

Chopin wrote about 'real' topics for women

By JIMMY SEXTON
The Natchez Democrat

Kate Chopin was a forgotten American voice until her literary reputation was resuscitated by critics in the 1950s.

Today her novel, "The Awakening," the story of a sensual, determined woman who insists on her independence, is widely read and highly honored, a feminist work which was decidedly ahead of its time.

Dr. Emily Toth, professor of English and Women's Studies at Louisiana State University, in Baton Rouge, presented an overview of Chopin's life and writings Saturday morning at the Natchez Literary Celebration.

Chopin's writings were popular because they dealt with topics — such as family, love, power, dreams and lust — usually only discussed behind closed doors, "gossiped" about by women.

"Writing about people's lives is an art, not a science," said Toth, whose biography of Chopin was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.

"With women, you have to look for gossip, or what they're hiding before you can grasp the true meaning of their life or work."

Chopin was a relatively unknown writer (her works were in the 1800s) when Toth began reading about her in preparation for her biography.

Now, she's number five on the list of most popular authors taught in literary courses across the country.

"There was a time when most students in college were assigned to read 'Moby Dick,'" said Toth.

"That's not the case any more. Now, they are routinely assigned to read 'The Awakening,' instead."

"Kate was an unconventional writer. Outwardly she fit a standard pattern, but she published stories about extramarital lust in Louisiana that made people sit back and wonder why she'd do something like that."

— Emily Toth

sider.

"That's how she learned her trade," said Toth. "She felt she was always on the outside looking in."

Chopin, who lived to be 54, was born in 1850 in St. Louis. She married Oscar Chopin at the age of 20 and they quickly moved to New Orleans. They lived there nine years, Chopin giving birth to six children (all of whom survived, which was uncommon in that time).

In 1882, at the age of 32, Chopin and her family moved to North Central Louisiana. Oscar died soon thereafter, leaving Chopin with six children and \$12,000 in debt.

"She had no choice but to run their plantation businesses," said Toth. "She had a scandalous social life as a widow, and two years later returned to St. Louis."

In the years that Chopin resided in Louisiana, she was aware of and receptive to Creole, Cajun, black, and Indian cultures, and she would incorporate people from these cultures in her work.

"In 1885, Chopin's mother died," said Toth. "That was a significant change in Chopin's life."

"She was 35 at the time, and left the Catholic Church to write stories about married widows and unhappy marriages. It left many speculating about her life and wondering why she ever left Louisiana."

"scholarly reasons."

"I soon learned that they hook viewers through five major secrets — love, sex, money, family and health," said Toth.

"All three forms of popular culture — soaps, romances and country music — are about these five secrets. These are also the three most popular cultures that are looked down upon; they are called trash and their audiences are attacked."

Toth said in reality, they are all uniquely important because they are the only popular cultures that focus on emotions, women's opinions and women's secret lives.

"Kate was an unconventional writer," said Toth. "Outwardly she fit a standard pattern, but she published stories about extramarital lust in Louisiana that made people sit back and wonder why she'd do something like that."

She later discovered, while in the kitchen of a woman whose grandfather had known Chopin, that Chopin had had an extramarital affair with the grandfather, whose name was Albert.

"Chopin made a choice that influenced the rest of her life," said Toth. "She could have stayed in Louisiana and had an affair, or she could go home to St. Louis and create a whole new life for herself."

Democrat
June 2, 1996

Chopin, who would be 156 this year, always lied about her age. Her writings derived from gossip, or conversation about people.

"Gossip is the world's oldest mass medium, practiced best by women," said Toth. "In fact, Southern women have made it an art form.

"Maybe it's because we spend more time outdoors and we're less inclined to read books. Women like to read people, and that's what it's all about."

Living in the South made Chopin a people writer, teaching her how to watch people. Though she lived in Louisiana for 14 years, she never visited Mississippi and considered herself an out-

Chopin's life is an example of "sequencing," said Toth, in which she played the role of wife and mother. That changed when she became a writer.

"Kate had always written and always gossiped, but she was 39 when she was first published," said Toth.

"Her first novel was about a woman choosing a career over marriage. Her second was about a woman wanting a long distance, unconventional marriage in order to 'keep her secrets.'"

Toth herself grew up knowing secrets and gossip were important. Her mother did not watch soaps on TV, but Toth did for

Chopin was a woman who turned away from a life of lustful desire toward another desire, a profession as a professional writer.

"We used to think that the biggest secret women had was something sexual, but not anymore," said Toth.

"The biggest secret for women today, as it was 100 years ago, is personal ambition. We're not supposed to let on that we want praise, money or power. To say you want money is a little bit taboo, because money symbolizes power.

"Chopin showed us that the big revelation is not that women have sexual feelings, but that women could take charge of their lives."



The Natchez Democrat/Barbara Gerard Kaiser

SMILING FACES: The volunteers of the Literary Celebration put in countless hours at the City Auditorium making sure everything runs smoothly. Pictured are, from left, Christy Williams, Carolyn Harper, Elise Ogden and Sharon Ogden.

1996
page 63

June 1996

Natchez

on the river



RICHARD N. WRIGH

Noted African-American author of *Native Son* and *Black Boy* was born in 1908 in Natchez, where his early childhood was spent. His quest for freedom led him to Paris, France, where he died in 1960.

**Official
Tourist Guide
to the
Historic City**

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND

1996
page 64



The Natchez Democrat/Barbara Gerard Kaiser

PREPARATION: Willie Morris, left, author and editor, reads over the evening program Thursday. William Styron, a Pulitzer Prize winning author, glances over his shoulder before taking the stage to read selections from one of his novels.

1996
page 65



The Natchez Democrat/Barbara Genard Kaiser

LITERARY TOUR: Authors, lecturers and guests to the Natchez Literary Celebration wound up the week with tours of historic homes around Natchez. (Top) Dr. Kenneth Stubbs (far right in tie) invites guests from the Literary Celebration into Riverview. (Above) Marshall Mitchell with the Natchez National Historical Park, entertains guests at Melrose. (Left) Carolyn Vance Smith (left), co-chair of the Literary Celebration, talks with Nikki Giovanni, Saturday night's literary speaker, while visiting Riverview.

JUNE 1996

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		<p>1</p> <p>THE 7TH ANNUAL NATCHEZ LITERARY CELEBRATION - Sponsored by Capiak Lincoln Community College, the National Park Service, The Mississippi Department of History and Archives. This award-winning audience devoted to literature, history and culture. The 1996 theme is "Women in Southern Literature". The Natchez City Auditorium. For info and reservations call (800) 862-3259 or (601) 445-5874.</p> <p>REMEMORS - Natchez Little Theatre. Ticket prices: \$10 adults, \$5 all students. 209 Linton Ave. For more info and reservations call (601) 442-2233.</p> <p>4TH MISSISSIPPI MEN'S STATE BOWLING TOURNAMENT - Applications available at Riverside Bowling Lanes. Begins every Sat. & Sun. at 9 a.m. For more info call (601) 442-8436.</p> <p>CONFEDERATE WALKING TOUR - NATCHEZ CITY CEMETERY</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>THE DEPORT GUARANTY CANCER TENNIS TOURNAMENT - co-sponsored by American Cancer Society, Natchez Community Tennis Assoc., State Parks Insurance Co., Kelly's Kids, and International Paper. \$50 per event or \$50 for two events. For more information call Norma Pyron at (601) 446-6677.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>THE DEPORT GUARANTY CANCER TENNIS TOURNAMENT - For more information call Norma Pyron at (601) 446-6677.</p> <p>LIS BELLES CHAMPIONS JUNE 9th CONCERT TOUR - open air concert with English band/belle presented by Parkway Presbyterian Church of Natchez, LA at the Canal Street Depot at noon. For more information call Vickie Stephens at (504) 488-9654.</p> <p>BELWOOD CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP - Belwood Country Club. For more information call (601) 442-5493.</p> <p>CONFEDERATE WALKING TOUR - NATCHEZ CITY CEMETERY - The William T. Martin Camp 900 Sons of Confederate Veterans conducts 90-minute tours. Saturdays 10 a.m.; 2 p.m. Sundays 2 p.m. \$5 per person at 3rd gate at City Cemetery on Linton Avenue. For more information call (601) 446-6651 or (800) 647-6742.</p>
<p>13</p>	<p>SECOND ANNUAL NATCHEZ JUNE-TENTH CELEBRATION - Theme "Reaching back for our African culture" Reception 6:00pm Movie "Sankofa" 7:00 pm at Adams School of Nursing</p>	<p>14</p> <p>SECOND ANNUAL NATCHEZ JUNE-TENTH CELEBRATION - Libetian Prayer 9:00 Park in The Road D'Veonca at Liberty Road</p> <p>FAMILY FUN DAY - 10:30 am. Food, fun & entertainment. Thompson School</p> <p>NIGHT OF BELIEFS - 7:00 pm. Concert - Willie Clayton & Mad Yalson. City Auditorium \$15.00 in advance. \$20 if at the door.</p> <p>CONFEDERATE WALKING TOUR - NATCHEZ CITY CEMETERY - The William T. Martin Camp 900 Sons of Confederate Veterans conducts 90-minute tours. Saturdays 10 a.m.; 2 p.m. Sundays 2 p.m. \$5 per person at 3rd gate at City Cemetery on Linton Avenue. For more information call (601) 446-6651 or (800) 647-6742.</p>
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1996
page 67

Her Truth is Marching On



Robin Miller — Staff reporter

Myrtle Evers-Williams smiles as she is greeted by admirers at the Natchez Literary Celebration on March 31. Ms. Evers-Williams talked about her late husband Medgar Evers and her experience in being a southern woman. Ms. Evers-Williams is also the chairman of the NAACP's board of directors.

