

# the Southern Register



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOUTHERN CULTURE • WINTER 2005

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

## The Twelfth Oxford Conference for the Book

The University of Mississippi  
Oxford, Mississippi • April 7-9, 2005

Since 1993, the Oxford Conference for the Book, organized by the Center and Square Books, has brought the publishing world's preeminent personalities to north Mississippi for a weekend of readings, discussions, and celebrations. The 12th Oxford Conference for the Book, April 7-9, featuring yet another accomplished lineup is sure to entertain and enlighten. Dedicated to the genius of Flannery O'Connor, this year's list of panelists includes not only O'Connor scholars but also leading journalists, poets, editors, and, of course, fiction writers. As usual, the conference also includes, for small registration fees, the opportunity for readers to mingle with writers and publishing insiders at two social gatherings: a cocktail buffet (\$50) and a catfish dinner (\$25). A young author's fair, featuring Newbery Medalist Richard Peck; a fiction and poetry jam; an Elderhostel program; and an optional literary tour of the Mississippi Delta (April 4-7) are also part of this year's festivities.

All conference panels are free and open to the public, although those wishing to attend should register to ensure seating space. Special registration is required for the cocktail buffet, the catfish dinner, and the Delta Literary Tour. Call 662-925-5993, e-mail marybeth@olemiss, or visit [www.olemiss.edu/depts/south](http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/south) for more information or to register for conference programs. For more information or to register for Elderhostel, call 877-426-8056 or visit [www.elderhostel.com](http://www.elderhostel.com) and refer to program 12317, or contact Carolyn Vance Smith at 601-446-1208 or [carolyn.smith@colin.edu](mailto:carolyn.smith@colin.edu).

The Oxford Conference for the Book is sponsored by the University of Mississippi, Junior Auxiliary of Oxford, Lafayette County Literacy Council, Mississippi Library Commission, and Square Books. The conference is partially



The Twelfth  
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The University of Mississippi • Oxford, Mississippi  
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Sponsored by the University of Mississippi, Junior Auxiliary of Oxford, Lafayette County Literacy Council, Mississippi Library Commission, and Square Books with an illustration by a contribution from the R&B Feder Foundation for the Beaux Arts and grants from the Mississippi Humanities Council and the Yoknapatawpha Arts Council.

Illustrating 2005 Oxford Conference for the Book materials is Baxter Knowlton's portrait of Flannery O'Connor. The portrait is reproduced on posters and T-shirts available from the Center by calling 800-390-3527.

funded by a contribution from the R&B Feder Foundation for the Beaux Arts and grants from the Mississippi Humanities Council and the Yoknapatawpha Arts Council.

See page 4 of this issue of the *Register* for the Delta Literary Tour itinerary and page 5 for the Oxford Conference for the Book schedule.

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## DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

THE AMERICAN SOUTH, THEN AND NOW SYMPOSIUM, which was held at the Center in November, was one of the most memorable events in our long history. It was an energetic gathering of leaders who shared their thoughts on the state of the South. When you gather journalists, politicians, business leaders, and academics together you may find a few strong opinions, and we did indeed find that. It was just after the presidential election and political feelings ran high, but the level of discourse was thoughtful and engaged.

We honored the work of the L. Q. C. Lamar Society, a progressive organization that held meetings similar to ours back in the early 1970s. We want to tap into the energy, intelligence, and good will that the Lamar Society embodied in its time. Meeting their leaders, including Tom Naylor, Brandt Ayers, Mike Cody, and so many others, gave us the chance to benefit from their experience and insights about the region. At the same time, we had young Southern leaders who were, in some cases, more optimistic than former Lamar members about the potential for achieving progressive change.

Governor William Winter's keynote address set the tone for the meeting. With his usual eloquence and insight, he warned us of the dangers facing the South if it refuses to address socioeconomic problems. He provided historical perspective on the achievements of the Lamar Society, finding hope in their example. He outlined the special opportunities we have that can be used to confront and overcome social problems. He left us chastened but hopeful.

I listened with fascination as the speakers moved through a range of emotions. We heard the deep commitments of historian Dan Carter to the future of the children of the South, and Susan Pace Hamill found in the Scriptures an inspiration for social justice. John Egerton has studied much Southern history and lived through the frustration of good causes. He is fearful of the future, and many at the meeting expressed anxieties. Historian Don Doyle told me of his feeling of a certain melancholy in the group, and I agreed with him. It is an old Southern mood. Still others cautioned against sadness and saw a glass that's easily half full, especially if one gets back to local citizen activism in neighborhoods and communities. We heard Leroy Clemons, an optimistic young African American leader of the Neshoba County, Mississippi, NAACP, speak with confidence of a future based on personal relationships that can embody a better South, but we heard other African American leaders caution of the need not to ignore the larger system that contains political, economic, and social injustices.

The symposium was a moment in Southern time, assessing a South that has undergone extraordinary transformation since the Lamar Society's work and now faces both new challenges and tenacious older problems such as rural poverty and racial conflict. It was a launching pad for the work of the Center's newest initiative, the Endowment for the Future of the South. We are still raising funds to match a grant from the Hardin Foundation, which will enable the Center to play a lead role in showing the continuing importance of the Southern cultural context to understanding and addressing issues that will shape the region's future.

The Future of the South project will focus in 2005 on racial reconciliation. Working with the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation and other centers on campus and throughout the region, we hope to illuminate the complexities of that issue, which is an essential one for the South to engage. We look forward to working with other organizations, with our ability to engage in collaborative work surely a key to the future of the South.

CHARLES REAGAN WILSON

# Oxford, Mississippi, Loses Writer, Friend

On Wednesday morning, November 24, 2004, Oxford lost not only one of the best out of a wealth of celebrated writers to have ever put pen to paper here, but also a good man and a friend to many. Larry Brown, writer of gritty Southern literature, died of a heart attack in his home in the neighboring community of Tula. He was 53.

From 1973 to 1990 Brown worked as a firefighter in the Oxford Fire Department and aspired to become a published author. During the mid-1980s Brown began to find success placing short stories in magazines and journals, eventually publishing in 1988 his first book of short stories, *Facing the Music*, with Algonquin Books in North Carolina, and retiring to write full time. His work soon gained popular and critical success across the U.S. and beyond. Deft at his craft, Brown wrote straight-forward, lyrical prose that won him legions of fans who snatched up his work as soon as it hit bookstores.

Often brutal, yet always based on a reality existing somewhere where books like his were seldom cracked open, Brown's characters lived on the periphery of society—hard-drinking, hard-loving, quick to fight, and sometimes quick to run. However unfamiliar his settings may have been to some of his readers, his stories were steeped in emotion that transcended region and class. They spoke words of the heart, making even the most remote characters familiar and knowable.

Brown's other works included the

Larry Brown 1951-2004



Bruce Newman/Oxford Eagle

Friends and admirers of Larry Brown are invited to contribute to an endowment fund that will provide an annual award to a Lafayette High School student showing promise or achievement in the arts. Please send contributions to the following address and note on the donation that it is for the Larry Brown Creative Arts Award.

Larry Brown Creative Arts Award  
Greater Oxford Community Foundation c/o Claiborne Barksdale  
1003 Jefferson Avenue Oxford, Mississippi 38655

The Greater Oxford Community Foundation is a nonprofit organization and will provide receipts for tax purposes. For details, go to the Web site [www.createfoundation.com/page17813.cfm](http://www.createfoundation.com/page17813.cfm).

novels *Dirty Work* (1989), *Joe* (1991), *Father and Son* (1996), *Fay* (2000), and *The Rabbit Factory* (2003); another collection of short stories, *Big Bad Love*

(1990), which was adapted into a film of the same name in 2001; and two works of nonfiction, *On Fire* (1994), a memoir of his fire-fighting days, and *Billy Ray's Farm* (2001), a book of essays on his life outdoors and as a writer. He served briefly as a creative-writing instructor at the University of Mississippi in 1998 and twice won the Southern Book Critics' Circle Award.

On Saturday, November 27, 2004, beneath brooding, mournful skies, Larry Brown was laid to rest next to his pond in Tula. Nearby stands a small house he had just finished building. It was where he'd intended to write. The potential it held was enormous.

JIMMY THOMAS

## *In Memoriam*

### Numan V. Bartley 1934-2004

Numan V. "Bud" Bartley, E. Merton Coulter Professor of History Emeritus at the University of Georgia, died in Athens, Georgia, on December 27, 2004. He taught at Georgia Tech before joining the faculty at the University of Georgia in 1971.

The author or coauthor of half a dozen books, he was a leading scholar of Southern politics and served as consulting editor for the Politics section of the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. He received the State of Georgia's Governor's Award in the Humanities and was a past president of the Southern Historical Association.



# MISSISSIPPI DELTA LITERARY TOUR

*Experience the place, the people, the  
food, and the music that inspired*

*Mississippi writers*

*April 4-7, 2005*

The place that novelist Richard Ford described as the South's South—the Mississippi Delta—is the site of a spring tour organized by the Center for the Study of Southern Culture and the Alluvian Hotel. Focusing on the area's legendary blues, writers, and food—along with its tumultuous history—the program is based in Greenwood, home of playwright Endesha Ida May Holland and memoirist Mildred Spurier Topp, and will include day trips to three other towns.

Each day we will travel the back roads of the Mississippi Delta, discovering other historic sites along the way. Scheduled for Monday, April 4, is a trip to Yazoo City, whose most famous and beloved son is author Willie Morris. On Tuesday, April 5, the group will travel to Greenville, home of William Alexander Percy, Ellen Douglas, Shelby Foote, Bern Keating, Walker Percy, Julia Reed, Ben Wasson, and many other writers—so many that Greenville is known for having “more writers per square foot than any other city of its size.” On Wednesday, April 6, the group will go to Clarksdale for a visit to the Delta Blues Museum and tour places connected to the life and work of playwright Tennessee Williams.

Also scheduled are meals at Lusco's, the new Giardina's, Madidi, and other notable Delta restaurants as well as live blues and gospel performances. On April 7, after breakfast at the Alluvian, participants will be free to travel on their own to Oxford, arriving in time to visit William Faulkner's home, Rowan Oak; tour the town; have lunch on the courthouse square; and attend the Oxford Conference for the Book, which will begin that afternoon.

The Delta tour is \$450 per person for all program activities, eight meals, and local transportation. The fee does not include lodging. To register, go to the Events and Conferences section of the Center's Web site ([www.olemiss.edu/depts/south/events/index.htm](http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/south/events/index.htm)) and click on Registration. Remember to sign up early. Only 35 spots are available, and they will go fast.

Group accommodations have been arranged at the Alluvian, in downtown Greenwood ([www.thealluvian.com](http://www.thealluvian.com)). **Rooms at the Alluvian require a separate registration** and are priced at a discounted rate of \$135 and may be reserved by dialing 866-600-5201 and asking for the special “Literary Tour” rate. In the event that the Alluvian sells out before you get a chance to book a room, we have also reserved a block at the Greenwood Best Western, 662-455-5777.

