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Media Contact:  
Gina Hyams, PR Consultant  
413.464.2851  
ginahyams@gmail.com

A high-resolution photograph is available for download at  
<http://www.mahaiwe.org/press.html>

### **Mahaiwe Presents Human Genome Talk by Michael Specter**

Great Barrington, Mass.— Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center will present a talk by acclaimed science writer Michael Specter titled “The Possibilities and Perils of Editing the Human Genome” on Friday, May 13 at 7:00pm. The lecture is based on an article he published in *The New Yorker* last year. “We welcome everyone in the community to join us for this intriguing talk about the transformative scientific research underway today,” said Mahaiwe Executive Director Beryl Jolly. Tickets are \$10, \$5 for students, and free for Mahaiwe members.

Michael Specter has been a staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 1998. He focuses on science, technology, and public health. Since joining the magazine, he has written about agricultural biotechnology, the global AIDS epidemic, avian influenza, malaria, the world’s diminishing freshwater resources, synthetic biology, the debate over the meaning of our carbon footprint, the effort to produce genetically modified mosquitoes to fight dengue fever, and new ways to edit DNA. He has also published many profiles, of subjects including PETA founder Ingrid Newkirk, Dr. Oz, the ethicist Peter Singer, Sean (P. Diddy) Combs, Manolo Blahnik, Miuccia Prada, and Richard Branson.

Specter came to *The New Yorker* from *The New York Times*, where he had been a roving foreign correspondent based in Rome. From 1995 to 1998, Specter served as the *Times* Moscow bureau chief. Before working at the *Times*, he spent six years at *The Washington Post*, first covering local news, and then becoming the Post’s national science reporter and, later, the newspaper’s New York bureau chief.

In 1996, Specter received the Overseas Press Club's Citation for Excellence for his reporting of the war in Chechnya. He has twice received the Global Health Council's annual Excellence in Media Award, first for his 2001 article about AIDS, "India's Plague," and secondly for his 2004 article "The Devastation," about the ethics of testing H.I.V. vaccines in Africa. He also received the 2002 AAAS Science Journalism Award, for his article "Rethinking the Brain," on the scientific basis of how we learn. His 2009 book, "Denialism: How Irrational Thinking Hinders Scientific Progress, Harms the Planet, and Threatens Our Lives," received the Robert P. Balles Annual Prize in Critical Thinking, presented by The Committee for Skeptical Inquiry. Specter received the 2014 Mirror Prize, awarded by Newhouse School of Public Communications, for his 2013 profile of Mehmet Oz, "The Operator." He also won the James Beard Award in 2014 for his New Yorker article "Against the Grain," which explored the American obsession with gluten-free products.

Since 2012, Specter has been a Visiting Professor at Bard College, in the department of Environmental and Urban Affairs.

The Mahaiwe is located at 14 Castle Street in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Box office hours are Wednesday through Saturday from noon to 6:00pm and three hours before show times. For tickets and information, see [www.mahaiwe.org](http://www.mahaiwe.org) or call 413.528.0100.

#### About the Mahaiwe

Located in downtown Great Barrington, Massachusetts, the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center is the year-round presenter of world-class music, dance, theater, classic films, Live in HD broadcasts, and arts education programs for the southern Berkshires and neighboring regions. The intimate jewel box of a theater opened in 1905. Since 2005, the performing arts center has hosted over 1,000 events and welcomed almost half a million people through its doors. Its education program has served over 12,000 students from 35 different schools with school-time performances and residencies. The Mahaiwe generates

in excess of \$1,000,000 in ticket revenue from 150 events each year, while contributing over \$4,000,000 in regional economic impact from the theater's direct spending and audience's restaurant, lodging, and shopping activities.