard of searing honesty. The additional voices that run throughout the book—childhood friends, Navy buddies, family members, and film and theater collaborators, such as

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Joanne Woodward, Tom Cruise, George Roy Hill, and John Huston—add richness, color, and context to the story Newman is telling.

Paul Newman was an American actor, film director, race car driver, and entrepreneur. He was the recipient of numerous awards, including an Academy Award, a BAFTA Award, three Golden Globe Awards, a Screen Actors Guild Award, a Primetime Emmy Award, the Cecil B. deMille Award, and the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award. His major film roles include “The Hustler,” “Hud,” “Harper,” “Cool Hand Luke,” “Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid,” “The Sting,” “The Verdict,” “Mr. and Mrs. Bridge,” “Nobody’s Fool,” “Road to Perdition,” and the voice role of Doc Hudson in Disney-Pixar’s “Cars.” Ten-time Oscar nominee, Newman won an Academy Award for Best Actor for “The Color of Money.” Newman won several national championships as a race car driver. A political activist and humanitarian, he raised and donated nearly \$1 billion to many charities. Newman had six children and was married to Oscar-winning actress Joanne Woodward for 50 years. He died in 2008 at the age of 83.

Newman appeared at Westport Country Playhouse when his wife Joanne Woodward was artistic director in the early 2000s. He was in productions of “Love Letters” (2000), “Ancestral Voices” (2000 and 2002), “For the Children” (2001), “Trumbo” (2004), “Come Be My Love” (2007) and a revival of Thornton Wilder’s “Our Town” (2002), which transferred to Broadway and was filmed for Showtime and PBS. He was a member of the Playhouse’s advisory council to the board of trustees.

Melissa Newman is an artist who works primarily in porcelain and stoneware. She has shown her work in galleries and museums in and around Connecticut and New York. After a lucrative career singing jingles for radio and television, she performs frequently as a singer with her jazz trio. She volunteered and worked at a correctional facility for almost 20 years, co-teaching art, drama, and singing there and in other communities. She has served for over 10 years on the board of The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, a camp for seriously ill children and their families. She has two grown sons and a husband, and is “perennially writing a very messy novel.”

Anne Keefe spent two years at McCarter Theatre and 27 years at Long Wharf Theatre as the resident stage manager, overseeing four Broadway transfers and one Off-Broadway transfer. She was production stage manager for three additional Broadway shows. Over the last 20 years she has been part of the artistic leadership at Westport Country Playhouse in various roles; she was co-artistic director with Joanne Woodward in the early years, and most recently curated the popular Script in Hand Series. In addition to the Del Hughes Lifetime Achievement Award, she has been named one of 10 Women of Distinction by the CT Women’s’ Hall of Fame, and received the Award for Theatre by the Westport Arts Commission, and the Tom Killen Award from the Connecticut Critics Circle. She is married to playwright David Wiltse.

ABOUT BARRETT BOOKSTORE

Barrett Bookstore, located in Darien, is the largest and oldest independent bookstore in Fairfield County, celebrating its 83rd year of business. Since 1997, it has been under the care and leadership of Darien resident Sheila Daley. The 3,600-foot store carries literary fiction, non-fiction, classics, biographies and memoirs, history, poetry, essays, science-fiction, fantasy, mystery and thrillers, cooking, wellness, business, fine and performing arts, sports, nature science, gardening, and picture/gift books. In addition, Barrett prides itself on its wide selection of books and games for children of all ages. Barrett Bookstore is committed to a high level of customer service and creating a vibrant literary space where all are welcome. www.barrettbookstore.com

ABOUT WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

The mission of Westport Country Playhouse is to enrich, enlighten, and engage the community through the power of professionally produced theater of the highest caliber and the welcoming experience of the Playhouse campus. The not-for-profit Playhouse provides this experience in multiple ways by offering live theater experiences of the highest quality, under the artistic direction of Mark Lamos; educational and community engagement events to further explore the work on stage; the New Works Initiative, a program dedicated to the discovery, development, and production of new live theatrical works; special performances and programs for students and teachers with extensive curriculum support material; Script in Hand play readings to deepen relationships with audiences and artists; the renowned

Woodward Internship Program during the summer months for aspiring theater professionals; Family Festivities presentations to delight young and old alike and to promote reading through live theater; and the beautiful and historic Playhouse campus open for enjoyment and community events year-round. Charity Navigator has recently awarded its top 4-star charity rating to the Playhouse in recognition of its strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency.

www.westportplayhouse.org

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