## MONDAY, APRIL 4

### YAZOO CITY: Willie Morris

- Noon Registration—Alluvian Lobby
- 1:00 p.m. Depart for Yazoo City—Richie Caldwell, tour guide  
JoAnne Prichard Morris, special guest  
Tour homesite, library, cemetery, etc.
- 5:00 p.m. Depart Yazoo City, arrive back in Greenwood by 6:00 p.m.
- 6:00 p.m. Cocktails on your own at Giardina's bar or free time
- 7:30 p.m. Blues & BBQ Dinner—Viking Training Center  
Spooney's Bar-Be-Que  
Crystal Grill pies  
Live Delta Blues

## TUESDAY, APRIL 5

### GREENVILLE: Greenville Writers

- 8:00 a.m. Alluvian Breakfast
- 9:00 a.m. Depart for Greenville—Jimmy Thomas, tour guide
- 11:00 a.m. Talk given by Kenneth Holditch at the  
William Alexander Percy Library
- Noon Lunch—Place TBA  
“The History of Greenville,” talk given by  
Hugh McCormick
- 1:30 p.m. Greenville Tour led by Mary Dayle McCormick
- 3:00 p.m. Greenville Cemetery Tour led by  
Princella Wilkerson Nowell
- 3:30 p.m. Reception at McCormick Book Inn with  
Hugh McCormick  
Readings by Ellen Douglas and Julia Reed  
Comments by Patti Carr Black  
Live Delta blues (local musician)
- 5:00 p.m. Depart for Greenwood
- 6:30 p.m. Free time
- 7:30 p.m. Dinner at Lusco's in Greenwood  
“The Cefalu Connection,” talk given by Amy Evans

## WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6

### CLARKSDALE: Tennessee Williams

- 8:00 a.m. Alluvian Breakfast
- 9:00 a.m. Depart for Delta Tour led by Luther Brown  
Greenwood to Cleveland, with stop at Delta State  
University Library
- Noon Lunch at Madidi—Clarksdale  
Gospel Music—Coahoma Community College Choir
- 1:30 p.m. Talk by Kenneth Holditch at Cutrer Mansion
- 2:30 p.m. Tour Tennessee Williams sites, including  
St. George's Episcopal Church, and visit various blues  
sites, including Delta Blues Museum and Cat Head
- 4:30 p.m. Depart for Greenwood
- 7:00 p.m. Tour of Delta art at the Alluvian, led by  
William Dunlap  
Maude Schuyler Clay, special guest
- 7:30 p.m. Dinner at Giardina's in Greenwood

## THURSDAY, APRIL 7

### OXFORD CONFERENCE FOR THE BOOK OR BUST!

- 8:00 a.m. Alluvian Breakfast
- 9:00 a.m. Depart for Oxford (1.5 hours)  
Oxford Conference for the Book, dedicated to  
Flannery O'Connor  
University of Mississippi campus, April 7-9

\*All events subject to change.

# Twelfth Oxford Conference for the Book

*The University of Mississippi • Oxford, Mississippi • April 7-9, 2005*

Program sessions on Thursday, April 7, will be at the Oxford Conference Center. Program sessions on Friday and Saturday, April 8-9, will be at the Gertrude Castellow Ford Center for the Performing Arts.

John Davis Williams Library  
Light Lunch  
Mississippi Hall of Writers  
Hosted by Julia Rholes  
Dean of University Libraries

## THURSDAY, APRIL 7

- 1:30 p.m. Welcome  
Tribute to Larry Brown  
Richard Howorth, Mayor  
Readings/Comments  
Joseph Urgo, moderator  
Ellen Douglas, Ashley Warlick, Brad Watson
- 2:30 p.m. Readings/Comments  
Tom Franklin, moderator  
Karen Spears Zacharias, John Green, Julia Reed
- 4:00 p.m. The Perfect Crime  
Jere Hoar, moderator  
George Pelecanos, Randy Wayne White
- 5:30 p.m. *Thacker Mountain Radio*  
Jim Dees, host  
George Pelecanos, Randy Wayne White  
The Yalobushwackers
- 7:00 p.m. Dinner  
Meet the Speakers  
Isom Place  
(Reservations Required)
- 9:00 p.m. Open Mike - Poetry & Fiction Jam  
David Galef, moderator  
Two Stick

- 2:00 p.m. Flannery O'Connor: Her Work and Legacy  
Charles Reagan Wilson, moderator  
Paul Elie, Beverly D. Fatherree, Kelly Gerald,  
William A. Sessions
- 3:30 p.m. Young Authors Fair  
Book Signing - Richard Peck  
Square Books Jr.
- 4:30 p.m. Poetry: Readings and Remarks  
Celebration of National Poetry Month  
Beth Ann Fennelly, moderator  
John Kinsella, Davis McCombs, Katrina Vandenberg
- 7:00 p.m. Country Dinner  
Taylor Grocery Band  
Taylor, Mississippi  
(Reservations Required)

## SATURDAY, APRIL 9

- 9:00 a.m. Finding a Voice/Reaching an Audience  
Amy Stolls, moderator  
Steve Almond, Paul Elie, Sheldon Fogelman,  
Elizabeth Gaffney, Jeff Kleinman
- 10:30 a.m. Writing about Truth, Art, and Sex  
William Dunlap, moderator  
Steve Almond, Ellen Douglas, Ronald Goldfarb,  
Julia Reed, Ashley Warlick

## FRIDAY, APRIL 8

- 9:00 a.m. Welcome  
Robert C. Khayat, Chancellor  
Literature for Young Readers  
Ethel Young-Minor, moderator  
Comments  
Leigh Ann Morgan, Rosemary Oliphant-Ingham,  
Susan Nicholas, Katie Snodgrass  
Introduction  
Sheldon Fogelman  
Readings/Remarks  
Richard Peck
- 10:30 a.m. The Endangered Species: Readers Today and Tomorrow  
Elaine H. Scott, moderator  
Claiborne Barksdale, John Y. Cole, Jon Parrish Peede, Keith Stephens
- Noon Center for the Book and Its State Affiliates  
John Y. Cole  
Constance Lawson

- Noon Lunch - On Your Own
- 1:30 p.m. Writing for Young People and Crossover Literature  
Phyllis Fogelman, moderator  
John Green, Richard Peck, Amy Stolls
- 2:30 p.m. Readings/Remarks  
Jamie Kornegay, moderator  
Steve Almond, Tayari Jones, Amy Stolls
- 3:30 p.m. Sense of History Panel & Readings  
Ted Ownby, moderator  
John Bailey, Elizabeth Gaffney, Ronne Hartfield
- 4:30 p.m. Writing about Politics  
Curtis Wilkie, moderator  
Hendrik Hertzberg, Nick Kotz, Thomas Oliphant
- 6:00 p.m. Book Signing  
Off Square Books

## Southern Gardens Symposium April 22-23, 2005

"Gardening," says Center director Charles Reagan Wilson, "has always been part of Southerners' regional identity." This is just one reason the Center and the University Office of Outreach have teamed up to offer the Southern Gardens Symposium, Friday through Saturday, April 22-23. The symposium will feature famed Mississippi gardener Felder Rushing, landscape



architect and garden historian James Cothran, and Rowan Oak restoration experts Kevin Risk and Ed Blake. Registration includes guided tours of gardens in both Oxford and nearby Holly Springs, presentations on Southern gardens and historic garden renovation, a tea party, and a lunch lecture. The fee for the symposium is \$85; no refunds will be given after April 10. To register for the symposium or for more information, including a schedule of events, visit [www.outreach.olemiss.edu/gardening/](http://www.outreach.olemiss.edu/gardening/).

**Yoknapatawpha  
Arts Council**  
Third Annual Oxford  
Film Festival  
September 5-11, 2005  
[www.oxfordfilmfest.com](http://www.oxfordfilmfest.com)  
662.236.6429  
Film submission deadline is  
May 1, 2005.

## Center Celebrates Double Decker

Oxford's annual Double Decker Arts Festival—a celebration of music, food, and the arts—is always a guaranteed good time, and this year the Center is getting in on the act. On Friday, April 29, the day before the festival, the Center will present a series of short (30- to 45-minute) lectures on topics ranging from dirt-track auto racing to the blues. Also on tap are the preview of a documentary film on the Freedom Riders, produced by the University's William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation, and a walk through Bailey's Woods, which connect the University to William Faulkner's Rowan Oak. The activities will take place at the Oxford Depot and are set to start at 10 a.m. and end at 5 p.m., with an hour lunch break at noon. No registration is required, and participants may come and go as they please.

Additionally, plans for a gospel concert in the Grove are being made for Sunday, May 1, the day after Double Decker. Concert details will be available soon. Check the Center's Web site ([www.olemiss.edu/depts/south](http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/south)), e-mail Mary Beth Lasseter ([marybeth@olemiss.edu](mailto:marybeth@olemiss.edu)), or call the Center (662-915-5993) for more information on both the concert and the presentation series.



Double Decker Bus on the Oxford Square

Robert Jordan/University of Mississippi

## Dates of Civil War Conference Set

The Civil War is the topic of a conference to be hosted by the University's Department of History and Office of Outreach from Friday, May 27, through Saturday, May 28, 2005. "Remembering America's Civil War" is the theme of the event planned to coincide with Memorial Day weekend. The conference will include presentations by historians exploring the national remembrance and commemoration of the war. Presentations will include talks on the creation of national military parks, the politics of monuments, the effect of the war on Southern widows, and postwar perceptions of Civil War prisons. Also slated are a Civil War memorial tour of the Ole Miss campus and, for an additional fee, a Sunday tour of Shiloh and the Corinth Civil War Interpretive Center. Visit [www.outreach.olemiss.edu/culture](http://www.outreach.olemiss.edu/culture), e-mail [marybeth@olemiss.edu](mailto:marybeth@olemiss.edu), or call 662-816-2055 for more information as it becomes available.



# Bruce West Exhibition at Gammill Gallery

Currently on exhibit in the Gammill Gallery is *Take Time to Appreciate*, a selection of 23 color photographs by Bruce West. All of the images were made in Mississippi, between 1994 and 2004. Most are portraits of people West met while traveling in the Delta. Indeed, the title of the exhibition derives from one of the hand-painted signs done by Mrs. L. V. Hull, a folk artist and the subject of one of West's vibrant color portraits. West adopted Mrs. Hull's phrase, he says, because "it speaks of my primary objective as a photographer."

"These are beautiful images," says David Wharton, director of Documentary Projects at the Center. "They're big prints (14 x17 inches), made from medium-format negatives, so they're highly detailed. And Bruce's use of color is lovely—rich and deep but never garish. But I'm even more impressed by his approach to content. His pictures are quiet, straightforward, and true. No one seems to be posing, neither the photographer nor his subjects."

When West comes to Mississippi, he often revisits people he has photographed previously, so several of the pictures in the exhibition are of the same person, though made at different times. This lends the images greater depth than one often sees in photographic portraits. In one picture of Mrs. Elisa Clinton, made in 1999, we



Bruce West

Reverend Dennis with Candelabra, Mississippi, 2000

see her in her backyard wearing a floral-print housecoat. In the background are flowers much like those on the housecoat. In another photograph of Mrs. Clinton, made the following year, she stands in front of her front porch's screen door, sporting large sunglasses, a baseball cap, and a Wal-Mart smock. The two images together show different sides of Mrs. Clinton and provide a fuller understanding of her life.

Bruce West is professor of art and design at Southwest Missouri State University, where he has taught since 1985. He has exhibited his photographs widely. Recent exhibitions include shows at the Sheldon Art Galleries, the St. Louis Art Museum, the Mississippi Art Museum, the University of Northern Iowa, and Millsaps College. He has received a number of awards for his work, including fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Ford Foundation for the Arts, and the Polaroid Corporation. His photographs are included in various public and corporate collections, including the St. Louis Art Museum, the Houston Museum of Fine Arts, the Mississippi Art Museum, the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Museum Ludwig, the Munchner Stadtmuseum, the Museum de la Photographie a Charleroi, the Paine-Webber Corporation, and A. G. Edwards and Sons Inc.

*Take Time to Appreciate* will be on display at Barnard Observatory's Gammill Gallery through March 25. Bruce West will give a gallery talk at noon on Wednesday, March 9.

lynn & stewart

**Gammill**  **Gallery**

## Exhibition Schedule

<p>January 15 - March 25, 2005  <b>Mississippi:</b>  <i>Take Time to Appreciate</i>  <b>Bruce J. West</b></p>	<p>March 25 - May 31, 2005  <b>Community Photography</b>          Southern Studies          Documentary Students</p>
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The Gammill Gallery, located in Barnard Observatory, is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., except for University holidays.  
 Telephone: 662-915-5993.

