Wisdom Thinkers Roundtable
Leading thinkers in religion, science, arts, education, and business

MODERATOR:
Arthur R. Miller, University Professor, NYU Law School
While famous as a brilliant and demanding lawyer and professor, Miller became the first law professor to appear regularly on television, hosting Miller’s Court—the TV show that pioneered making real-life lawyering accessible to a lay audience—from 1979 through 1987. The show created media buzz, and led to a 20-year stint as Good Morning America’s legal editor. He has also hosted a weekly show on Court TV, won an Emmy in 1984 for one of three Fred Friendly seminars he moderated for PBS’s 13-part series The Constitution: That Delicate Balance, and garnered three American Bar Association Gavel Awards for promoting public understanding of the law.

CONVENER:
Ralph Singh, Chair, Wisdom Thinkers Network;
Ralph feels that stories have the power to change the world. That is his life story: from the powerful vision that drew him from New York to the feet of the great spiritual master, His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh, in India at 22 where he became Babaji’s first foreign devotee and still serves as director publications and P.R. for Gobind Sadan; his role in forgiveness and reconciliation following the post 9-11 arson attack on his spiritual community Gobind Sadan, USA; to his Parents’ Choice award winning audio CD, “Stories to Light our Way,” of sacred and secular wisdom stories, being used by educators and community groups as a way to foster a more compassionate, engaged, pluralistic, civil society.

PANELISTS:
Karoline Buys, is the International Program Coordinator for Children of the Earth, an NGO that inspires and unites young people world-wide to create a peaceful and sustainable world through personal and social transformation. A frequent speaker at world events, she carries a powerful personal story of forgiveness from her childhood in Colombia. She currently lives in Munich, Germany. Part of her work is to encourage young people to expand their consciousness, as well as become young peace builders in their own respective countries.

James R. Doty, M.D., Clinical Professor of Neurosurgery, Founder and Director of the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education at Stanford, whose founding patron was the Dalai Lama. Jim lectures world-wide on the scientific basis of compassion and its importance in leading a full and meaningful life. An inventor, entrepreneur and philanthropist, he Chairs the Dalai Lama Foundation, and supports various international peace initiatives and programs to improve medical care to third world countries.

Richard A. (Dick ) Ehst, President and Chief Operating Officer of Customers Bank. A former Executive V-P of Sovereign Bank, Dick had been an independent consultant to more than 70 financial institutions in the mid-Atlantic region. Educated in Europe and the U.S., he served as a U.S. Marine in the Vietnam War. He is an Honored Member of Who’s Who Worldwide and has been the recipient of community service awards from more than 20 civic organizations over the past 30 years. Dick’s passion is his family, economic development and mentoring, and a lifetime commitment to overcoming prejudice.

Dr. Noor Gillani, a retired Principal Research Scientist at the National Space Science and Technology Center affiliated with NASA’s Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville AL. He is now focusing on further development of his PYAR Foundation which aims to help the cause of the world’s children in distress. Inspired by comments of His Highness the Aga Khan, Dr. Gillani has developed a model of Islamic Humanism based on his personal interpretation of the Quranic concept of man, which addresses both the purpose of human life and that of balancing our Muslim religious heritage with non-Muslim Western environment.