1996
page 68

"An Evening with the Stars" featuring Nikki Giovanni

Saturday, June 1, 1996
Natchez Municipal Auditorium

7:30 p.m.
Natchez, Mississippi

The Seventh Annual Natchez Literary Celebration presents
"Southern Women: 300 Years of Influence"



The Honorable William F. Winter
will preside and introduce the following:

Travis Thornton, Dean, Natchez Campus of Copiah-Lincoln Community College
Dean Thornton will introduce Ellen Douglas, penname of Josephine Haxton, winner of the 1996 Richard Wright Literary Award for Fiction, and Willie Morris, winner of the award for Non-Fiction.

Ellen Douglas, born **Josephine Ayres** in Natchez, Miss., is best known for her understated tragicomic novels that combine richly drawn characters with well-established settings to vividly and honestly represent Southern life. Her books include *Black Cloud*, *White Cloud* and *A Family's Affairs*.

Willie Morris, editor-in-chief of *Harper's* magazine at age 32, is the acclaimed author of many publications, including *North Toward Home* and *New York Days*.

Dr. Thomas D. Layzell, Commissioner of Higher Education in Mississippi, will introduce as a group Mississippi's **Most Outstanding Humanities Division Students and Faculty Members in Colleges and Universities**.

- Nikki Giovanni: "Art as Diversity: Art Is Diversity"

Nikki Giovanni is one of the best-known poets in America. She is the author of over a dozen books and the winner of many awards and honorary degrees. Her work has moderated from that of an angry revolutionary in the 1960s to focus on the individual's search for love and acceptance - an ongoing struggle in the black community. However, most critics agree that her personal voice gives consistency to her work which is "honest, searching, complex, lusty and, above all, individualistic and charmingly egoistical." Giovanni is currently Professor of English at Virginia Polytechnic University, Blacksburg.

1996
page 69

Friday, June 7, 1996

THE NATCHEZ DEMOCRAT, Natchez, Miss. • 3A



The Natchez Democrat/Barbara Gerand Kaiser

LITERARY CELEBRATION: Dean Travis Thornton of Copiah-Lincoln Community College (left) presents the Richard Wright Literary Excellence award to Ellen Douglas for her work in fictional literature. The ceremony was held June 1 as part of the Natchez Literary Celebration.

1996
page 70

Friday, June 7, 1996

THE NATCHEZ DEMOCRAT, Natchez, Miss. • 7A



The Natchez Democrat/Barbara Gerard Kaiser

LITERARY CELEBRATION: Dean Travis Thornton of Copiah-Lincoln Community College (left) presents the Richard Wright Literary Excellence award to Willie Morris for his work in non-fictional literature. The ceremony was held June 1 as part of the Natchez Literary Celebration.

1996
page 71

OPINION

Friday, June 28, 1996

NLT changes impression of South

One of the hundreds of people attending the seventh annual Natchez Literary Celebration, May 30 to June 1, was Gerie Jackson of Renton, Wash.

The theme of this year's conference was "Southern Women: 300 Years of Influence."

After leaving Natchez, Mrs. Renton wrote me a very touching letter. Part of it follows:

"The speakers and the topics communicated to me the deep regard and respect people who live in the South have for the history, traditions and people of the area.

"I also wanted to let you know how much this experience has done for my personal growth. I came away with a new appreciation for Mississippi as a breathtakingly beautiful area and for the people, especially the Southern women that I saw and learned about, as strong, smart, capable individuals with backbones as well as charm and grace.

"The trip did a lot to dispel the negative images and stereotypes we Northerners have concerning the South. What better education is there?"

Isn't she right? As an educator, when I read something like that, I think, "Wonderful! Terrific! That's what the conference is all about! We're succeeding!"

But it's not just those of us who sponsor the conference who are succeeding. It's everyone who believes in it and supports it. Because, without the assistance and generosity of many, many agencies, companies, business and individuals, the Literary Celebration simply could not take place.

The sponsors of the Literary Celebration, Copiah-Lincoln Community College, the



Top of the Morning

CAROLYN VANCE SMITH
Natchez Literary Celebration

National Park Service and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, are deeply grateful for the continued support of so many.

Saying "thank you" is all we can do, but the words come from the heart. Among those who helped this year are:

Adams County Board of Supervisors, Alcorn State University, All-Phase Electric Supply Co., All-States Security, Judge George W. Armstrong Public Library, Bluff City Distributors, Bridgett's Re-Sale Shop, Britton and Kootz First National Bank, Callon Petroleum and Cellular One.

Also, Co-Lin faculty, staff and students, Deposit Guaranty National Bank, Eastern National Park and Monument Association in Tupelo and in Natchez, the Co-Lin Board of Trustees, the Co-Lin Elderhostel program, The Order of the First Family of Mississippi, First Presbyterian Church and Fry Realty.

Also, Grand Village of the Natchez Indians, Historic Jefferson College, Heard Music Co., the historic houses Airlie, The Burn, Dunleith, Elms Court, Glen Auburn, Gov. Holmes House, Griffith-McComas House, House on Ellicott Hill, Magnolia Hall, Mount Locust, Mount

Repose, Myrtle Terrace, Pleasant Hill, Riverview, Shields Town House, Stanton Hall and Wensel House.

Also, Historic Natchez Foundation, International Paper Foundation, Kelly's Kids, Liza's Contemporary Cuisine, Mississippi Department of Economic and Community Development, Mississippi Educational Television, Mississippi Humanities Council, Mississippi State Board for Community Colleges, Mississippi Welcome Center and Leonore O'Malley.

Also, Natchez Art Association, Natchez Association for the Preservation of Afro-American Culture, the city of Natchez, Natchez Coca-Cola Company, Natchez Community Hospital, Natchez Convention and Visitor Bureau, *The Natchez Democrat*, The Natchez Eola Hotel, Natchez Garden Club, Natchez Newspapers Inc. and Natchez Public School System.

Also, Natchez Retiree Partnership, Natchez Rotary Club, Natchez Trace Parkway, Natchez Travel, Phi Beta Lambda at Co-Lin, Pilgrimage Garden Club, Stratton Chapel Gallery, Student Support Services at Co-Lin, Trinity Episcopal Church, the law firms of Truly, Smith, Latham and Kuehnle, United Mississippi Bank and Valley Foods.

Mark your calendars now for next year's conference. The eighth annual Natchez Literary Celebration will take place May 29-31, 1997, with the theme, "Famous Southern Families in Fiction, Biography, Drama and Poetry."

Plan now to join us. Your family might be one of the lecture topics!

Carolyn Vance Smith is co-chairman of the Natchez Literary Celebration.

1996
page 72

Features

The Confessions of William Styron

Styron had a choice, so he created Sophie

By Robin Miller
Staff reporter

NATCHEZ, Miss. — William Styron didn't talk about Sophie.

Not once did he mention her name, at least not until his presentation ended.

Someone — a woman in the back of the Natchez Municipal Auditorium — asked about her, asked from where he developed the mere idea of Sophie Zawistowska. He told of how, as a young writer in New York, he came in contact with a Polish woman who had survived the Holocaust.

Later in his career, he heard a story of a Jewish woman, also a Holocaust survivor, who was forced to make a choice whose roots were embedded in the depths of hell.

Those women were combined to create Sophie, a Polish survivor of Auschwitz, the Nazi concentration camp most affiliated with death.

People were herded methodically into gas chambers, exterminated by the thousands. Undesirables, as they were regarded. Gypsies, Poles, Russians and Jews. Millions upon millions of Jews.

The story is nothing new these days to most people. The Holocaust remains a festering wound in history that should not — cannot — be forgotten.

As are the stories of its survivors. As is Sophie's story.

Her choice became that of the Jewish woman of whom Styron was told:

Sophie, with an inanity poised on her tongue and choked with fear, was about to attempt a reply when the doctor said, "You may keep one of your children."

"Bitte?" said Sophie.

"You may keep one of your children," he repeated. "The other one will have to go. Which one will you keep?"

"You're a Polack, not a Yid. That gives you a privilege — a choice."

Her thought process dwindled, ceased. Then she felt her legs crumple. "I can't choose! I can't choose!" She began to scream. Oh, how she recalled her own screams! Tormented angels never screeched so loudly above hell's pandemonium. "Ich kann nicht wahlen!" she screamed.

But she did choose. His 1979 novel *Sophie's Choice* would not have been, otherwise.

The novel was later made into a film. Actress Meryl Streep played Sophie.

Anyone seeing the movie, and there are many who did, knows what Sophie chose to do. Readers of the novel know, too.

In fact, it's safe to say readers know more.

They know the whens, wheres and whys

■ Please see STYRON, C-8

C-8 Sunday, June 30, 1996

■ Advice, C-10
■ Weddings, C-12,

Alexandria Daily Town Talk

1996
page 73



Robin Miller — Staff reporter

Author William Styron, clutching a copy of his Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, was a featured speaker at the Natchez Literary Celebration last month. Styron read excerpts from the book, coinciding the passages with the conference theme, "Southern Women: 300 Years of Influence."