# Southern Studies Student Exhibition in Gammill Gallery

During the 2004 fall semester, students in the Southern Studies documentary photography seminar, taught by David Wharton, made repeated visits to six towns in north Mississippi with the aim in mind of compiling photographic “community portraits.” There were 12 students in the class—Robert Caldwell, Ellie Campbell, Jordan Craven, Matt Donohue, Sean Hughes, Nathan Kosub, Andrew Leventhal, Mary Margaret



Robert Caldwell, *Love: Mother and Child in Laundromat, Water Valley.*



Jordan Craven, *School Lunch, Holly Springs.*

Miller, Angela Moore, Susie Penman, Renna Tuten, and Robin Yekaitis. The communities they visited were Batesville, Bruce, Holly Springs, New Albany, Pontotoc, and Water Valley, with two students concentrating on each town.

At the end of the semester, each student compiled a 25-print portfolio of his/her best images. Working together, the class also selected 72 of the photographs to exhibit at Barnard Observatory’s Gammill Gallery. That

exhibition, *Community Photography*, will be on display from March 25 through May 31. It will be the second in a series of exhibitions planned as part of the Mississippi Hills Documentary Project, a collaboration between the Center and the Mississippi Hills Heritage Area Alliance. Some of the students’ pictures are printed in this newsletter. More will soon be available for viewing at the “special projects” link at the Center’s Web site ([www.olemiss.edu/depts/south](http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/south)).

*more photos on page 30*



Ellie Campbell, *Power Swings, Batesville.*



Renna Tuten, *Man at Flea Market, Pontotoc.*





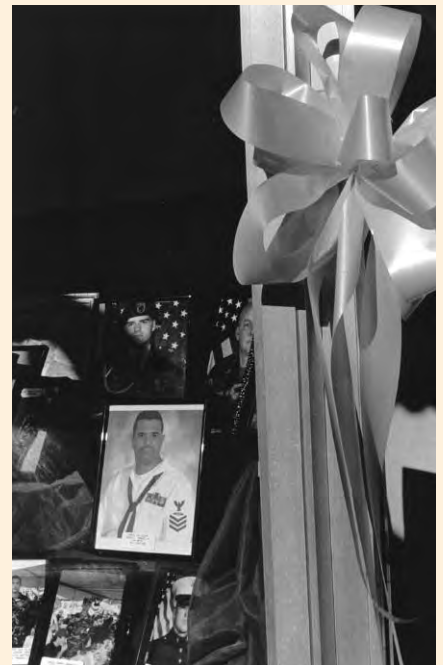
Matt Donohue, *Man with Ice Cream Cone*, Holly Springs.



Nathan Kosub, *Turnage's Drug Store*, Main Street, Water Valley.



Andrew Leventhal, *Willie Rogers, Age 95, with Portrait*, New Albany.



Sean Hughes, *Honoring the Troops*, Pontotoc.



Mary Margaret Miller, *Young Man in Garage*, Bruce.



Angela Moore, *National Anthem at Football Game*, South Panola High School, Batesville.

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**Ventress Order for Southern Studies**  
(See page 14 of this issue of the *Register*.)

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# *Friends* ern Culture ~ Fall 2004



# Faulkner's Inheritance

Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference : July 24-28, 2005

William Faulkner's "inheritance" was as expansive as the man himself. He once said that the writer "collects his material all his life from everything he reads, from everything he listens to, everything he sees, and he stores that away in sort of a filing cabinet . . . in my case it's not anything near as neat as a filing case, it's more like a junk box." He tended to be quite casual about "influences," referring, for example, to the South, the setting of the great majority of his fiction, as "not very important to me. I just happen to know it, and don't have time in one life to learn another one and write at the same time"; or to his Christian background as simply another tool he might pick up on one of his visits to "the lumber room" that would help him tell a story.

Sometimes he could just be poking fun, claiming he never read Joyce's *Ulysses* or had never heard of Thomas Mann—writers he would elsewhere declare as "the two great men in my time." And, of course, sometimes he would just express annoyance at readers who found esoteric theory in his fiction, when all he wanted them to find was Faulkner: "I have never read [Freud]. Neither did Shakespeare. I doubt if Melville did either, and I'm sure Moby-Dick didn't."

Nevertheless, as he acknowledged, the writer collects his material from everywhere, and Faulkner's life was not only rich in what he did and saw and read, but he seems to have remembered all of it: from the history of his own family, from the Old Colonel, to the poetry he read at the urging of Phil Stone, who began his great "tutorial" of the 17-year-old high-school dropout in 1914. Miss Bessie Sumners, who knew Faulkner from childhood, once mentioned how on Saturdays, when the country people would come into Oxford to do their weekly shopping, Faulkner would stand for hours at the corner—where Square Books is presently located—and simply watch and listen. Emily Stone said, when



Oliver Parini

Jay Parini



Priscilla Wald

Faulkner commented on some new furniture she and Phil had purchased, "I didn't think you'd notice." He replied, "I see everything."

The 32nd Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference—"Faulkner's Inheritance"—will explore for five days

of lectures, panel discussions, tours, and social gatherings some of the things he saw: what his inheritance was, and what happens to it in his writing. Appearing for the first time at the conference will be Jay Parini, Axinn Professor of English at Middlebury College, author of the newest biography of Faulkner, *One Matchless Time: A Life of William Faulkner*, as well as four volumes of poetry, six novels, and biographies of John Steinbeck and Robert Frost; Adam Gussow, assistant professor of English and Southern Studies at the University of Mississippi, author of *Mister Satan's Apprentice: A Blues Memoir* and *Seems Like Murder Here: Southern Violence and the Blues Tradition*, winner of the C. Hugh Holman Award for the best book of literary scholarship or criticism in Southern literature published in 2002; Jon Smith, assistant professor of English at the University of Montevallo, coeditor of *Look Away! The U.S. South in New World Studies* and author of *Southern Culture on the Skids: Narcissism, Branding, and the Burden of Southern History*, forthcoming from the University Press of Mississippi; and Priscilla Wald, associate professor of English at Duke University, author of *Constituting Americans: Cultural Anxiety and Narrative Form* and associate editor of the journal *American Literature*.

Returning to the conference are Susan V. Donaldson, professor of English at the College of William and Mary, author of *Competing Voices: The American Novel, 1865-1914* and coeditor of *Haunted Bodies: Gender and Southern Texts*; Martin Kreiswirth, professor of English and dean of graduate studies at the University of Western Ontario, author of *William Faulkner: The Making of a Novelist* and coeditor of three volumes, including *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism*; Noel Polk, professor of English at Mississippi State University, author or editor of over a dozen volumes, including, most recently, *Outside the Southern Myth*; and Judith L. Sensibar, professor emerita of English, Women's Studies, and Humanities at Arizona State University, author of two

books on Faulkner and editor of Faulkner's *Vision in Spring*. Her current project is the completion of "*We Have Waited Long Enough*": *The Story of William Faulkner, His Black and White Mothers, and His Wife*, forthcoming from Yale University Press.

Among the topics that will be taken up at the conference will be Jon Smith on Faulkner's environmental inheritance as a member of the so-called Lost Generation, Adam Gussow on blues music in Faulkner, and Susan Donaldson on the "culture of segregation." Judith L. Sensibar will examine Faulkner's relationship with his mother, Maud Butler Falkner, and the "white maternal" complement to his relationship with Caroline Barr, the "black maternal"; Noel Polk will speak

on Faulkner's need, in the context of his multilayered inheritance, to sweep away everything that preceded him, including his own previous work, in order to create "something that did not exist before." Martin Kreiswirth will deal with "the uncanny and race in *Absalom, Absalom!*"

In addition to formal lectures, there will be a number of shorter panel presentations, discussions by Faulkner friends and family, and sessions on "Teaching Faulkner" directed by James B. Carothers, University of Kansas; Charles Peek, University of Nebraska at Kearney; Terrell L. Tebbetts, Lyons College; and Theresa Towner, University of Texas at Dallas. The University's John Davis Williams Library will display Faulkner books, manuscripts,

photographs, and memorabilia; and the University Press of Mississippi will exhibit Faulkner books published by university presses throughout the United States. Films relating to the author's life and work will be available for viewing during the week.

The conference will begin on Sunday, July 24, with a reception at the University Museums and a special exhibition and presentation by Boyd Saunders, painter, sculptor, illustrator, and printmaker. The exhibition will feature lithograph prints from his illustrations for Faulkner's *Spotted Horses*. After the Museums reception, the opening papers of the conference will be presented at the Johnson Commons Auditorium and will be followed by a buffet supper at historic Memory House, formerly the home of John Faulkner. The Sunday evening program will begin with the announcement of the winner of the 16th Faux Faulkner Contest, coordinated by the author's niece, Dean Faulkner Wells, and sponsored by *Hemispheres Magazine*/ United Airlines, Yoknapatawpha Press, and the University of Mississippi. Dramatic readings from Faulkner's work will then be presented. Other events will include "Faulkner on the Fringe"—an "open-mike" evening at the Southside Gallery; guided day-long tours of Northeast Mississippi; a picnic served at Faulkner's home, Rowan Oak; and a closing party.

For more information about the conference contact the Office of Outreach and Continuing Education, Post Office Box 879, The University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677-1848; telephone: 662-915-7283; e-mail: [fyconf@olemiss.edu](mailto:fyconf@olemiss.edu).

For information on the conference program, course credit, and all other inquiries, contact the Department of English, Box 1848 Bondurant Hall, The University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677-1848; telephone: 662-915-7439; e-mail: [fyconf@olemiss.edu](mailto:fyconf@olemiss.edu). For on-line registration, visit us on the Web at [www.outreach.olemiss.edu/events/faulkner/](http://www.outreach.olemiss.edu/events/faulkner/).

DONALD M. KARTIGANER



## Southern Writers, Southern Writing Graduate Student Conference

The 11th annual Southern Writers, Southern Writing Graduate Student Conference will be held at the University of Mississippi July 22-23, 2005. Creative and critical readings will address various topics on or about the South. Critical topics are not restricted to literature; we welcome submissions from other disciplines and are particularly interested in interdisciplinary perspectives. Students whose papers are accepted may register for the 32nd annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference without paying a registration fee. For more information, visit either the graduate conference Web site at [www.olemiss.edu/conf/sws](http://www.olemiss.edu/conf/sws) or [www.outreach.olemiss.edu/events/faulkner](http://www.outreach.olemiss.edu/events/faulkner) or write to Southern Writers, Southern Writing, Department of English, C128 Bondurant, University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677-1848.

# New Ventress Order Members Ron Nurnberg and Joe Osgoode

The Center is delighted to announce that Ron Nurnberg and Joe Osgoode of Oxford, Mississippi, have joined the Ventress Order, an organization that administers gifts to the departments of the University's College of Liberal Arts. Nurnberg and Osgoode have designated their gift to the Center.

"Rolling our annual giving into a Ventress Order membership made sense," said Nurnberg, who is an alumnus of the graduate program in Southern Studies. "The Center gave so much to Joe and me. My years in Southern Studies were golden years, which were wonderful and life-altering."

Osgoode, an artist whose works include photographic collages of Ventress Hall, Barnard Observatory, and the Lyceum, agreed, commenting, "Southern Studies brings in a very lively group of people. Even though I was not a student, it offered so many events that I felt as though I was a part of the community."

Prior to embarking on his master's degree in Southern Studies, Nurnberg, who earned a bachelor's degree in business and interpersonal communication from Central College in Pella, Iowa, was associate director of a study abroad program for American students at Trinity College, Wales. In

addition, he helped start, co-owned, and operated Dressel's Pub in St. Louis, Missouri, a town favorite that honored the arts, especially Welsh and American literature, opera, jazz, and blues.

Nurnberg left the for-profit business world to pursue his degree in Southern Studies. His work in the program focused on the preservation and reinvention of Vicksburg's St. Francis Xavier Convent and Academy previously run by the Sisters of Mercy. Closed in the early 1990s, the complex of 19th-century buildings, one of them antebellum, faced an uncertain future. Building on the work of three prior Southern Studies graduates and drawing his vision from other cultural centers throughout the Southeast, Nurnberg worked closely with the city of Vicksburg to purchase the property, transforming it into the Southern Cultural Heritage Foundation. He also led the search for the Foundation's first executive director.