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<th>Wise Thinker</th>
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<td><strong>Rabbi Brad Hirschfield</strong></td>
<td>Co-President of Clal, acclaimed author, lecturer, rabbi, and commentator on religion, society and pop culture, offers a unique perspective on the American spiritual landscape and political and social trends to audiences nationwide. His blogs appear in outlets from Fox to Beliefnet. His book, “You Don’t Have to be Wrong for Me To Be Right,” aptly describes his active engagement and commitment to constructive dialogue with everyone.</td>
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<td><strong>Dr. Stuart A. Kauffman</strong></td>
<td>MacArthur Prize winner, frequent contributor to NPR’s blog – Cosmos and Culture, is a pioneer in the field of complexity theory. A biologist, trained as a medical doctor, who studies the origins of life and the origins of molecular organization, his most recent book, “Reinventing the Sacred: A New View of Science, Reason, and Religion” redefines God as the natural creativity in the universe itself, proposes a novel metaphysics.</td>
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<td><strong>Rabbi Irwin Kula</strong></td>
<td>As Co-President of CLAL-The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership, he received the 2008 Walter Cronkite Faith and Freedom Award for his work &quot;toward equality, liberty and a truly inter-religious community.&quot; Fast Company magazine and Religion and Ethics Newsweekly (PBS) both named him one of the leaders shaping the American spiritual landscape, and he was listed three years in a row in Newsweek as one of the Top 10 of the &quot;Top 50 Rabbis in America.&quot; Irwin’s award winning book is entitled, Yearnings: Embracing the Sacred Messiness of Life.</td>
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<td><strong>Dr. Nina Lynn Meyerhof, Ed.D.</strong></td>
<td>President and Founder of Children of the Earth, has made a life of advocating for children and youth. Long recognized as an innovative educator committed to global responsibility through authentic learning, she authored Conscious Education: The Bridge to Freedom. Recipient of several awards including The Mother Theresa Award among others, Nina continues to travel and work in 50 countries assembling adults and young people to build programs for peace recognizing our spiritual unity and scientific knowledge that we are all interconnected, as reflected in her World Spirit Youth Council.</td>
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<td><strong>R. Gustav Niebuhr</strong></td>
<td>Director of the Religion and Society Program, Syracuse University. Writing for the New York Times, the Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, and the Atlanta Journal/Constitution, Gustav has established a reputation as a leading writer about American religion. His work has been published in books, magazines and on the internet; he also does occasional commentaries on religion for the National Public Radio program &quot;All Things Considered.&quot; His latest book is Beyond Tolerance: Searching for Interfaith Understanding in America.</td>
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<td><strong>Iyafin Amiebelle Bush Olatunji</strong></td>
<td>African American Matriarch, was nurtured in Alabama, receiving her B.A. in 1950 as the third female generation of her family to graduate from Talladega College. She traveled to Europe to study the Romance Languages and then received her M.S. (LS) from Syracuse University in 1954. Iya accompanied her husband, Dr. M. Babatunde Olatunji, a delegate to the first All African People’s Conference in Ghana in 1958. She founded the Int’l School Without Walls with the first student traveling from Nigeria to Morehouse College, and the performing group, Olatunji 3rd Generation. She has traveled extensively on five continents and serves as a community activist and spiritual mentor to all people.</td>
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Carlos Portes
Chairman, The
Portes Group. Reflecting on his life’s
journey as a manifestation of God’s
greatest purpose, Carlos’s arrival in
the U.S. from Cuba, alone as a 10
yr. old, as part of the largest airlift of
children ever conducted (Operation
Peter Pan), has served to inspire his
continued crusade to serve others
and give back. A recipient of the
Ellis Island Medal of Honor,
appointed Special Ambassador for
Latin American Affairs by fmr.
President Carter, he has worked
with U.S. Presidents on major
domestic and foreign policy issues
including Cuba. As Chair of the Red
Cross, Greater NY, MAO, he worked
at Ground Zero assisting Latino
families, including those without a
voice, and reuniting children in
foreign countries with their surviving
parent, and helped shape the
services to the Chinese Community.
Serving the underserved and
Conflict Resolution are among his
greatest passions.

Diane Schenandoah,
renowned
Native American artist, Wolf Clan
Faith Keeper, was inspired by her
artist mother, Maisie, a Wolf
Clanmother of the Oneida people
and father Clifford, a sub chief of
the Onondaga Nation and a
talented musician. She received
her degree in Fine Art and
Creative Writing from the Institute
of American Indian Arts. The
spiritual significance of her work
is paramount as she counts it her
privilege and duty to share her
culture through her sculptures
and carvings. Diane also shares
Haudenosaunee legends, moral
lessons and the importance of the
social, spiritual and emotional
well being of her people, where
women are held in high regard as
important decisions makers.
Diane’s work graces permanent
collections across the country.
She is also a published author
and sings backup for her Grammy
award winning sister, Joanne
Shenandoah.

Dr. Naresh Singh
One of the world’s foremost experts
on and advocates for sustainable
livelihoods, Naresh now serves as
Director General of Strategic
Planning and Operations of the
Canadian Partnership Branch at
CIDA. He was Executive Director of
the U.N. Commission on Legal
Empowerment of the Poor (2006 to
2008) co-chaired by Madeleine
Albright and Hernando de Soto and
hosted by UNDP; and UNDP’s top
poverty advisor. During his
distinguished career in int’l
development, he has worked in
more than 40 countries. His books
include, Sustainable Livelihoods,
Building on the Wealth of the Poor;
and Legal empowerment, norms and
capacity of civil society which
examines the challenge of changing
power relations between the poor and
the élite.

Asma T. Uddin is the Founder
and Editor-in-Chief of
altmuslimah.com. Asma is also
a Legal Fellow with the Institute
for Social Policy (ISPU), and an
international law attorney with
The Becket Fund for Religious
Liberty. She edited Dr. Umar F.
Abd-Allah’s A Muslim in Victorian
America, serves as Associate
Editor for Islamica Magazine,
where she focuses on how
American Muslims can rethink
their social position within the
American legal framework. Asma
also contributes to OnFaith,
Huffington Post, CNN.com, and
Common Ground News. Her
more scholarly work has been
published by Cambridge
University Press and the Rutgers
Journal of Law and Religion.

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