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N E W S R E L E A S E

Jonathan Alter

“Why the 2012 Election Is the Most Pivotal of Our Lifetime”

Monday, October 1 / 8:00 p.m. / Free
Lobero Theatre
33 East Canon Perdido, Santa Barbara

S U M M A R Y F A C T S

- Jonathan Alter, columnist, *Bloomberg View* and author of *The Promise: President Obama, Year One* and *The Defining Moment: FDR's Hundred Days and the Triumph of Hope*
- “Why the 2012 Election Is the Most Pivotal of Our Lifetime”
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- Information: Walter H. Capps Center for the Study of Ethics, Religion, and Public Life at UCSB (805) 893-2317
- Digital copies of press materials available at <http://www.cappscenter.ucsb.edu/news/press-releases/>

Event Description:

The question this year is whether the country will stay on a centrist course or make a sharp turn to the right. If President Obama is reelected, the federal government will continue to take responsibility for lending a helping hand to people in need. If Mitt Romney wins, the safety net will be shredded. Because few votes may be won by discussing the poor, the American social contract is rarely discussed. But it is on the line.

Speaker Profile:

JONATHAN ALTER IS THE AUTHOR OF TWO *NEW YORK TIMES* BEST-SELLERS, *THE PROMISE: PRESIDENT OBAMA, YEAR ONE* AND *THE DEFINING MOMENT: FDR'S HUNDRED DAYS AND THE TRIUMPH OF HOPE* AND A WEEKLY COLUMNIST FOR *BLOOMBERG VIEW*. BEFORE *BLOOMBERG VIEW*, ALTER SPENT 28 YEARS AS A CORRESPONDENT, EDITOR AND COLUMNIST FOR *NEWSWEEK* WHERE HE COVERED SEVEN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS AND AUTHORED MORE THAN 50 COVER STORIES.

The 2012 campaign marks the eighth presidential election Alter has covered. He has frequently interviewed American presidents and other world leaders and regularly breaks news. His Newsweek cover stories over the years included everything from Bill Clinton's first interview after leaving the presidency, to Barack Obama's first-ever magazine cover, to Alter's personal story of living with cancer, to the history of assassinations in America. Beyond politics and media, he has written extensively over the years about education, fiscal policy, terrorism, anti-Semitism, at-risk children, national service and a wide variety of other issues.

In his role at NBC News, Alter has appeared on all NBC broadcasts including "TODAY," "NBC Nightly News," "Meet the Press," and NBC News specials. On MSNBC, he is a regular guest on "Hardball," "Morning Joe," "Andrea Mitchell Reports," "The Ed Show" "Martin Bashir" and other programs. One of his best-known scoops came on Election Night, 2000, when Alter went on the air to break the story about confusing "butterfly ballots" in Palm Beach County, Florida that shaped the outcome of the election.

He received the first prize Book Award from the New Jersey Council of the Humanities for *The Defining Moment* and was a finalist for the *Los Angeles Times* Book Award for *The Promise*. His many awards for media criticism include the 1987 Lowell Mellett Award and two New York State Bar Association Media Awards. In 1995, Alter was selected as one of the nation's most influential media critics in a survey of leading media executives and scholars published by the Freedom Forum Media Studies Center at Columbia University. He also won the 1987 Gerald Loeb Award for Distinguished Business Reporting, and a Mentoring USA Award for encouraging mentoring. Alter was a Fellow of the Japan Society in Tokyo (1993), the Ferris Visiting Professor of Press and Politics at Princeton University (1997), and the Rhodes Visiting Professor at Arizona State University(2009).

A Chicago native, Alter received his B.A. in history with honors from Harvard in 1979. Besides *The Promise* and *The Defining Moment*, Alter is the author of *Between the Lines: A View Inside American Politics, Media and Culture* (a collection of 20 years of his *Newsweek* columns), and the coeditor of *Inside the System* (a collection of *Washington Monthly* articles). He is chairman of the board of the Lukas Prize Project, which provides cash awards for non-fiction authors, and serves on

the board of Donors Choose, the Bone Marrow Foundation, the Blue Card, the Montclair Library Foundation and the Historians Advisory Council of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial.

Reviews of *The Promise: President Obama, Year One*:

“Alter, a Chicago native, has known Obama since his days as a state senator and unsuccessful congressional candidate. He's sympathetic to the president's goals, casts a cold eye on his most vociferous political antagonists and is independent enough to criticize the administration's — and the chief executive's — shortcomings. As one would expect from a reporter of Alter's experience, the book is rich in the kinds of insider detail that make for an entertaining, as well as informative, reading experience.” — *Los Angeles Times*

“Alter's prose is swift and subtly inspiring; the "Yes, we can!" motto rarely appears but provides an undercurrent for his record of accomplishment. Readers interested in political process and the reality of progressive politics will enjoy this well-considered take on the current administration, a "second draft" of history from a dedicated journalist who wisely anticipates "dozens more versions to come." — *Publishers Weekly*

"Jonathan Alter has delivered an exceptionally well-written account of President Obama's first year in office. Brimming with fresh and judicious ideas, his book fuses political analysis, subtle insights into the president's mind and policy debates into a fast-paced, crisis-filled story" — *The Washington Post*

Sponsor:

This event is presented by the Walter H. Capps Center for the Study of Ethics, Religion, and Public Life at UCSB.

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