1996
page 74





1996
Margaret Walker
Alexander &
fans,
and William M.
Smith, Jr. designer of
the 'NCC 1050



1996
Book signing
& Reception
Elms Court

1996
page 76



Willie Mae Dunn,
Bookshop
Chairman
1990 - 1991



Exhibit at
City Auditorium
1996 - "Women
of the South"
theme - This exhibit
relates to "A Warm
Path," a story by
Eudora Welles.



Melrose dedication

1990

See outline on disk



1990 NLC

Morgan Natchez
David Armstrong
Supervisor Walter
Salmon and his
wife, Virginia
Salmon, new pres-
of Adams Co. Bd-
of Supervisors, &
U.S. Senator
Thad Cochran

1996
page 78



Historic
marker
erected
during first
NLC, June 8,
1990

1996
page 79



Typical book signing 1996

1996
page 80

From left – 1996 Burl Leslie McLemore, Jackson State
University, Mayor of Natchez Butch Brown, Governor
William Winter, President of Co-Lin Billy Thames, Senator
Thad Cochran, Cora Norman, Director Mississippi
Humanities Council.

1996
page 81



Jim & Laura Parks



Travis Thornton



Joan McLemore



William Winter
Willie Morris



Marilyn Schwartz

1996
page 83

Carolyn Vance Smith
Jan Pickle



1996
page 84

G.C. Gibson



William Styron



Clinton Bristow



Alferdteen Harrison



Maryemma Graham



1996
page 85

Maryemma Graham



William Styron
Willie Morris



1996
page 86



Darden Asbury Pyron



1996
page 87



Willie morris

1996

page 88



W.J. "Bill" Vance

1996
page 89



William Winter
George Harden
Myrlie Evers-Williams



George Harden
myrlie Evers-Williams

1996
page 90

The Natchez Democrat

OPINION

Plenty of notables to attend NLC

Everyone knows that each year the Natchez Literary Celebration attracts world class writers and scholars. This year's conference is no different.

Set for May 30 to June 1 at the Natchez City Auditorium, the seventh annual celebration will headline such household names as Williams Styron, winner of a Pulitzer Prize and Myrlie Evers-Williams, author and board chairman of the NAACP.

We are very honored to host such celebrities. Helping us welcome them are numerous other dignitaries who also honor us with their presence. They include:

- Dr. Cora Norman of Jackson, executive director of the Mississippi Humanities Council, who will be honored May 30 with "Cora Norman Day at the NLC" on the occasion of her upcoming retirement. The MHC has funded the Literary Celebration each year since its beginning in 1990.

- Dr. Leslie McLemore of Jackson State University, president of the MHC board, who will introduce Dr. Norman at 9 a.m. May 30.

- U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran (R-Miss.), who will welcome visitors to Mississippi and Natchez Mayor Larry "Butch" Brown, who will welcome visitors to Natchez at 9:05 a.m. May 30.

- Dr. Billy B. Thames, president of Copiah-Lincoln Community College, who at 9:15 a.m. May 30 will present former Gov. William Winter, president of the board of trustees of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

Mr. Winter will serve once again as master of ceremonies and will introduce the speakers Dr. Patricia Galloway at 10 a.m. May 30, William Styron at 8:30 p.m. May 30, Marylin Schwartz at 5:45 p.m. May 31, Willie Morris and Myrlie Evers-Williams at 8:30 p.m. May 31 and Nikki Giovanni at 7:30 p.m. June 1.

- Dr. Aubrey Lucas, president of the University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, who will introduce the speaker Dr. Marjorie Spruill



Top of the Morning

TRAVIS THORNTON
Natchez campus dean

Wheeler at 9:15 a.m. May 30.

- Dr. John D.W. Guice, professor of history at USM, who will introduce the speaker Dr. Robert V. Remini of the University of Illinois at 11 a.m. May 30.

- Dr. Olon Ray of Jackson, executive director of the State Board for Mississippi's Community and Junior Colleges, who at 2 p.m. May 30 will introduce the speakers Dr. Clyda S. Rent, president of Mississippi University for Women, Columbus, and Dr. Bridget Pieschel, associate professor of English at MUW.

- Judge Mary Lee Toles, president of the Natchez Association for the Preservation of Afro-American Culture, who at 3 p.m. May 30 will introduce the speakers Dr. Michael Keyring of Vanderbilt University and Bruce Schwartz of North Hollywood, Calif.

- Dr. Joanne Hawks, director of the Sarah Isom Center for Women's Studies at The University of Mississippi, who at 9 a.m. May 31 will introduce Dr. Joan Cashin of Ohio State University.

- Dr. Alferdeen Harrison, director of the Margaret Walker Alexander Research Center at Jackson State University, who at 9:45 a.m. May 31 will introduce the speaker Dr. Mayemra Graham of Northeastern University, Boston.

- Dr. Clinton Bristow, president of Alcorn State University, who at 10:45 a.m. May 31 will introduce the speaker Dr. Darden Asbury Pylon

of Florida International University.

- Dr. James W. Stribling of Brookhaven, president of Co-Lin's Board of Trustees, who at 9 a.m. June 1 will introduce the speaker Dr. Emily Toth of Louisiana State University.

- Dr. Ann Abadie, associate director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at Ole Miss, who at 10:15 a.m. June 1 will introduce the Daughters of Margaret—a performing group from Jackson.

- President of the Adams County Board of Supervisors Thomas Campbell, who at 1:30 p.m. June 1 will welcome visitors to Adams County and introduce the speaker Dr. Thomas H. Gandy.

- Dr. Thomas H. Layzell of Jackson, Commissioner, Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, who at 7:30 p.m. June 1 will introduce Mississippi's Most Outstanding College Humanities Division Students and Faculty Members.

- The writers Willie Morris and Josephine Haxton (whose pen name is Ellen Douglas), both of Jackson, who will be presented with the 1996 Richard Wright Literary Excellence Awards at 7:35 p.m. June 1.

- The writer and scholar Dr. Margaret Walker Alexander, who won the Richard Wright Award in 1995 and will be introduced at 7:35 p.m. June 1.

It is my privilege to invite you to attend the Literary Celebration. All three of the sponsors, who are Co-Lin, Mississippi Department of Archives and History and the National Park Service, are excited about it.

The daytime lectures are absolutely free, and the ticketed events are low cost. Call Natchez Box Office for tickets and come say hello to your favorite celebrity. See you at the City Auditorium!

Travis Thornton is dean of the Natchez Campus of Copiah-Lincoln Community College.



Giovanni



Evans-Williams



Evers



Evers-Williams



Aubrey



Remini



Walker

Stellar lineup set for 1996 Literary Celebration

Past and best-selling author Nikki Giovanni will join many other distinguished writers, educators and entertainers at the seventh annual Natchez Literary Celebration May 30-June 1.

Following the theme, "Southern Women: 300 Years of Influence," the 1996 Literary Celebration will explore the impact made by women, including fictional women, on literature, culture and the arts in the South.

"The conference will emphasize the role of women in carrying forward ideals and ideas into a world which, with its technological potential, requires humanity's reflection more than ever," said Celebration founder and co-chairman Carolyn Vance Smith, an English instructor at Copiah-Lincoln Community College in Natchez.

"In an age when television and radio dominate most people's eyes, ears and minds, it is imperative that some avenue tackle the lofty goals of reading, knowing, thinking, contemplating and exchanging ideas," Smith said.

Many Celebration events, including most lectures, are free. Ticketed events are low in cost.

"Nikki Giovanni, with her dynamic prose and poetry, will be a highlight at the Celebration," Smith said. "She is one of the most widely read poets in America."

An educator at Virginia Tech University, Giovanni is known for her outspokenness on racism and on the importance of education, Smith said.

Also speaking at the Celebration will be Mississippi native Myrtle Evers-Williams, chairman of the national NAACP board.

Evers-Williams is author of *For Us, the Living*, published in 1967 and re-released in 1996 by University Press of Mississippi with an introduction by fellow Mississippian and award-winning writer Willie Morris, who also will appear at the Literary Celebration. Others on the program include:

• William Styron, author of *Sophie's Choice* and Pulitzer Prize winning *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, who will speak on women's voices in his works.

• Dr. Joan E. Cadlin of Ohio State University, who will speak on Varina Howell Davis, the power behind Jefferson Davis.

• Dr. Emily Toth of Louisiana State University, who will speak on feminist-leader Kate Chopin.

• Dr. Patricia Galloway of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, whose topic will be the Natchez Indians and their matrilineal kinship system.

• Dr. Thomas H. Gandy of Natchez, retired physician and historian, whose program will feature Natchez women who established the Natchez Pilgrimage.

• Dr. Mayemna Graham of Northeastern University, who will present a program on Mississippi authors Margaret Walker Alexander and Richard

Wright, a Natchez native.

• Dr. Michael Kroyling of Vanderbilt University, whose program will be on the works of Mississippi author Eudora Welty.

• Dr. Darden Aubrey Pyron of Florida International University, whose topic will be Margaret Mitchell and her famous book, *Gone with the Wind*.

• Bruce Schwartz, a Pasadena, Calif., producer, who will introduce and show his film version of Eudora Welty's "A Woman's Path."

• Dr. Robert Remini of the University of Illinois, whose lecture will feature Rachel Jackson, wife of Andrew Jackson, and Loretta Clay, wife of Henry Clay.

• Dr. Clyda Runt and Dr. Bridget Pieschel of Mississippi University for Women, whose program will be on MUW's women founders.