Following graduation in 1995, Nurnberg went to work for the National Trust's Main Street program in Helena, Arkansas, as the project's executive director. Nine months later, he became executive director for Teach for America in the Arkansas and Mississippi Delta, a position he has held ever since. Having expanded its presence from 32 teachers in 1996 to 134 teachers currently, he is focused on helping his teachers close the academic achievement gap by up to two years for every year that Teach for America recruits spend in the classroom. "Educated youth in these communities are a countermeasure to the brain drain that the Delta has been experiencing," he said. Another of his goals is to turn Teach for America alumni into lifelong advocates for this pursuit.

Nurnberg and Osgoode remain involved with the Center. Each year, at the home they call Ditch Crest, they host a welcome party for new graduate students in Southern Studies. They



Joe Osgoode (left) and Ron Nurnberg

also regularly offer Ditch Crest as a gathering place for visiting writers to the Oxford Conference for the Book: previous guests have included Jill McCorkle and Lee Smith.

"Joe and I believe in what the Center for the Study of Southern Culture is doing, and wanted to take part in supporting that. The Ventress Order was an ideal way to do this."

Named in honor of James Alexander Ventress, a founding father of the University, the Ventress Order encourages recognition of the College of Liberal Arts as one of the country's outstanding centers of learning. College of Liberal Arts graduates, family members, friends, or organizations may join the order and designate their gift to particular departments or programs within the college. Corporate and full individual memberships are available by pledging \$10,000 and \$5,000 respectively. Gifts are payable in lump sums or installments not to exceed 10 years. Affiliate memberships are also available through a pledge of \$1,000, payable in a lump sum not to exceed four years.

For more information about the Ventress Order for Southern Studies, contact Angelina Altobellis at 662-915-1546 or altobell@olemiss.edu.

ANGELINA ALTOBELLIS

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# Reading the South

## *Voices of the American South.*

Edited by Suzanne Disheroon-Green; associate editors, Lisa Abney, Philip Dubuisson Castille, Barbara C. Ewell, Sarah E. Gardner, Joe Marshall Hardin, Julie Kane, and Pamela Glenn Menke. New York: Pearson Longman, 2005. 1,404 pages. \$52.00 paperback.

Twenty years ago, in an essay titled "The Study of Southern Literature," M. Thomas Inge noted the continuing vitality of a distinctive literary culture in the South, a tradition whose origins he traced to the early 19th century. In the past decade, however, scholars have increasingly argued that the region's writing has lost its distinctiveness, becoming not simply postmodern but post-Southern as well. Pop music allusions and generic mall settings in Bobbie Ann Mason's fiction, for example, are often cited as a clear break from the South's past literature—and from the past itself.

*Voices of the American South*, an anthology of poetry, fiction, drama, and nonfiction, stresses such discontinuities in the headnote for Mason's "Drawing Names," the tale of an awkward Christmas reunion. Discussion questions that follow the story further encourage readers to observe instances of "dirty realism," along with major changes in the structure of the Southern family. Equally significant social transformations are evident in selections by Richard Ford, Frederick Barthelme, Jill McCorkle, and other recent writers. Undeniably, change is pervasive in contemporary literature, including the literature of the South. Yet, the anthology headnote on Bobbie Ann

Mason also includes the intriguing fact that the Kentucky author's latest book is a biography of Elvis Presley. As an icon of the South, Elvis is probably even more widely recognized around the world than Johnny Reb; their differences hint at the great variety of authors, plots, and characters brought together in a book that begins decades before the Civil War and ends with some of today's most admired authors.

In his 1985 essay, Inge made the startling remark that, "If the Confederacy had succeeded and become a separate nation, what we know as Southern literature would in effect be a national literature." This historical perspective is consonant with the chronological organization of *Voices of the American South*, whose section headings highlight such crucial events as the Civil War, Reconstruction, growing industrialization, and the civil rights movement. The scholarly expertise of Disheroon-Green's associate editors guaranteed special strengths within these divisions. For instance, Louisiana poet Julie Kane was an excellent resource for the wealth of 20th-century poetry anthologized here, including such lesser known writers as Margaret Danner ("The Slave and the Iron Lace") and Rodney Jones ("Mule"). And Barbara C. Ewell and Pamela Glenn Menke, editors also of *Southern Local Color: Stories of Region, Race, and Gender* (2002), surely recommended the diverse representation of popular local color writers—from the African American Charles Chesnutt to *The Clansman* author Thomas Dixon Jr.—in "Part III: Rebuilding and Repression: 1880-1910." This same

section includes a rare selection of female regionalists, with stories by Mary Murfree, Grace King, Ruth McEnery Stuart, and Kate Chopin.

Mississippians will be pleased by the recognition of the state's long line of literary talent. Prominent in the "Southwestern Humor" cluster, from "Part I: Antebellum Period," is the rambunctious story "The Dance" by Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, an early president of the University of Mississippi. While any recent Southern literature anthology would reprint William Faulkner, Richard Wright, and Eudora Welty, *Voices of the American South* further extends to Margaret Walker, Larry Brown, Ellen Douglas, and Elizabeth Spencer. Three of the University of Mississippi's former Grisham Visiting Writers in Residence are also present: Mary Hood, Randall Kenan, and Tim Gautreaux.

As the editors admit, they lacked both the space and the bankroll to include additional "exemplary" works. Even at 1,404 pages, the anthology omits Barry Hannah's fiction, Natasha Trethewey's poetry, Janisse Ray's nonfiction, and any drama besides Tennessee Williams's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. But it's impossible to think of any type of Southern writing that's omitted. The gothic, the grotesque, the grit lit are all here, along with the genteel tradition, the slave narrative, proletarian fiction, Jefferson Davis's second inaugural address, Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Eulogy for the Martyred Children," Martha McFerren's "The Bad Southern Cooking Poem," and Marilyn Nelson's tribute to the Tuskegee Airmen. Section

Book Reviews and Notes by Faculty, Staff, Students, and Friends of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture

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introductions, maps and timelines, author headnotes, discussion questions, and an up-to-date bibliography are here as well. I can't wait to introduce my Survey of Southern Literature students to *Voices of the American South*.

JOAN WYLIE HALL

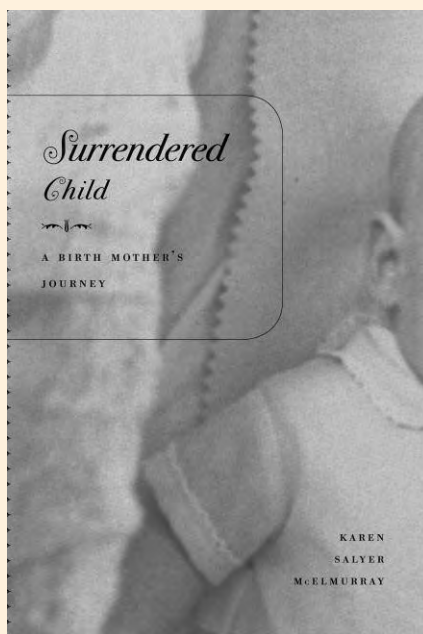
### ***Surrendered Child: A Birth Mother's Journey.***

By Karen Salyer McElmurray.  
Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004. 272 pages, 22 photographs. \$29.95 cloth.

Winner of the Association of Writers and Writing Programs Award for Creative Nonfiction.

Karen McElmurray's memoir, *Surrendered Child*, is a rare book, rare for a series of surprising reasons. In the first place, "memoir" is only an approximation of its genre; it is actually the tale of a life haunted by a single, irrevocable decision made by one child to relinquish another. Sixteen years old in 1973, Karen McElmurray gave her son up for adoption in the delivery room of a Kentucky hospital without ever so much as seeing his face or holding his body. She then embarked on the rest of her life only to discover over and over again how utterly her future had been consumed by that defining moment from her past. Possibilities for other children present themselves later in her life, but the reader joins McElmurray in realizing that it isn't those children she wants—she wants that one particular son.

She finds him, when they are both adults. The book jacket tells us as much, and the photographs located in the book's center feature a picture of the two of them. So the book has a happy ending. But embedded in that conclusion is another of its rarities:



*Surrendered Child* conveys a mature certainty that happy endings do not erase a lifetime of pain. They can only mitigate circumstances, even if they serve as new beginnings. Necessarily, McElmurray has to share with the reader a lot more than the breath-robbing pain of actual childbirth that yields no child, replacing an infant with bed sheets wet from wasted breast milk. She has to tell us how she came to the moment of relinquishment before she delivers us into the moment of reconciliation. In telling that dark story, McElmurray and the reader confront the writer's obsessive-compulsive mother who requires her daughter to shower in the garage before entering the house, who tucks her in at night wearing white gloves, and who teaches her that her body is but a dirty inconvenience. The numbing loneliness of her routine is broken when McElmurray is 14 and her beleaguered but imperfect father returns her mother to the eastern Kentucky mountains from which they both came. Then commences a cycle of sex, drugs, and running away worthy of any narrative about the 1970s. "Nights, I could curl up on a mattress on the floor in the back room,"

she writes, "and dream myself invisible, folded and folded into a piece of black cloth made of me, so small I did not exist. Like this, I was safe."

In unfolding that darkness, and the many tight, black places into which she both literally and metaphorically takes us, McElmurray surrenders a great deal to the reader—we have the sense that she holds nothing back from us, and the sheer rawness of her account meant that on several occasions I simply put the book down for a while, uncomfortable that I had been told so much about the inner workings of a life, embarrassed that I grew up just a few years later and a few miles away in a stable household where only other people had babies as teenagers. But I couldn't leave the book alone. I kept picking it back up, and that impulse, the reader comes to realize, mirrors McElmurray's own drive to understand her life. For years, she avoids her past or holds it at a safe distance; she becomes a writer but convinces herself that she is writing about people other than herself. She travels from state to state, from job to job, from man to man. But that delivery room moment, that nameless child won't allow McElmurray to put them down for long. She is particularly plagued by the fact that she cannot recall the date of the child's birth.

Finally, *Surrendered Child* is so powerful because the writer surrenders herself to what she does not know but longs to learn. In asking who her son is, McElmurray must also ask who she is, and the very form of the narrative demonstrates how difficult that second question is to answer. The book begins with the memory of what McElmurray concedes may be an invented moment, then moves to her admission to the maternity ward, before including a copy of the letter she received in 1998 from the Kentucky Department of Social Services in response to her request for information regarding the son she gave away. All of

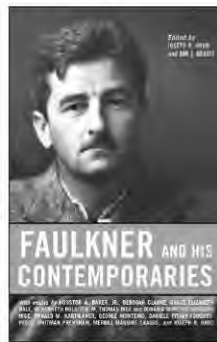
that has happened by page four. Eschewing chronological order, McElmurray then weaves a book, instead of telling a story, alternating clear memories that include dates and correspondence and the role of other people, with italicized plunges into shadowy recollections and what may be moments of pure fabrication. McElmurray's larger point is this: all that she has—any of us have—is memory, meaning that the past is as reliable an indicator of the future as we allow it to be. In thus gesturing beyond the confines of any individual life, McElmurray's book takes on its greatest rarity. It becomes about the reader's life too, about how she will reconcile what she remembers from yesterday with what she does today. It becomes about how and why we remember, about why we may cling to the self-definition suffering affords us: "If I write, truly write, will I come to the end of remembering, of grieving, and will there then be nothing left?" McElmurray agonizingly wonders 179 pages into the book and in the midst of the very process she questions. Memory she compares to "a flooded road in the wake of a passing car," sets of elusive images that can trap us only when we insist on their veracity. Ultimately, McElmurray surrenders some of her restless, relentless prodding at moments in time, concluding this in the afterword: "I have remembered the past and wondrously summoned what I hope is the future." The reader may be inspired to do the same.

