



For Immediate Release  
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## CNN's Jim Acosta headlines 2019-2020 Media Innovators Speaker Series

**PITTSBURGH** – Season ticket packages go on sale Monday, July 22, for the 2019-2020 Media Innovators Speaker Series, featuring CNN's **Jim Acosta**.

The series, presented by the Center for Media Innovation and the Pittsburgh Playhouse at Point Park University in collaboration with 90.5 WESA, kicks off Thursday, Sept. 12, with **Molly Burke**, a YouTuber and disability rights activist. Acosta will be at the Playhouse in February. Also part of this year's series are NPR reporters **Quil Lawrence** and **Neda Ulaby**.

"I am excited about the stories to be told by this year's class of speakers. Molly, in particular, is an inspiration – despite the challenges she faced early in life, she saw no limitations to what she could accomplish," said Andrew Conte, director of the Center for Media Innovation, state-of-the art incubator and collaborative space for students and professional journalists. "Jim, Quil and Neda are on the front lines delivering news every day at a time when their chosen profession is continually under attack."

WESA General Manager John Sutton said the series is a great opportunity to learn more about the news and have a better understanding of the world.

"All of these journalists have so much more to share than what gets on the air or online," Sutton said. "We're particularly excited to bring NPR's Quil Lawrence to Pittsburgh for deeper conversations about veterans' issues and Neda Ulaby to explore the intersection of arts, culture and politics."

All shows start at 7 p.m. at the Pittsburgh Playhouse at Point Park University on Forbes Avenue, Downtown Pittsburgh.

- **Thursday, Sept. 12: Molly Burke.** At just 4 years old, Burke was diagnosed with a rare retinal disease that caused a loss of vision. By age 5, she was an ambassador for The Foundation Fighting Blindness Canada. Today, she is a highly sought after motivational speaker and her weekly YouTube videos reach a worldwide subscriber base of more than 1.8 million.
- **Thursday, Oct. 17: Quil Lawrence,** a New York-based correspondent for NPR News, covering veterans' issues nationwide. He won a Robert F. Kennedy Award for his coverage of American veterans and Gracie Award for coverage of female combat veterans. He covered Iraq and Afghanistan for 12 years, serving as NPR's Bureau Chief in Baghdad and Kabul.

- **Thursday, Feb. 6: Jim Acosta**, Chief White House Correspondent for CNN. Acosta regularly covers presidential press conferences, visits by heads of state and issues impacting the executive branch. His new book, “The Enemy of the People,” is an explosive, first-hand account of the dangers he has faced reporting on the current White House.
- **Thursday, May 7: Neda Ulaby**, a reporter on arts, entertainment and cultural trends for NPR’s Arts Desk. Ulaby scours the worlds of art, music, TV, film, new media and literature for stories reflective of political and economic realities, culture issues, obsessions and transitions, as well as artistic adventurousness.

Four-show ticket packages are now on sale at [www.PittsburghPlayhouse.com](http://www.PittsburghPlayhouse.com). Tickets for individual shows go on sale Monday, Aug. 5. You also can get more information and order tickets by calling 412-392-8000 or stopping by the Playhouse Box Office at 350 Forbes Ave., Downtown Pittsburgh.

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*Point Park University, immersed in the heart of Downtown Pittsburgh, focuses on student success through innovative experiential learning opportunities. Point Park enrolls more than 4,000 students in over 100 undergraduate, master's and doctoral programs offered through its Conservatory of Performing Arts, Rowland School of Business, and schools of Arts and Sciences, Communication, and Education. The University's alumni and students represent all 50 states and 34 countries around the world. Visit [PointPark.edu](http://PointPark.edu) to learn more.*

*90.5 WESA, Pittsburgh's NPR news station, is an independent, member-supported service of Pittsburgh Community Broadcasting. Our mission is to create and distribute trusted content, build connections and strengthen our community through public media. 90.5 WESA can be heard on 90.5 FM in Pittsburgh; 92.3 FM in New Baltimore; 100.5 FM in Johnstown, 104.1 FM in Ligonier and Somerset, and online at [wesa.fm](http://wesa.fm).*