• Dr. Magjorie Spruill Wheeler of the University of Southern Mississippi, who will speak on the role of women in shaping the South.

Other events will include:

- Works of Maya Angelou and Margaret Walker Alexander presented by Rosa W. O'neal and the Daughters of Margaret ensemble of Jackson.

• A tour of Natchez houses Airle, Riverview and Melrose with living history and refreshments.

• An Old-South evening with Marilyn Schwartz, Dallas author of *The Southern Belle Primer*.



Order tickets now for low-cost NLC events!

All morning and mid-day presentations at City Auditorium are free, beginning at 9 a.m., Thursday-Saturday, May 30, June 1. Ticketed events are listed below. Please send completed registration form with check or money order to Natchez Ban Office, P.O. Box 1204, Natchez, MS 39121, or fax order card below, call 1-800-862-1259 or 601-445-0531.

Name (do not write in to sign on morning)

Home Address

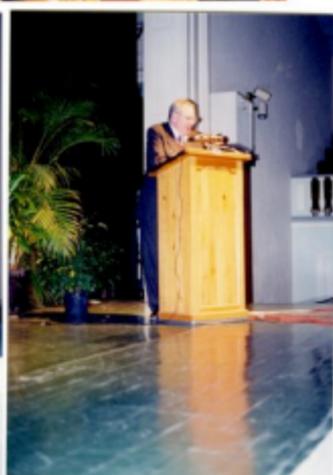
City	State	Day	Home Phone	Work Phone
EVENT	TIME/DATE		NO. TICKETS	PRICE/TICKETS
A. The Conference Reception	Wednesday, May 28, 6-9 p.m.			\$10.00
B. Food and Tour	Thursday, May 30, 5-9 p.m.			\$20.00
C. William Styron	Thursday, May 30, 8:30 p.m.			\$10.00
D. Come visit the Wind	Friday, May 31, 1-4 p.m.			\$2.00
E. Margie Schwartz	Friday, May 31, 3:45 p.m.			\$10.00
F. The House	Friday, May 31, 6:45 p.m.			\$20.00
G. Myrtle Evers-Williams & Verna Morris	Friday, May 31, 8:30 p.m.			\$10.00
H. Eudora Welty	Saturday, June 1, 2:30-5:30 p.m.			\$15.00
I. "Evening with the Stars"	Saturday, June 1, 7:30 p.m.			\$10.00
J. Changing Perspectives	Sunday, June 1, 9 p.m.			\$10.00

TOTAL PAYMENT ENCLOSED

1996 page 92







1996
page 95

CITIZEN

OF THE YEAR

COLLEAGUES SAY

"Carolyn has worked toward the preservation of community, which is the highest social good toward which we can strive. She is a true 'keeper' of the Natchez culture."

— Dr. Cora Norman, executive director, Mississippi Humanities Council.

"Simply put, Carolyn Smith can do anything. When she speaks people listen because they know she will produce. She is the driving force of so much that we have."

— Travis Thornton, dean, Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Natchez.

"She is committed to not only her students, but also the community and anyone of any background or any age. If you own a hotel or restaurant, you'd better like Carolyn Smith because she brings a lot of business to Natchez."

— Bob Dodson, superintendent, Natchez National Historical Park.



1996
page 1

Ed Darling
Publisher

Jimmy Sexton
Managing Editor

O The Natchez Democrat PINION

Editorials

Outstanding citizens deserve recognition

Our hats are off to *The Natchez Democrat's* Citizen of the Year and Unsung Heroes. Each of them richly deserves the credit.

We cannot say enough about Carolyn Vance Smith, the citizen of the year.

She was one of a small group of local visionaries who six years ago felt deep down that a celebration of books and the South could be a huge success.

Thus was born the Natchez Literary Celebration, which will mark its sixth anniversary this year with an appropriate theme of the role of women in the South.

Myrlie Evers Williams, who grew up in Mississippi and is chairman of the board of the NAACP, will be the keynote speaker.

Last year, Maya Angelou, former poet laureate of the United States, and world acclaimed writer, was the special speaker.

To have women of such high acclaim here in Natchez is truly remarkable.

That they would come here gives the literary celebration national significance.

In addition, the awards the celebration has won are well-deserved.

Smith also has overseen development and programs of the Natchez Elderhostel program, which annually brings hundreds of seniors here in an educational setting to learn about Natchez.

Smith makes her contribution without seeking the limelight and with a masterful attention to detail.

Both programs have brought thousands of individuals to Natchez who had never been here before, so the programs aren't only culturally enriching but economically beneficial.

Thanks, Carolyn, for all you do.

Thanks also to our unsung heroes:

- Arella Bacon, of Natchez, for her devotion to children's programs a community activities.
 - Charles Ferguson, of Vidalia, for his tireless efforts on behalf of youngsters in Concordia Parish.
 - Natchez Fire Capt. Johnny Franklin, for his outstanding work to prevent children from starting fires.
 - Audrey Laird, of Natchez, for entertaining — and caring for — so many of our senior citizens
 - The late Margaret Littig, of Natchez, for her dedication to her profession as a neonatal nurse.
 - Aubrey Logan, of Natchez, for putting his mind and hands to work for Catholic Charities.
 - Mae Marshall, of Natchez, for her passion of keeping kids in school.
 - Lillian Mashon, of Natchez for helping seniors connect to Life Line and visiting with family and friends of the critically ill.
 - Leonore O'Malley, of Natchez, for all her work with a variety of needy projects and programs.
 - Bobby Sanders, of Harrison, for being the man on whom so many seniors rely for help.
 - Mike Thompson, of Natchez, for eagerly assisting foreign students and the Natchez Opera Festival.
 - Tommy "Blackie" Williams, of Natchez, for his devotion to veterans and their needs.
- Each one of you makes our communities special places in which to work and live.

1996
page 2



Above: Palatial Stanton Hall will be the site of a lavish tea dance

Right: A prestigious award presented during the Literary Celebration is named after the esteemed Natchez author Richard Wright.



- Willie Morris, Mississippi author of *North Toward Home* and many other works, who will speak on human relations.
- Dr. Darden Asbury Pyron of Florida International University, whose topic will be Margaret Mitchell and her famous book, *Gone With the Wind*.
- Bruce Schwartz, a Pasadena, California, producer, who will introduce and show his film version of Eudora Welty's "A Worn Path."
- William Styron, author of *Sophie's Choice* and *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, who will speak on the Southern heroine.
- Dr. Robert Rimini of the University of Illinois, whose lecture will feature Rachel Jackson, wife of Andrew Jackson, and Lucretia Clay, wife of Henry Clay.
- Dr. Clyde Rent and Dr. Bridget Pleschel of Mississippi University for Women, whose program will be on MUW's women founders.
- Dr. Marjorie Spruill Wheeler of the University of Southern Mississippi, who will speak on the role of women in shaping the South.

Other events will include:

- A tour of the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians and Mount Locust on the Natchez Trace with a picnic, music, living history and storytelling.
- A luncheon followed by interpretive readings of works of Maya Angelou and Margaret Walker Alexander presented by Rosia W. Crisler of Jackson.
- A tour of Airtel, Riverview and Melrose with living history and refreshments.
- An Old-South evening with Marilyn Schwartz, Dallas author of *The Southern Belle Prisoner*.
- A tea dance at a historic mansion.
- A gala reception hosted by Natchez Association for the Preservation of Afro-American Culture.
- The film classic, *Gone With the Wind*.
- An exhibit of historic photographs featuring influential Natchez women.

The Natchez Literary Celebration is co-sponsored by Copiah-Lincoln Community College, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and the National Park Service.

Many events are free, including most lectures; ticketed events are low-cost. Only rarely does the opportunity to participate in such a gathering of literary figures come along, and only once a year does it take place in surroundings like those in Natchez. Call 1-800-647-6742 to learn more. ♦

1996
page 3

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1996

Profile '96

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CAROLYN VANCE SMITH

Smith's work inspires love of Natchez & Mississippi

Leaders make things possible. Exceptional leaders make them inevitable. Carolyn Vance Smith belongs in the category of the exceptional.

For the past 23 years, Smith has been head of the English department and public relations director at Co-Lin.

From founding two award-winning projects in 1990 — the annual international Natchez Literary Celebration and the international Natchez Elderhostel program — to writing and editing more than 20 non-fiction books to teaching to serving on the executive committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi, Smith has inspired others with her energy.

For that reason and many others, Smith is *The Natchez Democrat's* Citizen of the Year for 1996.

"Working for Co-Lin has been an exciting experience for me," said Smith. "I've watched it grow from a very small college to one that attracts outstanding faculty, students and administrators.

"With enlarging programs and more computer rooms, not to mention our

new classroom building, it's been a revolution. I see innovation all around me, and it's very exciting."

Smith's awards and accomplishments are numerous. She has received the International Master Teacher award, the Governor's Award for Tourism Development, the Athena Award for outstanding leadership by the Natchez-Adams County Chamber of Commerce, and in 1995 for the Natchez Literary Celebration, she received an award from the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games for outstanding humanities programming.

"I have a high energy level, and I simply enjoy working with people to see what we can accomplish together," she said.

Born in Terry, Miss., Smith was reared in El Dorado, Ark. Following high school graduation she attended Mississippi University for Women and Vanderbilt University, earning both a bachelor's and a master's degree in English and history. Her teaching career began in the Natchez public school system in the late 1960s, followed by a year at the college level before returning to Natchez and Co-Lin in 1973.