KATHRYN MCKEE

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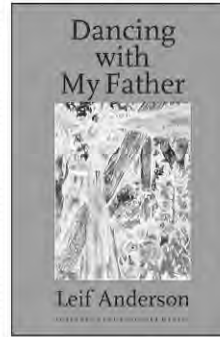


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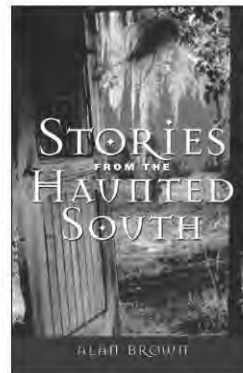
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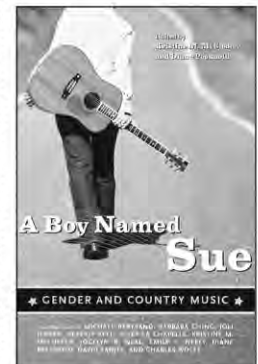
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**Chord Changes on the Chalkboard: How Public School Teachers Shaped Jazz and the Music of New Orleans.**

By Al Kennedy. Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2002. 204 pages. \$55.00.

Surely no Southern-born art form has seen its stock as “culture” rise so dramatically in the course of the long 20th century as that thing called jazz. Presumptively originating in the turn-of-the-century whorehouses, night-clubs, and raucous street parades of New Orleans’s Storyville district, guilted by association with Prohibition-era gin-drinking and hair-bobbing, jazz put the flap in “flapper” (that is, impressionable white maidenhood gone horribly wrong) and precipitated a moral panic—at least among Jazz-Age readers of the *Ladies’ Home Journal*. “Jazz disorganizes all regular laws and order,” lamented Anne Shaw Faulkner in a now-legendary 1921 article entitled “Does Jazz Put the Sin in Syncopation?”: “it stimulates to extreme deeds, to a breaking away from all rules and conventions; it is harmful and dangerous, and its influence is wholly bad. . . . The effect of jazz on the normal brain produces an atrophied condition on the brain cells of conception, until very frequently those under the demoralizing influence of the persistent use of syncopation, combined with inharmonic partial tones, are actually incapable of distinguishing between good and evil, between right and wrong.”

Roll over, Beethoven! Yet roll over he has, and to the apparently delighted approval of those who man (and underwrite) the cultural battlements up in New York. Spearheaded by the efforts of jazz trumpeter/composer/educator/advocate Wynton Marsalis, Jazz at Lincoln Center recently settled into its new home at Columbus Circle: a

\$128 million, 100,000-square-foot facility that is, according to the JALC Web site, “the world’s first performing arts center designed specifically for jazz.” “The whole space,” according to Marsalis, JALC’s Artistic Director, “is going to be dedicated to the feeling of swing, which is a feeling of extreme coordination. Everything is going to be integrated: the relationship between one space and another, the relationship between the audience and the musicians, will be one fluid motion, because that’s how our music is.”

If you remain as astonished—and cheered—as I am by this recent ascendance of jazz to the status of a certified American cultural treasure, then Al Kennedy’s monograph, *Chord Changes on the Chalkboard*, can help explain just why the New Orleans-born Marsalis was so well equipped for his mission as what might be called a serious popularizer—a musician’s advocate determined both to raise the cultural status of his chosen art and broaden its appeal as democratic, people-pleasing entertainment.

The truth is, Wynton was just doing what came naturally. Or culturally. New Orleans is the key, in any case: not the Big Easy of Hurricanes-to-go and bad behavior on Bourbon Street, but an indescribably rich musical environment presided over by three or four generations of disciplined, practical, indefatigable music educators. Forget about “the rhythms of Congo Square” and the reputed naturalness with which Louisiana-born black folk deploy them; forget about “the moan of the blues” and “spontaneous block parties” and “feets don’t fail me now.” All those things contribute to the magic of New Orleans jazz, of course, but they’re beside the point of Kennedy’s book. *Chord Changes on the Blackboard* is concerned with *musical literacy*: a concept that makes hash of our received (and subtly racist)

understandings about “black culture” as essentially a pleasure-giving body-centered thing, a sung/danced/drummed mode of being tracing back to Africa and opposed to a presumptively Euro-American emphasis on textualized knowledge, deferred gratification, the law-giving power of the written word, and cool, efficient, hardworking, nicely behaved culture builders.

Wrong! Well, half wrong. It turns out that Wynton Marsalis—a cool, efficient, hardworking, nicely behaved culture builder *par excellence*—is merely the latest in a long line of black New Orleans musical educators who were determined from the beginning to defend jazz against accusations of immorality; translate the collective improvisational energy and street-sourced creativity of jazz into chord charts, lead sheets, and teachable sequenced techniques; and convince generations of willing young people that jazz musicians were, in fact, culture heroes worthy of study and emulation. Exactly like Beethoven, in fact. Except that these culture heroes purveyed their art at nightclubs just down the block from the schools where the educators and their kids diagrammed their solos. These culture heroes also sometimes visited the schools, and taught in them, and ended up, like Wynton’s father, Ellis, mentoring generations of young black men (and the occasional white boy like Harry Connick Jr.) into careers as superbly well-trained jazz performers and educators, which is to say musically literate culture builders.

The *Ladies’ Home Journal* got it wrong, in other words, and Wynton has it exactly right: jazz isn’t about moral disorder and loss of control; it’s about disciplining yourself with a teacher’s help so that you and the band are capable of swinging hard with extreme coordination—and taking care of the business side well

enough that you can make a living at it. Yet as Kennedy makes clear, early black jazz educators in New Orleans had a difficult time on various fronts; white disapprobation was a less pressing challenge, in fact, than the disapproval of a black middle class committed to an ideology of uplift and the egregious underfunding of black education in general. Simply putting instruments in the hands of eager students for any sort of musical education took extraordinary resourcefulness.

One pivotal figure in Kennedy's narrative, trumpet player and bandleader Clyde Kerr Sr., came up by way of McDonough 35—New Orleans's only public high school for African Americans until 1941, a Rampart Street institution within honking distance of the Eagle Saloon and the Funky Butt Hall. Kerr ended up becoming a longtime fixture at Booker T. Washington Senior High, where the Clyde Kerr Studio Orchestra became a legendary training ground for New Orleans schoolboy musicians.

Valmore Victor, an elementary school music teacher who gave several generations of New Orleans musicians (including Ellis Marsalis) their start between 1928 and his retirement in 1953, was remembered as the same sort of musical provisioner by sax man Earl Turbinton: "He had a house which must have had a thousand instruments; tuba, maybe twenty or thirty saxophones, twenty or thirty trumpets and trombones. You'd bring your own mouthpiece and Professor Victor would say, 'Go in there and get an alto 'til you find one that feels good to you. Play all these horns.'"

Victor, like Kerr, Osceola Blanchett, Yvonne Busch, and the other musician/educators whose stories Kennedy has assembled here, imbued his students with a both/and rather than either/or mentality—both classical *and* jazz, both sight-reading *and* improvisation, both performing

*and* composition. This ethos lives on in the multidimensional, institution-building approach of Wynton Marsalis, Donald Harrison, Terence Blanchard, and other young lions of New Orleans jazz. Above all, the pedagogical stress back in the day was on sight-reading as a route to both professional success and the social solidarity that comes when talented individuals do the hard work necessary to blend themselves into a swinging collective.

Yvonne Busch, who took over as Booker T. Washington's band director in 1951 at age 22 after spending her precocious preteens touring as a trumpeter with the International Sweethearts of Rhythm, "knew [that] self-discipline was a necessary ingredient for a student to become a musician, and group discipline was the only way a group of musicians could become a band." Faced with a strict proscription against jazz, swing, and rhythm-and-blues handed down by her school-board supervisors, she nevertheless fed her students' interest in jazz by writing arrangements on the blackboard for them to copy. Not just jazz, either. "At Werlein's Music Store," notes Kennedy, "all of the clerks knew Busch, and they would immediately pull out the latest sheet music for her when she came into the store. She was a regular customer, purchasing music—often with her own money—for her students. She would buy everything from marches, to classical selections for her concert band, to the sheet music of songs such as Bill Haley's 'Rock around the Clock' and songs by Elvis Presley."

Roll over, Louis Armstrong! Except that he wouldn't, of course, because Satchmo was an impurist, as all the great jazz players are. American popular song, of whatever provenance, is merely the meat; it's the motion—the swing, the blues-cry, the rhythmic and melodic intelligence—that counts when you're talking jazz.

Kennedy's book is, as I say, a good and needed corrective to jazz history as primitivist mythmaking. To be fair, it's an uneven effort, as revised dissertations sometimes are. The opening chapter, which narrates the early days of musical education in New Orleans's black public schools, contains far too many *we can assume, would have, and must have had*s. A later chapter on the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts (NOCCA) is a tedious review of internecine warfare within various arts organizations that could profitably have been cut by half. But these quibbles don't finally detract from the book's achievement, which is to fill in the back story to Wynton Marsalis, *Jazz at Lincoln Center*, the stellar arrival of "America's Classical Music." There's no sin in syncopation, it turns out, and a great deal to be proud of down in New Orleans.

ADAM GUSSOW

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### ***Hungry for Home: Stories of Food from Across the Carolinas.***

By Amy Rogers. Foreword by John Egerton. Charlotte: Novello Festival Press, 2003. 390 pages. \$29.95 hardcover.

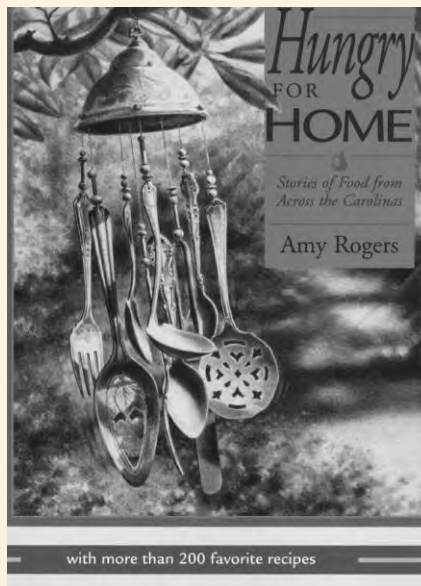
Shoppers at the S. H. Kress variety store in Charlotte, North Carolina, offered baker Dolores Stowe cash bribes if she would turn loose of the pecan chiffon pie recipe. True to company policy, she resisted. But in 1972, the year Dolores retired, the company dropped the pie from its menu, and the *Charlotte Observer* talked the Kress regional office of Atlanta into parting with the recipe. Trouble is, it lost something in the translation from 30 pies to two, and 125 people called the paper to protest. Longtime food columnist

Helen Moore had been on vacation when the furor broke, and she was told to fix it. She tracked down Dolores Stowe, and they manipulated brown and white sugar, vanilla, eggs, and pecans until Dolores declared, "This looks like my old pie." That recipe is reprinted, and the story recounted, in *Hungry for Home: Stories of Food from Across the Carolinas*, by Detroit native Amy Rogers. Each of the recipes in the book, more than 200 in all, is prefaced with a story connected to North or South Carolina.

"When it comes to food, nearly all of us are mongrels," Rogers writes. She leads off the book with her own Around the World Salad dressed with Middle Eastern sesame tahini sauce, Asian soy, and Italian basil leaves. Immigrants tell about bringing to the Carolinas Vietnamese cold shrimp noodle rolls, Greek avgolemono, and an Italian Nonna's chicken soup sent South from Syracuse, New York. Marisa Rosenfeld from Brazil shares the collard green recipe from her homeland and describes her North Carolina neighbors' wonderment as her plants approach six feet in height.

Recipes in *Hungry for Home* have a community cookbook simplicity to them. Writer Frye Gaillard's traditional Catawba Indian recipe for venison pot roast relies on a package of Lipton onion soup mix. Tammy Wilson defends her family's practice of making potato salad with Miracle Whip since, as her mother insisted, "Real mayonnaise is too greasy."

