

(For immediate release—with photo)

159 years after Dred Scott decision, descendants of Scott and Chief Justice Taney meet on stage.

The infamous Dred Scott decision that led to the Civil War is the focus of a contemporary dialogue in a new play by Kate Taney Billingsley presented by The Actors Studio in New York under the direction of Estelle Parsons, Oscar winner and a stage and screen presence for more than 60 years.

The play, "A Man of His Time," is part The Community Project, a series of original one-act productions the studio (at 432 West 44th St.) is offering at 7 p.m. May 13-14 and May 19-21 with a 2 p.m. matinee May 21(Saturday) Admission is free. For reservations, e-mail reservations@theactorsstudio.org.

The playwright, Taney Billingsley, is a descendant of Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, author of the Supreme Court ruling that both declared Dred Scott "property" as well as nullifying the Missouri Compromise, making slavery legal in the western territories. Her dramatization is a metaphor for today's discourse on race, presented as a conversation over coffee between Taney and Scott family members.

Following the nightly curtain May 14, two family descendants—Charlie Taney of Norwalk, CT, the playwright's father, and Lynne M. Jackson, great-great-granddaughter of Scott, and founder of the Dred Scott Heritage Foundation of St. Louis, MO—will take the stage to engage in a discussion of race relations then and now.

Estelle Parsons is a member of the American Theatre Hall of Fame and at 88 is still a vibrant figure in the theater. She won the 1967 Academy Award for best supporting actress for her portrayal of Blanche Barrow in the film "Bonnie and Clyde" and has been nominated five times for a Tony Award. She also appeared over a number of seasons on TV's "Today show as a regular on the sitcom "Roseanne."

Contact: Kate Taney Billingsley

kate.billingsley@gmail.com

203-550-6127

(Cutline)

Estelle Parsons



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Attachments area