"I don't see any major changes com-

ing soon in my life," said Smith, who has two grown children with her husband, Marion, a Natchez attorney and former Mississippi state senator.

"I enjoy what I'm doing, and I believe the school still needs me. Working in a first-class building is such a pleasure that I wouldn't want to stop anything right now."

Smith's influence in the community goes far beyond the Literary Celebration and Elderhostel. Her published writings include "Natchez: An Illustrated History" and "The Goat Castle Murder." She has also written for *The Democrat* and *Today in Mississippi*.

"The work I do with Elderhostel and the Literary Celebration is very important to me," she said. "It is a part of me, and reflects some of my interests... it's very self-fulfilling. Without good people around me, none of these projects would get off the ground."

"I would like to write some more books, but I just don't have the time to do all the research that's needed," said Smith. "I've never been fearful of trying anything, but I try not to be overly ambitious. I am careful so if I do attempt a project, I have thought it through so that I know it is doable."

— By Jimmy Sexton

**MISSISSIPPI UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN
ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION**

**request the pleasure of your company and
spouse/guest at an**

"AFTER HOURS CELEBRATION"

**Guest Speaker:
Dr. Clyda S. Rent, President
MUW**

**Thursday, May 30, 1996
from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.**

**Natchez Eola Hotel
110 North Pearl Street
Natchez, MS 39120**

1996
page 5

Literary Celebration to feature 'Classic Natchez' booksigning

By KELLY ELDRIDGE

The Natchez Democrat

The authors of the new book, "Classic Natchez," will be featured at a gala May 29 from 6 to 9 p.m. at Elms Court as part of the Natchez Literary Celebration.

Randolph Delehanty of New Orleans and Van Jones Martin of Savannah, Ga., will be signing copies of the book.

Ticket-holders may bring their own copies or buy a copy at the gala for \$40.

There will also be a tour of Elms Court as part of the ticket price.

Tickets are \$10 per person.

"Classic Natchez" hit the bookstores in March and has been a tremendous success.

It is the most comprehensive book published about the architecture of Natchez.

The 164-page hardback book contains about 260 mostly-color illustrations and 180 contemporary photographs of Natchez

homes, gardens, archival images, maps, drawings and floor plans.

A time line illustrated with archival photographs, maps, panoramas and floor plans takes the reader from the earliest native habitations, through the construction boom of the cotton era, to the modern-day efforts of preservation.

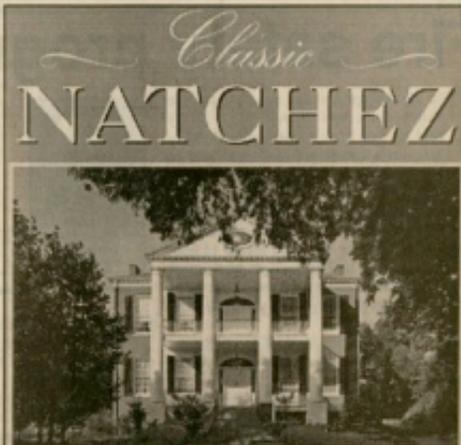
The booksigning couldn't have been scheduled for a better time, said Elizabeth Boggess, the local project coordinator for the book.

"The timing is great for the booksigning," Boggess said.

"We really wanted to join forces with the Literary Celebration, and it just happened to work out that way."

There were 14 local sponsors for the book comprising a committee for local input and three co-chairmen.

It is the fourth book in a Southern Classic series published by Martin-St. Martin and is distributed nationally and international-



ly.

Others include "Classic Savannah," "Classic Atlanta" and "Classic New Orleans."

Some of the proceeds will go

toward a special fund for the Gandy Collection of Historic Photographs, now housed in Stratton Chapel at First Presbyterian Church.

1996
page 6

Literary fest, CVB earn state honors

Related story, Page 5A

By BRIAN HAWKINS
The Natchez Democrat

JACKSON, Miss. — The Natchez Convention and Visitor Bureau and the Natchez Literary Celebration on Wednesday garnered statewide recognition at the 1996 Governor's Conference on Tourism.

The CVB won the Mississippi Tourism Promotion Association's award for outstanding tourism promotion for 1995 for its "Tourism Highlights" newsletter.

The newsletter, published bimonthly, is distributed to 1,500 meeting planners, tour operators and local members of the hospitality industry, said Connie

Taunton, CVB executive director.

"Our newsletter helps us get information out to people across Natchez, the entire state and the country," Taunton said.

"We were very excited about winning this award. It speaks highly of Natchez and what we have to offer for visitors and convention groups."

Laura Godfrey, CVB public relations and film commission coordinator, said the newsletter is a valuable communication tool for the bureau.

"We've had people tell us that it is a strong way of communicating what is going on with tourism in our community."

See HONORS, Page 9A



The Natchez Democrat/Brian Hawkins

HONORED: Connie Taunton, executive director of the Natchez Convention and Visitor Bureau is congratulated by Vaughn Stinson, director the Mississippi Division of Tourism.



The Natchez Democrat/Brian Hawkins

AWARD WINNER: Carolyn Vance Smith receives the Natchez Literary Celebration's award from Vaughn Stinson, director of the Mississippi Division of Tourism.

Honors

Continued from Page 1A

Godfrey said. "I feel really good about it."

The MTPA awards were judged by tourism professionals from out-of-state.

The Natchez Literary Celebration won MTPA's award for outstanding tourism event for 1995. Carolyn Vance Smith, co-chair of the literary celebration, said the award is a testament to the collaborative effort of the community in organizing the event.

The literary celebration is sponsored by the Natchez campus of Copiah-Lincoln Community College, the Mississippi Department

of Archives and History and the National Park Service. The 1995 celebration featured noted poet Maya Angelou as a keynote speaker.

"This is very rewarding for all of us in Natchez who love education, books and the sharing of knowledge," Smith said.

"Through the cooperation of all the groups, we put it together, which shows what teamwork can do. I accept this award for all of Natchez.

Taunton was also a nominee for the state Division of Tourism's Governor's Award for Tourism Achievement for her efforts in developing tourism promotion campaigns for Natchez. The award is given to an individual associated with an attraction, chamber of

commerce, CVB, hotel, transportation company service, outdoor recreation facility or restaurant.

"I was thrilled to be included in the select group of nominees — being nominated for work I love to do is an honor," Taunton said.

Godfrey was a nominee for the state Division of Tourism's Mississippi Community Volunteer Award for her work as chairman of the organizing committee of the Great Mississippi River Balloon Race, which benefits the Historic Natchez Foundation.

The community volunteer award recognizes a person who has contributed time and effort to a tourism program or event without receiving a monetary award.

1996
page 8

The Seventh Annual Natchez Literary Celebration presents
Southern Women: 300 Years of Influence



Founders of the Natchez Pilgrimage pose at Green Leaves in the 1930's.

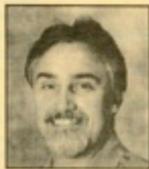
May 30 – June 1, 1996

Natchez, Mississippi

Welcome to the Seventh Annual Natchez Literary Celebration
from Celebration Co-chairmen



Smith



Dodson



Barnett



Sponsors of the 1996 Natchez Literary Celebration are Copiah-Lincoln Community College, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and the National Park Service. Now in its seventh year, the Olympic Award-winning conference has been called "Mississippi's most significant annual conference devoted to literature, history and culture." Co-chairmen of the Celebration are Mrs. Carolyn Vance Smith, Coordinator of the English Department and Director of Public Information at Copiah-Lincoln in Natchez; Mr. Robert Dodson, Superintendent of the Natchez National Historical Park in Natchez; and Mr. James F. Barnett Jr., Director of Historic Properties of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Natchez. Sponsors and co-chairmen annually welcome participants to three days of educational and fun-packed experiences with some of the world's most renowned scholars and writers. Mark your calendars: The 1997 Natchez Literary Celebration will be May 29-31, following the theme, "Famous Southern Families in Fiction, Biography, Poetry and Drama."

The Seventh Annual
Natchez Literary Celebration
presents

**SOUTHERN WOMEN:
300 YEARS OF INFLUENCE**

May 30-June 1, 1996 • Natchez, Mississippi

The 1996 Natchez Literary
Celebration won a prestigious award in the
summer of 1995:

The 1995 Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games
Cultural Olympiad Award in the Humanities

TUESDAY, JULY 18, 1995

Literary celebration earns honor of Olympic proportions

By JOAN GANDY

Special to The Democrat

The Natchez Literary Celebration has won a regional designation for excellence in the humanities awarded by the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games.

The annual Celebration, now in its sixth year, is one of 21 winners selected by the Cultural Olympiad for excellence and innovation in humanities programs throughout the southeastern United States.

"We are overwhelmed by this truly prestigious award," said Carolyn Vance

Smith, founder and co-chairman of the Celebration and an English instructor at Natchez. "What an honor to be selected from all the outstanding cultural events which take place in the South."

Smith received the award from Jeffrey N. Babcock, director of Cultural Olympiad of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, during ceremonies Monday in Atlanta.

"It is with a great deal of joy that Mississippi has this international attention and in particular Natchez" Smith said. "The whole community has pulled together

something that is world class.

"As an educator, it is very gratifying to me that people will come together for the study of books and literature and go away excited," said Smith, a Co-Lin teacher.