In preparation for her garlicky crab claws, Josephine Humphreys of Sullivan's Island, South Carolina, provides a lesson on how to lure the blue crustaceans out of the water with half a catfish tied to a string weighted with a bolt. Rogers offers two recipes for the fall highland delicacy persimmon pudding, one with eggs and one without, from a grandmother's handwritten notes on woodstove cuisine. Dan Huntley



describes how his father-in-law, Carroll Robinson, bakes and poaches country ham in a water-brown sugar-vinegar solution then tests for doneness by plunging his bare hands into the liquid. "Carroll doesn't give out recipes, he gives advice," Huntley writes. Between lavender-hued pages, Rogers offers valuable hints in marginal starbursts: "If you stray too far from the recipe for blueberry pie, you'll get blueberry soup."

Some may take issue with the assertion that cooks can substitute applesauce for dried apples in a mountain stack cake, or the contention that chicken spaghetti was invented by Episcopalians. But, as Rogers knows so well, kitchen table debate is a defining characteristic of Southern eaters, transplanted or indigenous. Emerging from the pages of *Hungry for Home* is a portrait of a diversified and evolving Carolina food culture, from the killed lettuce of the uplands to the crab bisque of the coast, all in a tone of front porch comfort, as warming as Brad Legrone's bread pudding baked with day-old Krispy Kreme doughnuts.

FRED SAUCEMAN

### ***Being Dead Is No Excuse: The Official Southern Ladies Guide to Hosting the Perfect Funeral.***

By Gayden Metcalfe and Charlotte Hayes. New York: Miramax Books, 2005. 236 pages. \$19.95.

The funerary ritual, as it applies to the Mississippi Delta, is revealed in a new book entitled *Being Dead Is No Excuse: The Official Southern Ladies Guide to Hosting the Perfect Funeral* by Gayden Metcalfe and Charlotte Hayes. Although the title assumes a region-wide familiarity, the Delta community of Greenville, Mississippi, is really the star here. The authors (both natives of the area) use humor, gossip, and tradition to spin this yarn of manners and heritage, entangling local families and their lore into what amounts to a peek inside the otherwise insular community of Greenville. While it is an entertaining read at times, the societal mores and eccentricities of which the authors speak may be too unfamiliar for some readers. Class-conscious moments such as "[a Delta lady] can never be too thin or have too much silver" may alienate some; this is definitely a book written with a certain audience in mind. That said, it is the funeral food that deserves—and really gets—attention. With tried and true family recipes comprising the bulk of the text, readers of *Being Dead Is No Excuse* will feel like they have hit pay dirt. Surprises such as fried walnuts, vodka cake, and the oddly named Visiting Dignitary Spinach offer a well-rounded peek into the cookbooks and cupboards of the ladies of Greenville, Mississippi. And if you are in need of a new twist on an old favorite, coconut cake and cheese straws find their way into the funeral procession as well.

AMY EVANS



# New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture Project Well Under Way

There's been a considerable buzz around the Center lately about the *New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* and the progress it has made in production. The multiyear project has gotten off to a strong start, and its momentum is steadily increasing.

The *New Encyclopedia*—an update and revision of the 1,634-page *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* that was originally published in 1989 and described by *U.S. News & World Report* as the “first attempt ever to describe every aspect of a region’s life and thought, the impact of its history and politics, music and literature, manners and myths, even the iced tea that washes down catfish and cornbread”—is being published as a series of paperback volumes, representing a corresponding section of the original edition. In all, 24 volumes will be released, each one substantially updated and with a significant amount of new material on everything Southern—from *Agriculture and Industry in the American South* to *Violence in the American South*. Collectively, the paperbacks will represent the *New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*.

The new format will allow the inclusion of a sizeable amount of new illustrations, graphs, tables, and photographs, as well as, at minimum, a 20 percent increase in the number of articles per volume. Also, a new area of scholarship is being added. *Foodways in the American South* will appear for the first time as a collection of articles, some of which were included in the original edition, most of which, however, will be new. John T. Edge, director of the Southern Foodways Alliance at the Center, is the consulting editor for the new volume and has developed an extensive list of new topics to include, as well as a first-rate group of contributors from across the South and from afar to author the new articles. Articles composing the *Foodways* volume will



Mary Beth Lasser

Charles Wilson (left) and Jimmy Thomas

include lengthy thematic entries such as “Food and Gender” and “Cultural Representations of Food” and more concise topical articles such as “Grits,” “Bourbon,” and “Barbecue.”

The *Language in the American South* volume, although not entirely new, will include such a vast amount of new scholarship that it will be one of the first published works to deal extensively with language in the South. Michael Montgomery, Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of South Carolina and coauthor of the *Dictionary of Smoky Mountain English*, will serve as consulting editor of the *Language* volume with Ellen Johnson, assistant professor of English, Rhetoric, and Writing at Berry College. Montgomery and Johnson have compiled a comprehensive list of articles that includes such topics as “The ‘R’ in Southern English,” “New Immigrant Languages,” “Gullah,” and “Perceptions of Southern English.”

Four to six volumes of the *New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* will be

published per year, and the first four volumes—*Foodways in the American South*; *Geography in the American South*; *History, Manners, and Myth in the American South*; and *Religion in the American South*—are scheduled to be published in the spring of 2006. Included among various other volumes to follow over the next five years will be *Literature in the American South*, *Law and Politics in the American South*, *Music in the American South*, *Race in the American South*, and *Ethnicity in the American South*.

Over the last 15 years, the South has continued to be a paradoxically evolving yet static region. Its culture continues to reflect both of those aspects. The new and updated scholarship included in the *New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* is intended to illuminate that which defines the South, intriguing and enlightening those who live within as well as beyond its nebulous borders.

JIMMY THOMAS

# Southern Leaders Championing Ideas of 35-Year-Old Lamar Society

The consensus among the some hundred Southern leaders who gathered at the University of Mississippi November 18-20, 2004, to consider the region's future was that, although progress has been made, much work remains. Comprising the area's preeminent journalists, politicians, and academics, the group was on campus for the Center-organized symposium *The American South, Then and Now: From the L. Q. C. Lamar Society to the Endowment for the Future of the South* to share ideas about how to address that progress and the work that must be done if the South is to overcome such problems as racism, ignorance, and poverty.

Former Mississippi governor William Winter set the tone for the meeting in his keynote address, delivered to a standing-room-only crowd at Barnard Observatory, the Center's home. "Now it is time for us to have an accounting of where we are today," Winter said. "The kind of South we pass on to our children will be a measure of our priorities."

Symposium participants looked specifically at the progress that has been made since the 1969 formation of



(above) From left: Mike Cody, Tom Naylor, and Ed Yoder participated in an opening panel on the L. Q. C. Lamar Society.

(right) Brandt Ayers, publisher of the *Anniston (Alabama) Star*, spoke at the luncheon.

(below) Tom Naylor, at the podium, recalled the founding of the Lamar Society.

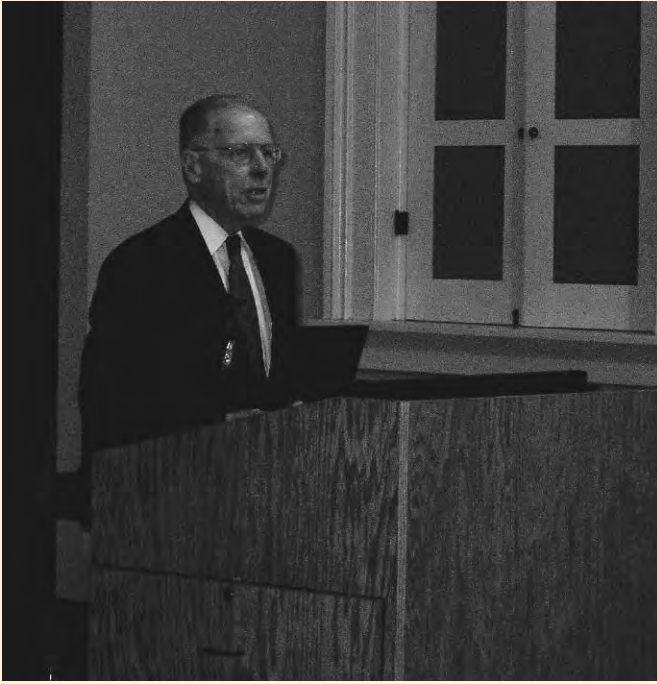


the L. Q. C. Lamar Society, named for the Mississippi statesman who called for reconciliation between North and South in his 1874 eulogy of former abolitionist and fellow U.S. senator Charles Sumner. During its existence, the Lamar Society's priorities were much the same as those Winter outlined in his speech: racial reconciliation, a "world-class" educational system, and economic and job growth.

Winter lauded the society for "bringing a new tone to the political arena" in the early 1970s—primarily through meetings and the publication of its manifesto, *You Can't Eat*







(above) Governor William F. Winter delivered the symposium keynote address.

(below) Sociologist John Shelton Reed looked into the future, and his advice was to the point: learn Spanish, as Hispanic immigration is remaking the region.



*Magnolias*—when most of the South’s governor’s mansions were home to progressive thinkers like Jimmy Carter of Georgia and Reubin Askew of Florida. And he credited the society with the creation of the Southern Growth Policies Board, a North Carolina-based think tank whose goal is economic development and whose work, Winter said, allowed the South to “come through an unprecedented period of change (in the 1970s and ’80s) better than it might have otherwise.”

Founding Lamar Society members themselves recounted their work at a symposium panel. Thomas Naylor, professor emeritus of economics at Duke University, said that when the society was founded, “the South was considered by many to be America’s biggest problem.” But, he said, “the Lamar Society, with some degree of success, offered the new breed of Southern politicians a positive alternative to the racism and demagoguery of the past.”

Founding president Mike Cody, a lawyer who represented Martin Luther King Jr. during the Memphis sanitation workers strike of 1968, said that the goal of the society was “to gather people from around the South, people of all races, politics, educational backgrounds, and religions to share common ideas and common experiences” in order to solve the South’s problems. Cody pointed out that the society dissolved as its members went on to serve on the staffs of the South’s new progressive governors and with organizations like the Southern Growth Policies Board.

The American South symposium, which also featured panels on such topics as the media, politics, and religion, is the first project of the Endowment for the Future of the South—a new Center initiative, that, in many ways, is an attempt to replicate the work of the Lamar Society. Created through a \$500,000 matching grant from Meridian’s Phil Hardin Foundation, the Endowment promotes examination of contemporary Southern social issues.

“The work of the Lamar Society took place at a key period of social change in the South,” said Center director Charles Reagan Wilson. “We are at another key moment in time, especially after the drama of the presidential election. We want to provide at the University of Mississippi through collaborations with other universities and organizations an institutional anchor for the kinds of ideas the Lamar Society championed.”

JENNIFER SOUTHALL

The Phil Hardin Foundation has provided a grant to begin the work of the Endowment for the Future of the South. The Center is currently raising matching funds for the grant. Anyone who is interested in finding out more about Future of the South projects, and contributing to the Endowment, should contact Center Director Charles Reagan Wilson at 662-915-5993 or contact Angelina Altobellis at 662-915-1546 or [altoabell@olemiss.edu](mailto:altoabell@olemiss.edu).



# Portrait of Former Professor and Liberal Arts Dean at Home in Barnard Observatory

Barnard Observatory might not be the most obvious place to hang a portrait of Dean Arthur Beverly Lewis, but according to those who knew him, it is no doubt the best place.

“My father had such affection for the Observatory,” says Lewis’s daughter, Mary Lewis Poole. “It was the heart and soul of his life at the University.”

