



Arkansas Literary Festival
April 20-22, 2006 • River Market District

News

For Immediate Release

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Fourth Annual Arkansas Literary Festival to Be Held April 20-22 *National Authors to Headline River Market District Event*

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (March 20, 2007) – Nikki Giovanni, the “princess of black poetry” and one of Oprah’s 25 “Living Legends,” and Frank Warren, author of the popular “Postsecret” books and the Web’s third most popular blog, will headline this year’s Arkansas Literary Festival, set for April 20-22 in Little Rock’s River Market District. More than 50 authors are scheduled to participate in the festival, which includes adult and children sessions.

In its fourth year, the festival continues to make a name for itself in the world of book festivals, attracting some of the nation’s best-selling authors and most discussed up-and-comers. This year’s festival includes more authors and concurrent sessions for participants to choose from.

“This year’s line-up of authors is more diverse than ever,” said Katie McManners, development director for Arkansas Literacy Councils, Inc. and festival coordinator. “The festival will offer sessions on history, food, religion, politics, animals and everything in between. Our children’s area will again feature outstanding authors and activities for children of all ages.”

Headline authors include Giovanni, Warren, Roland Mesnier, Jonathan Reynolds, Milton Viorst, Kevin Brockmeier, NPR’s “The Book Guys” and children’s author Cheryl Barnes. A full list of authors and their biographies can be found at www.arkansasliteraryfestival.org.

Events at the festival include readings and discussions by celebrated authors, plus book signings, children’s activities, musical entertainment and an outdoor exhibit area in the River Market pavilions. The festival is free and open to the public. New this year – authors will appear at the main book sales area in the River Market East Pavilion for additional book signings and discussions with festival-goers.

Proceeds from book sales and sponsorships support Arkansas Literacy Councils, Inc. (ALC) and its network of 50 community-based literacy councils that recruit and train volunteer tutors to help adults improve their basic reading and writing skills.

The festival opens with National Public Radio's "The Book Guys," Allan Stypeck and Mike Cuthbert, for one of two live shows for future broadcast. The event will be held at 6 p.m. and 7:15 p.m. Thursday, April 19 at the Main Library's Darragh Center. Audience members are encouraged to bring their books for appraisals.

Nikki Giovanni will kick off the authors sessions speak on Friday, April 20 at Philander Smith College's Auditorium. Later that evening, the Festival will host a martini party with authors at 7 p.m. at the Junior League of Little Rock headquarters. Guests will sip martinis, enjoy gourmet hors d'oeuvres, rub elbows with festival authors, and have the opportunity to have books signed. Tickets are \$40 per individual and \$75 per couple in advance; \$50 per individual and \$80 per couple at the door.

Roland Mesnier, head pastry chef for five U.S. presidents, will be featured at "Roland on the River" at 1:30 p.m., Saturday, April 21 at the River Market Clark Room. Mesnier will give guests an insider's look at the world of politics through pastry. The event includes a slide show and demonstration by Mesnier, plus a tasting of his treats. Tickets are \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door. Call (501) 663-4321 to purchase tickets.

That evening, the *Arkansas Times* will host its "Pub or Perish" event, featuring open-mic readings by festival authors and local writers at The Peabody Little Rock. Following Pub or Perish will be an after party, presented by *Oxford American Magazine*. Both events are free and open to the public.

The festival's children's activities will start with the Children's Breakfast at the Clinton Presidential Center. The breakfast, starting at 9 a.m., Saturday, April 21 will feature Cheryl Barnes, author of "Woodrow, the White House Mouse," and the mouse himself. Other special appearances include Walter "The Giant Storyteller" Mayes and children's musicians Brian and Terri Kinder. Children and their parents will enjoy a pancake breakfast, receive tickets to return to tour the Clinton Library, and kids will receive a goodie bag. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$20 for children, or \$50 for a family (two adults, two children). Call (501) 663-4321 to purchase tickets. On Sunday, April 22, families, literacy specialists, librarians and reading teachers can join Walter "The Giant Storyteller" Mayes as he engages in conversation with two special guests. This free event is for children 8-12 and adults interested in learning about children's literature.

Educators, librarians, literacy specialists, probation officers, parents and others are invited to attend free professional development workshops on Saturday, April 21 in the Main Library boardroom. Tricia Suellentrop will discuss her innovative literacy project with juvenile offenders; author Alison Moore will present how to incorporate a multi-media presentation about the historical orphan train; and Walter Mayes will lead a lively discussion of best books for kids of all ages. Attendance is limited to 20 people per session, and professional development credits may apply. Call (501) 663-4321 for reservations.

Also part of this year's literary festival is an essay-writing competition, sponsored by the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Students from across the state have submitted essays related to the Central High integration crisis. The winning essayist will read his or her work at a reception at 5 p.m. on Saturday, April 21 in the Writer's Garden of the Main Library. School finalists from the Arkansas Arts Center's Poetry Out Loud competition will also be recognized at the reception, which is sponsored by UALR and free and open to the public.

This year's festival chairman is Jean Block, attorney with the Arkansas Office of the Attorney General. Honorary chairman is Lisenne Rockefeller, who continues her late husband's legacy. Lt. Gov. Win Rockefeller was honorary chairman of the festival from its inception in 2004 and will be honored with an award at the Celebrate Literacy Month Ceremony in the State Capitol Rotunda at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 24.

Proceeds from book sales and sponsorships support Arkansas Literacy Councils, Inc. (ALC) and its network of 50 community-based literacy councils that recruit and train volunteer tutors to help adults improve their basic reading and writing skills. ALC was named 2005 Nonprofit of the Year by *Arkansas Business*. For more information about the festival, visit the Arkansas Literary Festival website at www.ArkansasLiteraryFestival.org or call (501) 663-4321.

About Arkansas Literacy Councils

ALC was founded in 1971 as a nonprofit corporation to support local, nonprofit literacy councils that recruit and train volunteers to help adults improve their basic reading and writing skills. The nonprofit is affiliated with the national adult literacy organization ProLiteracy Worldwide. ALC's mission is to "Empower Arkansas Through Literacy." ALC coordinates funding, training, national service, nonprofit development and other activities for the statewide network of 50 local literacy councils. In the fiscal year ending June 30, 2006, the literacy councils served 6,319 students – 4,001 in basic literacy and 2,318 in English-as-a-Second-Language. More than 4,515 tutors provided 215,903 hours of instruction. In 2006, the festival raised \$54,000 for ALC.