One of the selection committee members, Troy Holliday, of Ripley, a member of the Mississippi Humanities Council, said the competition "was very keen and this is a great compliment to Natchez." Ninety-seven events vied for the honor.

Holliday said, "The literary celebration went to the top of the list."

The Natchez Literary Celebration was established to raise the local, state and

world consciousness of the wealth of history, literature and culture associated with the South during the past two centuries, Smith said.

"We have tried to stimulate critical thought about the connection of the South to certain outstanding individuals, events, essays, history, biography, fiction, poetry, oral literature, music, film, photography, drama, architecture and food," she said.

"The celebration brings together scholars from throughout the United States and from abroad to participate each year."

Sponsors of the event are Copiah-Lincoln, the National Park Service and the

Mississippi Department of Archives and History. No program of its kind existed in the region prior to the founding of the celebration in 1990, Smith said.

Themes have included influence on southern literature, history and culture by the Mississippi River, the Spanish period in Natchez and the King Cotton era. The 1996 Celebration theme is "Southern Women: 300 Years of Influence."

"As a place where Native American, French, English, Spanish and Colonial American rule progressed during a 300-year period, Natchez has provided an excellent

See AWARD, Page 2A

base for exploring southern culture," Smith said. "The 1996 conference also will focus on the closing of one century and the beginning of another with an emphasis on the role of women in carrying forward ideals and ideas into a world which, with its technological potential, requires humanity's reflection more than ever."

Smith said the Cultural Olympiad award is a salute to the entire community of Natchez. "From the beginning, the Natchez Literary Celebration has been embraced by the community, with more than 300 people volunteering each year to assist in the undertaking."

1996
page 10

**The 1996 Natchez Literary Celebration
presents
"Southern Women: 300 Years of Influence"**

A Natchez Tour of Four Historic Sites

*2:30 - 5:30 p.m., Saturday, June 1
with refreshments and living history*

- **AIRLIE**, Elm St. at Myrtle Ave., a late 18th - century restoration project, one of the original 1932 Pilgrimage homes.
- **MELROSE**, 1 Melrose-Montebello Parkway, National Historic Landmark and cornerstone of the Natchez National Historical Park.
- **RIVERVIEW**, 47 New St., a recently restored mid-19th-century home.
- **STRATTON CHAPEL GALLERY**, 405 State St., "Natchez Women," an exhibit of historic photos.

**For tickets at \$15 (including transportation), call
(601) 445-0353 or 1-800-862-3259**

Deadline Wednesday May 29, 1996.



Sponsors: Copiah - Lincoln Community College, Mississippi Department of Archives and History and The National Park Service.



TICKETS

7th Annual
NATCHEZ LITERARY
CELEBRATION

May 29 - June 1, 1996

601-445-0353

1-800-862-3259

Natchez Pilgrimage Tours
Canal Street Depot
Canal at State Street
Open daily 'til 5:00 pm

1996
page 11

P The Natchez Democrat PEOPLE

Wednesday, May 29, 1996

WOMEN IN TIME: Elizabeth Netterville, above, makes adjustments to the mannequins featured in the plantation period, 1820 to 1865. The characters are Scarlett, from "Gone With the Wind," and Vvry, a character from Eudora Welty's story, "A Worn Path." Donna Hart, inset, points out a dress worn by the frontier woman during the settlement of the Natchez area.



1996
page 12

NEWS RELEASE



Atlanta, Georgia
Telephone: 404.524.1200
Telex: 54000
Fax: 404.524.1200
Internet: www.olympic.org

The Atlanta Olympic Cultural Olympiad
Atlanta, Georgia
Telephone: 404.524.1200
Telex: 54000
Fax: 404.524.1200
Internet: www.olympic.org

Contact: Carolyn Brown Smith, Student Library / 1100 Peachtree St., N.E., Atlanta, GA 30309

1996 MARCHER LIBRARY CELEBRATION WINS 1996 ACOG CULTURAL OLYMPIAD REGIONAL DESIGNATION AWARD IN THE HUMANITIES

Atlanta, Georgia, July 17, 1996) The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) Cultural Olympiad has announced that the 1996 Student Library Celebration has won a 1996 Regional Designation Award in the Humanities.

The award-winning project has a goal of making low-income students feel that they have opportunities to participate in library programming. The 1996 Student Library Celebration offers a broad array of library activities, including speakers in the fields of reading, poetry, history, drama, dance and biography. Complimentary programming includes live readings, field trips and books, exhibits, plays, demonstrations and live history demonstrations.

Developed with the Georgia Humanities Council in cooperation with the Southern States Humanities Council, the Regional Designation Awards in the Humanities are designed to recognize and enhance excellence and innovation in humanities programming in the South. The 21 award-winning programs -- which take place during the period July 1, 1995 - August 31, 1996 -- represent a wide geographic range and are inclusive of humanities institutions in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina and Virginia.

"The cultural diversity of this year's designs is a clear indication that humanities programming in our region continues to flourish," said Linda Coulson, Producer of Humanities and Special Projects for the Cultural Olympiad.

ACOG's Cultural Olympiad is a multi-year festival of the arts, culture, and entertainment that culminated in the 1996 Olympic Arts Festival. Recent Cultural Olympiad programs include "An Olympic Celebration: the Nobel Laureates of Literature," which brought eight laureates to Atlanta for two days of readings and panel discussions at the Carter Center. Current programs include "100 Years of World Cinema," a two-year program of 100 landmark films celebrating the centennial of filmmaking, presented in collaboration with the High Museum of Art.

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1996
page 13



NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Steve Wilson
Telephone: 404/224-1242 ext.
Mailstop 2404
Telephone: 404/224-1242
Teletype: 404/224-1242

The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games
150 Peachtree, S.W.
200 Williams Tower, Suite 1400
P.O. Box 1996
Atlanta, GA 30302-1996/PA
Telephone: 404/224-1242

CULTURAL OLYMPIAD ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 1996 REGIONAL DESIGNATION AWARDS IN THE HUMANITIES

Atlanta, Georgia ... (July 17, 1996) The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) Cultural Olympiad today announced the winners of the 1996 Regional Designation Awards in the Humanities, a collaborative project with the Georgia Humanities Council and the Southern States Humanities Councils.

Recognized for their excellence and innovation in humanities programming, the 21 award-winning projects range from festivals celebrating southern culture and literature to a documentary about a Louisiana step-dance colony. All of the winning projects will take place between July 1, 1996 and August 31, 1996.

Developed with the Georgia Humanities Council in cooperation with the Southern States Humanities Councils, the Regional Designation Awards were launched in 1994 to provide opportunities for educational institutions, historical societies, libraries and museums to participate in ACOG's Cultural Olympiad. The program is in keeping with the Cultural Olympiad's goal of bringing the arts and culture of the southern United States into an international spotlight. This is the second and final year for the awards.

"The cultural diversity of this year's designs is a clear indication that humanities programming in our region continues to thrive," noted Leslie Gordon, producer of humanities and special programs for the Cultural Olympiad.

Organizations throughout the 12-state region of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia were eligible to apply. Each organization submitted a specific project for consideration. Two panels representing the 12 states, convened by the Georgia Humanities Council, reviewed the applications and selected the winners.

ACOG's Cultural Olympiad is a multi-year festival of the arts, culture, and entertainment that culminates in the 1996 Olympic Arts Festival. Recent Cultural Olympiad programs include "An Olympic Gathering: the Nobel Laureates of Literature," which brought eight laureates to Atlanta for two days of readings and panel discussions at the Center Center. Current programs include "180 Years of World Cinema," a two-year program of 100 landmark films celebrating the centennial of filmmaking, presented in collaboration with the High Museum of Art.

For more information about the Cultural Olympiad or the 1996 Olympic Arts Festival, call 404/224-1875.

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REGIONAL DESIGNATION AWARDS IN THE HUMANITIES

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| Alabama Shakespeare Festival
Theatre in the Mind
October 1995 - August 1996 | Montgomery, AL |
| The Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community
Seventh Annual Zora Neale Hurston Festival of the Arts and Humanities
January 23 - 28, 1996 | Eatonville, FL |
| Atlanta-Clack County Library
Georgia Voices Festival
July 1995 - August 1996 | Atlanta, GA |
| The Atlanta Historical Society, Inc.
Transformation and Legacy: The Civil War in American Life
July 1995 - June 1996 | Atlanta, GA |
| Auburn University Center for the Arts and Humanities
Reading Our Lives: Southern Autobiography
January - December 1996 | Auburn, AL |
| Center for the Study of Southern Culture, University of Mississippi
22nd Annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference
July 30 - August 4, 1996 | University, MS |
| The Columbian Museum
In Our Own Backyard: The Fall, Aut of the Chattahoochee Valley
July 14 - October 15, 1996 | Columbus, GA |
| Fleming O'Connor State Foundation
Savannah as Muse: The City and Her Writers
May 1 - 31, 1996 | Savannah, GA |
| Gwinnett Council for the Arts
Festival of Film
June 4 - September 30, 1996 | Dalton, GA |
| Louisiana Public Broadcasting/Fordly Productions
American Legacy
July 1 - August 31, 1996 | East Baton Rouge, LA |
| Louisiana State University in Shreveport
Deep South Presidential Program
September 1995 - June 1996 | Shreveport, LA |

1996
page 14



The Natchez Literary Celebration

Sponsored by
Copiah-Lincoln Community College,
Mississippi Department of Archives and History, and
The National Park Service

- Natchez National Historical Park
- Natchez Trace Parkway

Post Office Box 894
Natchez, MS 39121-0894
(601) 446-5874
FAX (601) 446-9967

August 8, 1995

Dear Natchez Literary Celebration Participant:

We want to share exciting news with you about the Natchez Literary Celebration. Because of your continued participation and support, this special annual event keeps growing and attracting more national and international attention. This recent honor is an excellent example.