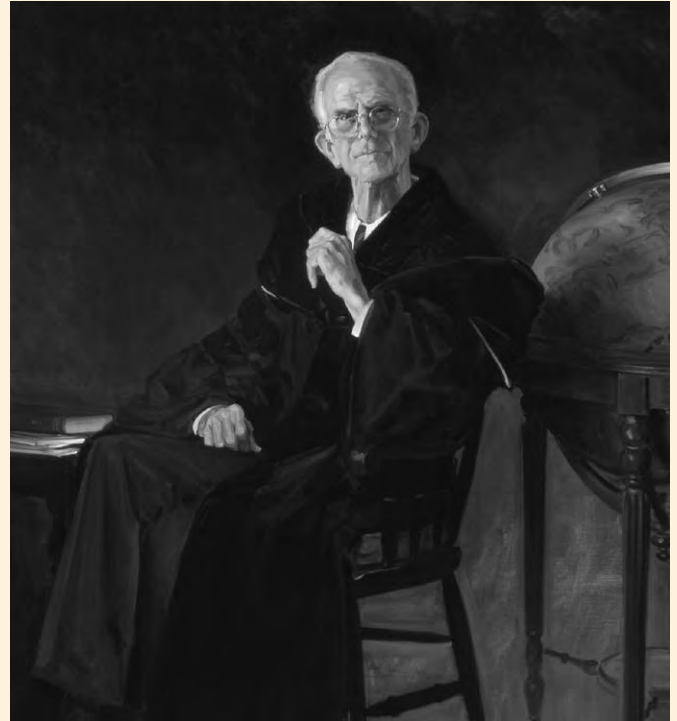
Long before the Observatory was home to the Center, it was home to Ole Miss’s physics and astronomy program; Lewis, who earned both bachelor’s and master’s degrees from UM (in 1923 and 1925), spent many hours in the building as a student, and many more there during the first few years of his 35-year professional career at Ole Miss. (Lewis was named associate professor of mathematics and physics in 1936, then served as professor of mathematics and physics, chair of the Department of Physics and Astronomy, professor of physics and astronomy, and Dean of the College of Liberal Arts before retiring in 1971.) Lewis was in fact so strongly connected to Barnard Observatory, that he delivered an address at the building’s 1992 rededication.

Poole and Jason Bouldin, the painting’s creator and a Lewis family friend, both say it is fitting not only that the portrait hangs in Barnard but also that it is located across from a portrait of F. A. P. Barnard, the University’s first chancellor and the man for whom the Observatory is named. “We’re benefitting from the University being strong now because of people like Dr. Lewis and Dr. Barnard,” Bouldin says. “They made sure we had something to inherit.”

“In many ways Dr. Barnard was a mentor for my father,” Poole says. “He felt like Dr. Barnard laid the groundwork for him.”

Winner of the Grand Prize in the Portrait Society of America’s 2002 International Portrait Competition with public commissions hanging in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Judiciary Room of the U.S. House of Representatives, Harvard’s University Hall, and the Oxford Federal Building and Court, Bouldin asked Lewis for his permission to be painted shortly before the professor’s death, in 2000. The resulting portrait was itself a finalist in the 2001 American Society of Portrait Artists International Portrait Competition.

“Dr. Lewis had such a wonderful mind and a great love of the University,” says Bouldin, who studied for a year at Ole



Arthur Beverly Lewis. Portrait by Jason Bouldin

(left) Members of the Lewis family at Barnard Observatory for the dedication of Jason Bouldin’s portrait of Dean Lewis.



Miss before transferring to Harvard, where he earned his bachelor’s degree. “His entire professional career was tied up with the University, and even though he was advancing in age he maintained a clarity of mind and a lively spirit. The juxtaposition of his failing body and strength of mind and spirit were worth recording.”

Bouldin’s painting shows Lewis in regalia, seated between symbols of his “academic training”: a book and stack of papers on his right and a celestial globe on his left. Also, Bouldin has painted Lewis as if he were answering a question, with the professor’s left hand raised, a traditional symbol of oratory.

Center director Charles Reagan Wilson agrees that Lewis’s spirit was worth recording and is pleased to have the portrait hang at the Observatory. “Dean Lewis was a student in this building and as dean was obviously a great friend of all of us who are interested in the liberal arts. We’re glad that he’s been honored with this portrait and that it’s hanging here.”

JENNIFER SOUTHALL



# SOUTHERN FOODWAYS REGISTER

The Newsletter of the Southern Foodways Alliance

**SAVE THE DATES! SFA FIELD TRIP 2005** Join the Southern Foodways Alliance for our annual Field Trip. In keeping with this year's theme of sugar and the sweet life, we explore New Orleans and environs. Dates to save are July 7-10. Details are forthcoming at [www.southernfoodways.com](http://www.southernfoodways.com).

## Mississippi Delta Meets the Culinary Institute of America

Viking Range Corporation and the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) present Tasting the South, a tour of Memphis and the Mississippi Delta, set for May 16-22, 2005. The tour, part of CIA's Worlds of Flavor Travel Program, offers chefs, home cooks, and food lovers the opportunity to immerse themselves in the food culture of such far flung destinations as India and Vietnam. The Delta tour is CIA's first domestic offering.

John T. Edge, director of the Southern Foodways Alliance, will lead the tour, which will feature such Southern foods as smoked or fried Mississippi pond-raised catfish, grits ground



Hot Tamales

fresh each morning from Delta Corn, hot tamales, and barbecue. The trip begins in Memphis, Tennessee, known as the largest city in Mississippi and the de facto capitol of the Delta. Travelers will spend a morning in the Memphis pits, learning the secrets and surveying the conditions that conspired to make Memphis the pork barbecue capital of America. Mississippi chefs Ann Cashion (Cashion's Eat Place, Washington D.C.), Dan Latham (L&M's Kitchen and Salumeria, Oxford, Mississippi), John Currence (City Grocery, Oxford, Mississippi), and Wally Joe (KC's, Cleveland, Mississippi) as well as such culinary and cultural authorities as Lolis Eric Elie (author of *Smokestack Lightning*) will host classes at the Viking Culinary Centers in Memphis and Greenwood.

The Memphis and the Mississippi Delta tour promises to be one of the most entertaining and informative tours that Worlds of Flavor has offered. The tour has 18 spaces available. To register, contact Education Department, Travel Programs, Attention: Michael Coon, The Culinary Institute of America at Greystone, 2555 Main Street. St. Helena, CA 94574; fax 707-967-2410 or 707-257-3756; e-mail [insideroute@ole.com](mailto:insideroute@ole.com).

## Founders Oral History Project

In October, the Southern Foodways Alliance—with funding support from Jim 'N Nick's—launched its Founders Oral History Project. At the helm is Amy Evans (named "one of the most fearsome talents in wine and food" by *Food & Wine* magazine). This important undertaking will forever preserve the history of the SFA through interviews with the organization's 50 founding members. By recruiting active members in locations across the country to conduct the interviews, SFA supporters have the opportunity to be more actively involved in its mission—and its history. If you would like to get involved, e-mail Amy at [amy\\_evans@usa.net](mailto:amy_evans@usa.net).

## SFA Board Meets at Blackberry Farm



This January, the Southern Foodways Alliance Board gathered for its annual retreat. Host was John Flear of Blackberry Farm in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains of Tennessee. First row, from left: Scott Barton, New York City; Mary Beth Lasseter, Oxford, Mississippi; Charla Draper, Hoover, Alabama; Elizabeth Sims, Asheville, North Carolina; Carol Puckett Daily, Jackson, Mississippi; Fred Sauceman, Johnson City, Tennessee. Second row: Peggy Galis, Athens, Georgia; Matthew Rowley, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; John T. Edge, Oxford, Mississippi; John Flear, Walland, Tennessee; Damon Lee Fowler, Savannah, Georgia; Marcie Ferris, Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Mike Riley, Bristol, Virginia; Ann Abadie, Oxford, Mississippi.

# New Orleans Museum Celebrates Southern Food and Drink

While she was head of the University of New Orleans Foundation, attorney Elizabeth Williams helped set up two museums, the National D-Day Museum and the Ogden Museum. When she left the foundation, she realized that “what I really wanted to do was set up a museum that dealt with my own longtime interests in food, food culture, and food history, and that New Orleans was the perfect place to do it.” She soon joined forces with fellow enthusiasts Gina Warner and Matt Konigsmark, and the three of them formed a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation and set themselves up as a small board to get things rolling, planning to expand the board later on.

Williams knew from her earlier experience that, in most people’s minds, a museum is a building. She didn’t have one and didn’t want to spend the museum’s first few years, and the financial and political capital of its directors, on bricks and mortar. She was eager to get on with the main business of the museum—exploring the glories of Southern food and cooking—well aware that an opening exhibition might give the museum the visibility it needed with the prospective donors who could make a permanent home possible.

The museum’s first exhibition, *A Toast of New Orleans*, devoted to the legendary drinks and drinking habits of the city, opened June 12, 2004, at the New Orleans City Centre, a shopping mall next to the New Orleans Superdome. The exhibition closed in August, but will reopen March 10 in the U.S. Mint in the French Quarter. As curator Elizabeth Pearce notes, “Drinks can be taken for granted; they wash down a po’boy or keep us cool inside a sticky, sultry jazz club, and they are as important as the food, music, and architecture in making New Orleans unique.”

A second exhibition, *Tout de Sweet—All about Sugar*, is scheduled to open in June 2005, timed to coincide with the SFA’s 2005 field trip to New Orleans. The sugar exhibition, which will also be housed in a shopping center, will be devoted to the sugar culture of the South—history, families, politics, slavery, current issues, recipes, innovative modern uses of sugar, traditional sugar sculpture, even the Sugar Bowl.

It is hoped that the exhibitions will give the museum visibility, but meanwhile the board is going on with behind-the-scenes activity that will make the institution a valuable resource for research on Southern foodways. An agreement has been reached with UNO to house the museum’s culinary archive, which will include a comprehensive collection of menus from Southern restaurants. Southern University will catalog and describe the artifacts that the museum collects. Several other institutions have expressed interest in partnering with the museum for research purposes.

The search for a permanent home for the museum continues. Elizabeth Williams envisions it as a cultural center where visitors can experience the food and drink of the South in all its complexity—the many ethnicities that have combined to create it; the farmers, fishermen, and hunters who have produced it; the inventors, chefs, business people, and home cooks who pass it on. In addition to exhibitions and research opportunities, the museum will eventually encompass a test and demonstration kitchen, lectures and demonstrations, perhaps even a restaurant. “A huge number of people are turning this into a labor of love,” says Elizabeth Williams.

SFA members who would like to learn more about the Southern Food and Beverage Museum may find information at [www.southernfood.org](http://www.southernfood.org).

THOMAS HEAD

## *The Pat Conroy Cookbook: Recipes of My Life*

By Pat Conroy with Suzanne Williamson Pollack  
Doubleday, 2004, \$26.

I’ve been a devoted fan of Pat Conroy’s fiction since being inspired by *The Water Is Wide* when I was studying elementary education at the University of Texas many years ago. As I devoured each eagerly awaited subsequent book, I learned that Conroy’s fiction is often enriched by the emotional experiences of his personal life. When his fictional characters began to demonstrate a passion for food and cooking, I suspected we might be kindred spirits. I already knew we are both Southerners, but Conroy appeared to be revealing a profound love of food and the pleasure of sharing it with others—something else we certainly have in common. My suspicions were confirmed with the arrival of Conroy’s cookbook, which he describes as his “autobiography in food.” Once it arrived, I couldn’t put it down, vicariously spending an entire weekend with the author and all the folks with whom he loves to cook and eat. Conroy makes the point that a “recipe is just a story with a good meal at the end,” and goes on to serve up hilarious stories, poignant anecdotes, and revealing vignettes, sauced and garnished with mouth-watering recipes.

The chapter “Why Dying Down South Is More Fun” leads to pickled shrimp, a unique macaroni, and country ham with bourbon glaze. The touching story about Conroy preparing the bridesmaids’ luncheon for his daughter Megan’s wedding brings forth cucumber soup, swordfish salad, and an heirloom pound cake recipe. There’s everything from low country oyster roasts to Roman home cooking, all from the pen of a master storyteller. Read this book, cook from it, savor it. It’s a wonderful read, and it eats every bit as good as it reads, as well. I am once again totally smitten. And Mr. Conroy, if you go before I do, I’ll be proud to come to your funeral and bring pickled shrimp.

