

September 04, 2014 | By John B.B. Freeman

New York Times Columnist Frank Bruni to Speak at UC San Diego, Oct. 29

Frank Bruni, whose distinguished writing career at *The New York Times* has taken him from White House correspondent to chief restaurant critic to his current role as Op-Ed political and cultural observer, has long been known for his carefully crafted opinions and observations on the current scene.

Bruni will be the first featured speaker at UC San Diego Extension's 2014-15 [Helen Edison Lecture Series](#) on Wednesday, Oct. 29, 7 pm, at the Mandeville Auditorium on campus.

Co-presented by UC San Diego Extension and the UC San Diego Council of Provosts, the event is free and open to the public, no tickets or reservations are required. After 5:30 pm, parking is available for a fee of \$4.



New York Times Op-Ed columnist Frank Bruni

The Helen Edison series' other confirmed speakers include:

- Kevin Starr, California historian, author: Tuesday, Dec. 2, at 7 pm, UC San Diego's Price Center East Ballroom
- Rebecca Goldstein, author/philosopher ("Plato at the Googleplex"): Tuesday, Jan. 27, 7 pm, UC San Diego's Price Center East Ballroom

Bruni will speak on the topic: "Americans Today and Their Customized Cocoons."

Specifically, Bruni will discuss the unexpected and troubling effect that technological advances have had on American lives.

In his view, while such advances theoretically open the world to us as never before, speeding us to distant horizons and enabling unprecedented connections, they're too often used to create narrow niches that separate us from each other.

Bruni will examine how this happens, drawing examples from politics, popular culture, and how he tries to resist this trend in his own life.

Starting as a *Times* metro reporter in 1995, he then covered the White House for the first eight months of the George W. Bush administration and also wrote extensively for the *Times*' Sunday magazine.

In 2002 was promoted to Rome bureau chief. In 2004, he was named the *Times*' chief restaurant critic, a role he had for five years.

Bruni was named as a *Times*' Op-Ed columnist in 2011.

Among several published books, Bruni has written two *New York Times* best-sellers, including "Born Round: The Secret History of a Full-Time Eater" (2009), which chronicles his experiences as a restaurant/food critic and bouts with eating disorders and crash diets.

The Times' first openly gay columnist, Bruni has also served as guest judge on TV's "Top Chef." He had a cameo role in the 2009 movie "Julie & Julia," based on the journal of an aspiring young chef who emulates chef Julia Child.

Presented by UC San Diego Extension, the Helen Edison Lecture Series is funded by a major gift from the late Helen Edison, a San Diego philanthropist. The ongoing series annually presents free public lectures by distinguished speakers from the arts and humanities.

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