On July 17, the Celebration received a 1995 Regional Designation Award in the Humanities from the Cultural Olympiad in Atlanta, Georgia. Natchez Literary Celebration was one of only 21 award-winning projects in the 12-state region of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

These special awards are a project of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games Cultural Olympiad along with the Georgia Humanities Council and the Southern States Humanities Councils. The purpose of the program is to bring the arts and culture of the southern United States into an international spotlight.

Now in its seventh year, the Natchez Literary Celebration continues to raise local, state and world consciousness of the wealth of history, literature and culture associated with the South during the past several centuries. As you know, one of the top goals of the Celebration is to encourage a more open, more accepting attitude among the various segments of the audience: those who are old and young, black and white, rich and poor, highly educated and those educationally deprived.

Please mark your 1996 calendars for the next Natchez Literary Celebration, May 30 to June 1. The theme of "Southern Women: 300 Years of Influence" promises to be fascinating and provocative. Again, thank you for your contribution to this worthwhile project. See you next year!

Carolyn Vance Smith

1996
page 15

1995-1996 WINNERS

ALABAMA SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL, MOBILE

October 1995
130-271-1100
"Murder in the Woods"
October 1995 - August 1996

Dedicated to enhancing the community's cultural and social awareness, there is no third party sponsor professionals and humanities scholars invited to discuss in areas of education, theater related to classic and especially significant drama. The 1995-96 season will range from Shakespeare's classic contemporary works by text by the Southern States' Program.

THE ASSOCIATION TO PRESERVE THE BAYVILLE COMMUNITY, BAYVILLE, FLORIDA

407-647-5307
"Seaside, Seaside Sea Side Slurp Slurp
Archives of the Arts and Humanities"
January 15-25, 1996

Since its founding in 1990, the Seaside Festival has brought together professional artists and historians to explore in a three-day event to celebrate the contributions of Joe Brady Brown and John Lutenfeldt, the oldest incorporated Black municipality in the United States. The theme of the 1996 festival is "The Sea Side Slurp Slurp: The Seaside Renaissance and Beyond (Art, Politics and Culture)".

ATYHOUSA LAKE COUNTY LIBRARY, ALBANY, GEORGIA

706-833-5000
"George Jones Festival"
July 1995 - August 1996
The "George Jones Festival" is a one-day event of literary, history, and culture. Multidisciplinary programs that examine the state's cultural identity will be presented and through film and theater by storytelling workshops featuring members of the Southern States' Association and musical performances.

THE ATLANTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC., ATLANTA, GEORGIA

404-876-8220
"Transfiguration and Legacy: The Civil War in American Life"
July 1995 - June 1996

Through a series of public lectures, symposia, book discussion programs and related workshops, scholars from a broad range of humanities disciplines will examine the ways in which the underlying causes of the Civil War have been formed as they present in contemporary American life. Programs will take place in Atlanta and in Atlanta in new-official sites, and will use a variety of formats, including discussion and films, to explore the themes of Transfiguration and Legacy.

ALABAMA UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES, MOBILE, ALABAMA

204-681-1000
"Reading the Library: Southern Anthropology"
January - December 1996

Reading the Library is a reading and discussion program focusing on 19th and 20th-century American ethnographic that will be offered in 20 Alabama public libraries over a two-year period. Led by scholars in history and literature from 28 colleges and universities across the state, the program will emphasize how study of individual lives through ethnography can teach us about understanding of our own lives.

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOUTHERN HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI, UNIVERSITY, MISSISSIPPI

662-915-2811
"The James Fenimore and Mississippians"
July 1995 - August 1996

In addition to its contributions to scholarship on the southern historical writer, this renowned annual conference also features readings by noted literary figures, musical and literary productions, film presentations, film, music and exhibitions.

THE COLLETON MUSEUM, COLLETON, GEORGIA

706-898-0711
"On Our Own Backs: The Art and Art of the Charleston Bay Valley"
July 14 - October 10, 1996
This exhibition and related lectures and programing will present the collections of a two-year, ethnography survey by indigenous folk art and artists in Georgia and Alabama. Programing will include a lecture series on the art's traditional folk expression and historical transformation and performance illustrating regional folklore.

FLANNERY O'CONNOR HOME FOUNDATION, JACKSON, GEORGIA

770-341-7611
"Transcendence and Legacy: The Civil War in American Life"
July 1995 - June 1996

A series of programs on O'Connell's first internationally known writer will be held at the museum located at the childhood home of Flannery O'Connell, O'Connell, United States, later the Southern States' Association and United States of America. This presentation on the lives of each writer and readings from their works will be open to speakers in English, Spanish and French.

SECURITY COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS, SOUTH, GEORGIA

904-633-1000
"Festival of Film"
June 1 - September 30, 1996

The culture of Native Americans indigenous to the Southeast will be presented during the Festival of Film, at the state of the Georgia Capitol, an international gathering of federally recognized Native Americans will feature a show and learn competition, storytelling and craft fair. Educational programs will include videos, lectures, theater workshops and photographic and art exhibits.

LOUISIANA PUBLIC BROADCASTING/FAMILY, PENSACOLA, FLORIDA

904-394-4411
"American English"
July 1 - August 31, 1996

The center's oldest radio program, which has aired for 20 years, is the subject of the 20-episode documentary "American English," founded in 1974 in California, the center moved after three years to contemporary Louisiana where it retained its production, Commission for Historical and Political Sciences place the together changes of history today into a cultural perspective.

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY IN SHREVEPORT, SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA

504-750-5111
"Ray Scott Presidential Program"
September 1995 - June 1996
A series includes a major academic conference on the theme "1980-1984: Six Years Politics and Culture of the 1980s and 1980s," and a seminar on the presidency school teachers. The seminar will compare Franklin and Reagan Roosevelt to other "first families" to provide the exploring the meaning nature of the roles of President and first lady.

THE LEVITT STORES, ATLANTA, GEORGIA

404-522-5727
"Miami Eyes in the Past, Windows in the Future"
February - March 1996

A student-produced video, "Miami Windows in the Future," traces on the history of international influence in Florida, featuring interviews with directors of the Academy and Hollywood's community who use foreign languages. "Miami Eyes in the Past," a festival that complements the video, will consist of a series of appointments with where the Olympic Village have been held over the past 100 years.

MCKESSICK MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

803-777-1211
"Knowing Nature: Scientific Study in the South, 1800-1850"
January - December 1996

This exhibit explores how the wilderness and landscapes of North and South Americans and Anglo-Americans to the South interested to shape the country, both of nature history during the period 1800-1850. "Knowing Nature," includes an interactive program, and offers an interactive program to offer a look into our country of knowing nature from those of their earlier cultural exchanges.

MIAMI BOOK FAIR INTERNATIONAL, MIAMI, FLORIDA

305-327-0304
"Miami Book Fair International"
November 12-24, 1996

This annual literary festival, designed to promote an awareness of literature and books, attracts an audience of over a half million, and features more than 225 authors for public readings and literary discussions. Presentations are planned for authors of all ages, including storytelling and puppetry for children. Some 100 children will display their talents during the festival at the Miami-Dade Community College in Sweetwater, Miami.

MIDDLE GEORGIA COLLEGE, COLUMBIA, GEORGIA

404-396-3285
"Teaching Health: A Festival of Southern Life and Culture"
May 20-25, 1996

Through a multidisciplinary program that includes theater, reading, musical and theatrical performances and exhibits, the festival of Southern Life and Culture will bring together scholars, writers, musicians and artists to share their insights about Southern life and traditions.

HANCOCK COUNTY FOUNDATION AND MUSEUM - HANCOCK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA, MIDDLETOWN, GEORGIA

706-382-4743
"Singing Slaves: History, Interpretation, & Revival in the New African American Genre"
October 1 - 1995 - June 30, 1996

Singing Slaves is a multi-media project that will bring together scholars in history, art history and folklore with middle school students and music adults to examine the strong African American social traditions of singing, storytelling and singing in Atlanta, Georgia and across the country.

MOONSVILLE ARCHAEOMUSEUM, PRINCE OF GEORGES, MARYLAND

410-467-3111
"Monthly Southern American Festival"
September 25, 26, 1996

is a 100-acre parklands site with more than 20 historic prehistoric records, the Moonsville Native American Festival will feature an understanding and appreciation of local American Indian culture, both past and present. More than 20 different arts, crafts and folklores are directly created: living history, storytelling and musical and historical performances (performances of the culture and historic and historic stock market studies are featured).

NUMBER 9 BATH AND BUSINESS, MARIETTA, GEORGIA

404-977-9232
"Cotton: The Crop That Created a Culture"
January - September 1996

This exhibit will explore the birth and early life of this cotton and images that have come to define contemporary perceptions of Southern culture during the period when cotton was being raised throughout the South and beyond. The exhibit will explore the cotton industry, as well as dimensions of growing, spinning and weaving, the exhibit and related programing will bring multiple perspectives and studies to view in an examination of Southern culture.