VIRGINIA WOOD



# Iconic Southern Restaurants: Blue & White, Tunica, Mississippi

Gambling has changed Tunica, Mississippi, in so many ways that it's impossible to list all of them. But one thing that has remained—so far, anyway—is the Blue & White.

One day, perhaps, the rising cost of real estate will do what the rising cost of real estate always does to places like the Blue & White, which has been a landmark almost since it opened in 1937. Until then, the Blue & White remains what it has always been—solid, dependable, Southern cooking for breakfast, lunch, and dinner in solid, dependable Southern cooking surroundings. The gas pumps are gone, but the big blue and white sign remains, which means it's almost impossible to miss the restaurant, located on U.S. Hwy. 61 just far enough south of most of the casinos and development.

One highlight at the Blue & White is real redevye gravy, made with ham drippings and leftover coffee and served with Virginia ham. This is an acquired taste, salty and dark, but for anyone who remembers what it's supposed to taste like—or who wants to try—it's almost worth the drive down from Memphis. Needless to say, the grits and biscuits are up to the quality of the gravy.

Blue & White Restaurant, 1355 U.S. Highway 61 N, Tunica, MS 38676; 662-363-1371

JEFF SIEGEL

# The Menu Project

Researching food trends, menu design, restaurant fads, and the economics of food will be easier because of the Menu Project of the Southern Food and Beverage Museum, begun in conjunction with the University of New Orleans. The museum, working with state restaurant associations, is systematically collecting menus from restaurants from every Southern state. The menus will be collected every year and put into a database, to form a rich source of material for future researchers. The museum is collecting as many menus as it can get, both from small holes-in-the-wall and white tablecloth places.

Members of the Southern Foodways Alliance can participate in building this important research tool by sending us a menu from all of your restaurant meals. Your help will ensure that no menu falls through the cracks. The museum wants the collection to be as complete as possible. And of course we would welcome any older menus that you may be ready to part with. We have a growing core of menus and hope to build it through the continued cooperation of restaurants and diners.

Help us create this database by sending your menus to Southern Food and Beverage Museum, 1435 Jackson Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70130.

ELIZABETH WILLIAMS

## SFA Contributors

THOMAS HEAD is the *Washingtonian* magazine's executive wine and food editor and one of its restaurant reviewers. He writes regularly for the *Washingtonian* and other publications on food, drink, and travel.

JEFF SIEGEL, a graduate of the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University, has authored six books, and his writing has appeared in *Sports Illustrated*, *Gourmet*, and *Travel & Leisure*.

ELIZABETH WILLIAMS is the president of the Southern Food and Beverage Museum in New Orleans.

VIRGINIA WOOD is the food editor of the *Austin Chronicle*.

## SOUTHERN FOODWAYS ALLIANCE



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# Yoknapatawpha Arts Council Third Annual Oxford Film Festival

September 5-11, 2005

[www.oxfordfilmfest.com](http://www.oxfordfilmfest.com)

662.236.6429

Film submission deadline is May 1, 2005.



## Welty Newsletter

The Winter 2005 issue of the *Eudora Welty Newsletter* includes essays on Czech translations of Welty's works, the scholarly significance of and use of humor in *The Shoe Bird*, the roots of King MacLain, and Welty's use of Beethoven in "June Recital." The "Roses in Welty's Garden" column discusses the Dainty Bess, and there is also information on Mittie Elizabeth Creekmore Welty, as well as other News and Notes. Subscriptions are \$10 domestic and \$14 international for two issues per year. To subscribe, please visit [www.gsu.edu/~wwwewn/order.htm](http://www.gsu.edu/~wwwewn/order.htm) or mail your request to *Eudora Welty Newsletter*, Department of English, Georgia State University, P.O. Box 3970, Atlanta, GA 30302-3970.

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### WILEY AND THE CHECKMATES

*Introducing Wiley and the Checkmates*

Pickmark Records 15001

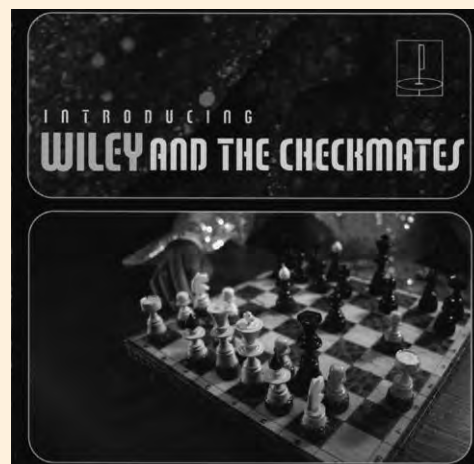
Anyone who's lived in Oxford for a time probably knows Herbert Wiley, who until recently ran a shoe repair business just off the Square. Back in the '60s and early '70s Wiley was the front man for a soul band, the Checkmates, who played on the local chitlin' circuit as well as fraternity parties. Wiley retired from the scene to raise a family, but several years ago a local band inspired him to dust off his matching gold lamé hat and suit and return to the fray.

The new Checkmates, an octet who perform largely in a classic deep soul style, have become the most popular band in Oxford. As the title of this CD suggests, it's their debut, and was jointly produced by the band and Fat Possum Records' Bruce Watson. While the Checkmates' live performances contain many soul and blues gems, the CD is composed solely of originals that demonstrate their ability to work within a variety of genres without being derivative.

The band's penchant for deep soul is expressed on "Dog Tired," which melds James Brown and Rufus Thomas, the jaunty "Gonna Find a Way," which evokes Sam Cooke, and "Can't Pull the Wool over My Eyes," whose punchy horns and percolating bass rhythms bring to mind Otis Redding's "I Can't Cut You Loose." "Another Man's Home" is a player's lament that sounds straight out of the contemporary chitlin' circuit, while "Messed Up World" is a timely political commentary that builds musically around early '70s blaxploitation motifs. "Streak-A-Leon," featuring hipster jive from Wiley on top of guitarist J. D. Mark's distorted guitar riffs, finds the band in the same territory as some of Fat Possum's recent collaborations of bluesmen and garage bands.

Wiley's skills as a crooner are highlighted on the mid-tempo opener "Sweet Breeze," which features female backup singers, the Muscle Shoals-style ballad "Sixteen Miles," and Wiley's own "Eyes of the World," a lover's declaration that features elegantly arranged strings, courtesy of the Ole Miss Music Department.

*Introducing Wiley and the Checkmates* is a strong outing from a young band that has improved considerably since these sessions were recorded last year. No nostalgia trip, this CD suggests the exciting possibilities that lie in respectfully modernizing deep soul. For more information, visit [www.wileyandthecheckmates.com](http://www.wileyandthecheckmates.com).



SCOTT BARRETTA

# Nassour Donates Arts and Entertainment Collection to Williams Library

Journalist, author, and playwright Ellis Nassour recently donated an extensive art and entertainment collection to Ole Miss “as a way to give back.” The 1964 University of Mississippi graduate said at a September ceremony at the J. D. Williams Library that he was motivated to donate the collection because “of a great lack of anything arts related” in Mississippi when he was growing up in Vicksburg.

The Mamie and Ellis Nassour Arts and Entertainment Collection—which was given in memory of Nassour’s parents—contains videotapes, compact discs, vinyl LPs, audio cassettes, bound plays, books, and art pertaining to musical theater. “The Nassour collection gives the university a new breadth of research material, stretching from Hollywood to the New York stage and back to the South,” says Center director Charles Reagan Wilson. “The primary sources on Patsy Cline, in particular, help support the Center’s new emphasis on the study of Southern music.”

A former *New York Times* and *New York Daily News* journalist, Nassour is the author of two books on Cline—*Patsy Cline* (Leisure Books) and *Honky Tonk Angel: The Intimate Story of Patsy Cline* (St. Martin’s). Ellis also coauthored *Rock Opera: The Creation of Jesus Christ Superstar* (Hawthorn Books).



Jennifer Ford, interim head of Ole Miss Archives and Special Collections (left), Julia Rholes, dean of UM Libraries, and Ellis Nassour with items from Nassour’s recently donated collection.

Besides honoring his parents, Nassour’s collection also salutes several people who influenced him at Ole Miss, including Chancellor and Mrs. John D. Williams, Tom S. Hines, Sam Talbert, and Mildred Spurrier Topp, Ellis’s creative writing teacher, whose efforts brought “out the best of what talent I had,” he says.

Those interested in making donations to help sustain and build the Mamie and Ellis Nassour Arts and Entertainment Collection are encouraged to contact the University of Mississippi Foundation at 662-915-5944.

TOBIE BAKER

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## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

ANGELINA ALTOBELLIS joined the Center's staff in July 2003 as advancement associate. She earned her MA in comparative literature from the University of Texas at Austin.

TOBIE BAKER is a communications specialist for the Office of Media and Public Relations at the University of Mississippi. Formerly a newspaper reporter in Grenada, he received his BS in journalism from the University of Mississippi in 1996.

SCOTT BARRETTA is the former editor of *Living Blues*. He is a freelance writer and teaches sociology at Ole Miss and Millsaps College.

AMY EVANS is associate director of the Southern Foodways Alliance's Oral History Initiative and a special projects consultant for Viking Range Corporation. She is also an exhibiting artist, freelance photographer, and cofounder of PieceWorks, a nonprofit arts and outreach organization.

ADAM GUSSOW, assistant professor of English and Southern Studies at the University of Mississippi, is the author of *Mister Satan's Apprentice: A Blues Memoir* and *Seems Like Murder Here: Southern*

*Violence and the Blues Tradition*, winner of the C. Hugh Holman Award for the best book of literary scholarship or criticism in Southern literature published in 2002.

JOAN WYLIE HALL teaches in the English Department at the University of Mississippi. She is the author of *Shirley Jackson: A Study of the Short Fiction* and articles on Tennessee Williams, William Faulkner, Grace King, Frances Newman, and other authors.

KATHRYN MCKEE is McMullan associate professor of Southern Studies and associate professor of English at the University of Mississippi. She has published essays and lectured about writers of the 19th- and 20th-century South, including William Faulkner, Ellen Glasgow, Bobbie Ann Mason, and Sherwood Bonner.

FRED SAUCEMAN is executive assistant to the president for university relations at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City. He writes a weekly column on food for the *Kingsport Times-News* and has published several magazine articles describing his region's foodways. His essays about mountain food culture are heard monthly on *Inside Appalachia*, produced by West Virginia Public Broadcasting.

JENNIFER SOUTHALL is a communications specialist for the Office of Media and Public Relations at the University of Mississippi. She taught high school English and worked as a magazine editor before returning to the University, where she received a BA in English.

JIMMY THOMAS is managing editor of the *New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. He received BA degrees in English and philosophy at the University of Mississippi and has worked for publications in Oxford and New York.

DAVID WHARTON is assistant professor and director of documentary projects at the Center, where he teaches courses in Southern Studies, fieldwork, and photography. He is the author of *The Soul of a Small Texas Town: Photographs, Memories, and History from McDade*.

CHARLES REAGAN WILSON is director of the Center and professor of history and Southern Studies. Among his publications are *Baptized in Blood: the Religion of the Lost Cause* and *Judgment and Grace in Dixie: Southern Faiths from Faulkner to Elvis*.



(above) Robin Yekaitis, *Little Princess, Halloween Parade, New Albany*.

(left) Susie Penman, *Mr. Aron with a Picture of His Grandchildren, Bruce*.

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## POSTER

### The Sixth Oxford Conference for the Book Poster (1999)

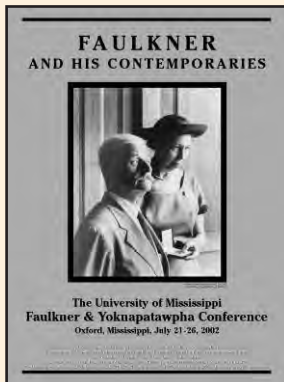
Poster features Eudora Welty portrait by Mildred Nungester Wolfe from the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.



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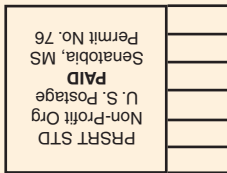
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