NAFOLK LITERARY CELEBRATION, NAFOLK, VIRGINIA

804-688-0871
"1996 Southern Literary Celebration"
May 10 - June 1, 1996

With a goal of reaching literature audiences

that have limited opportunities to provide literary programming, this three-day event offers a better understanding nationally an award system as the fields of reading, poetry, history, fiction, drama and biography. Complimentary programming includes live readings, book signings and tours, exhibits, plays, documentaries and live history demonstrations.

THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA HUMANITIES CENTER, ATHENS, GEORGIA

706-542-5222
"The Biggie Picture: Writers in Life"
September 1995 - June 1996

A series of 20-minute radio programs will trace the relationship between the literary achievement of five internationally acclaimed writers and their early years. University Humanities Center will interview writers who live in the United States, including Andre Gide, Gertrude Stein, 1980 Nobel Prize winner Czeslaw Milosz, Nobel Prize laureate of India and 1980 Nobel Prize winner Bharati Mukherjee. University Humanities Center will be broadcast by satellite in radio, television, and tape of the program will be available for use in libraries across the country.

VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

804-342-9601
"The Story of Virginia, An American Experience"
October 1995 - August 1996

Using artifacts, interactive games, hands-on objects, multi-media components and educational gallery guides, this exhibit will be the first to cover a full range of the state's history, its regions and people, depicting individual and events of significance into the context of American history.

1995-1996 PANELISTS

- Dr. JOHN BURNHAM
Georgia State University
Atlanta, Georgia
- Dr. PAUL HUNTER
New York University
New York, New York
- Dr. ROBERT HANCOCK
Alabama Community College
Montgomery, Alabama
- Dr. PAUL FLECK
Florida International University
Miami, Florida
- Dr. ALAN PERAZICH
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida
- Dr. JENNIFER SALAMON
Southern Louisiana University
Lafayette, Louisiana
- Dr. PAUL A. HANCOCK
South Carolina Historical Society
Columbia, South Carolina
- Dr. RAY, WOODRUFF
National University
Atlanta, Georgia

1994-1995 WINNERS

- ALABAMA DEVELOPMENT FESTIVAL
- THE ASSOCIATION TO PRESERVE THE BAYVILLE COMMUNITY
- THE ATLANTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
- THE ATLANTA JEWISH FEDERATION
- CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
- DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL RESOURCES, NORTH CAROLINA MUSEUM OF HISTORY
- FLANNERY O'CONNOR HOME FOUNDATION
- MIAMI BOOK FAIR INTERNATIONAL
- MIAMI COUNTY FOUNDATION AND MUSEUM
- THE MARIETTA MUSEUM OF ART
- THE MARIETTA MUSEUM FOUNDATION, INC.
- THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

1996 program

REGIONAL DESIGNATION PROGRAM

THE REGIONAL DESIGNATION AWARDS IN THE HUMANITIES

The Regional Designation Awards in the Humanities were developed by the Cultural Olympiad of The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games and the Southern Humanities Council in cooperation with the Southern State Humanities Councils. The purpose of the award program is to recognize and celebrate excellence and innovation in humanities programming throughout the South. The Regional Designation Awards also serve to provide opportunities for cultural organizations — such as educational institutions, historical societies, libraries and museums — to participate in the Cultural Olympiad.

Those eligible to apply for Regional Designation Awards in the Humanities include (for example) non-profit organizations located in at least one of the Southern states (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia). For the purpose of the Regional Designation Program, the humanities are defined as fields of knowledge and pursuit of critical thinking and reflection, such as languages and literature, history, anthropology, philosophy, ethics, comparative religion, and criticism of the arts and social sciences, employing historical and philosophical approaches. Applicants in the humanities are professionally educated persons personally engaged in study, research, writing or teaching in one of the humanities fields.

This year's designers were chosen from among all applicants by a panel of humanities scholars and specialists. Designated projects were chosen on the basis of strong organizational history, excellence in programming and modeling of cultural occasions. The Regional Designation Award recognizes a specific project that will be produced and/or presented within the Southern region between July 1, 1995, and July 1, 1996.

THE ATLANTA COMMITTEE FOR THE OLYMPIC GAMES CULTURAL OLYMPIAD

The Olympic Movement has fostered a long tradition of promoting excellence in art as well as sport, and the International Olympic Committee's Charter calls for an arts and culture festival — or Cultural Olympiad — to support and enhance the Olympic Games. In conjunction with the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games, the Cultural Olympiad of The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games is a spectacular arts, culture and entertainment celebration. Celebrating in the summer 1996 Olympic Arts Festival, the multi-year program shares the South's finest artistic talent with global audiences and showcases exciting international cultural expressions in a rich and multifaceted program.

SOUTHERN STATE HUMANITIES COUNCILS

The Southern State Humanities Councils are independent, non-profit organizations dedicated to providing opportunities for citizens to bring the perspectives and insights of the humanities to bear on aspects of human and cultural experience. In fulfillment of this mission, the councils support public programs, including conferences, exhibits, books and film discussions and media productions based on history, literature, philosophy and the other disciplines of the humanities.

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Atlanta



The Atlanta Committee
for the Olympic Games
CULTURAL OLYMPIAD
P.O. Box 1996
Atlanta, GA 30301-1996

REGIONAL

DESIGNATION

AWARDS

IN THE HUMANITIES

1995-1996 WINNERS

The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games
CULTURAL OLYMPIAD



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Atlanta, GA

1996
page 17

Gandy Collection



Hulda Stanton and family at Stanton Hall, 1890

"Southern Women: 300 Years of Influence"

The Seventh Annual

Natchez Literary Celebration

May 30-June 1, 1996 • Natchez, Mississippi

Natchez Literary Celebration is winner of a Cultural Olympiad Award for excellence in the humanities and was chosen Festival of the Year by the Mississippi Tourism Promotion Association. Most events are **free**, including lectures by outstanding scholars and writers. Ticketed events, such as luncheons and tours, are \$5 to \$20.

**For more information, call
1-800-647-6724 or 601-446-6345
Natchez Convention & Visitors Bureau
For tickets, call
1-800-862-3259 or 601-445-0353**

The South's Warmest Welcome
MISSISSIPPI

This project is partially funded through a grant by the Mississippi Department of Economic and Community Development.

1996
page 18



Giovanni



Toth



Styron



Evers-Williams



Morris



Wheeler



Remini

Stellar lineup set for 1996 Literary Celebration

Poet and best-selling author Nikki Giovanni will join many other distinguished writers, educators and entertainers at the seventh annual Natchez Literary Celebration May 30-June 1.

Following the theme, "Southern Women: 300 Years of Influence," the 1996 Literary Celebration will explore the impact made by women, including fictional women, on literature, culture and the arts in the South.

"The conference will emphasize the role of women in carrying forward ideals and ideas into a world which, with its technological potential, requires humanity's reflection more than ever," said Celebration founder and co-chairman Carolyn Vance Smith, an English instructor at Copiah-Lincoln Community College in Natchez.

"In an age when television and radio dominate most people's eyes, ears and minds, it is imperative that some avenue tackle the lofty goals of reading, listening, thinking, contemplating and exchanging ideas," Smith said.

Many Celebration events, including most lectures, are free. Ticketed events are low in cost.

"Nikki Giovanni, with her dynamic prose and poetry, will be a highlight at the Celebration," Smith said. "She is one of the most widely read poets in America."

An educator at Virginia Tech University, Giovanni is known for her outspokenness on racism and on the importance of education, Smith said.

Also speaking at the Celebration will be Mississippi native Myrtle Evers-Williams, chairman of the national NAACP board.

Evers-Williams is author of *For Us, the Living*, published in 1967 and re-released in 1996 by University Press of Mississippi with an introduction by fellow Mississippian and award-winning writer Willie Morris, who also will appear at the Literary Celebration.

Others on the program include:

- William Styron, author of *Sophie's Choice* and Pulitzer Prize winning *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, who will speak on women's voices in his works.

- Dr. Joan E. Cashin of Ohio State University, who will speak on Varina Howell Davis, the power behind Jefferson Davis.

- Dr. Emily Toth of Louisiana State University, who will speak on feminist author Kate Chopin.

- Dr. Patricia Galloway of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, whose topic will be the Natchez Indians and their matrilineal kinship system.

- Dr. Thomas H. Gandy of Natchez, retired physician and historian, whose program will feature Natchez women who established the Natchez Pilgrimage.

- Dr. Maryemma Graham of Northeastern University, who will present a program on Mississippi authors Margaret Walker Alexander and Richard

Wright, a Natchez native.

- Dr. Michael Kreyling of Vanderbilt University, whose program will be on the works of Mississippi author Eudora Welty.

- Dr. Darden Asbury Pyron of Florida International University, whose topic will be Margaret Mitchell and her famous book, *Gone with the Wind*.

- Bruce Schwartz, a Pasadena, Calif., producer, who will introduce and show his film version of Eudora Welty's "A Worn Path."

- Dr. Robert Remini of the University of Illinois, whose lecture will feature Rachel Jackson, wife of Andrew Jackson, and Lucretia Clay, wife of Henry Clay.

- Dr. Clyda Rent and Dr. Bridget Pieschel of Mississippi University for Women, whose program will be on MUW's women founders.

- Dr. Marjorie Spruill Wheeler of the University of Southern Mississippi, who will speak on the role of women in shaping the South.

Other events will include:

- Works of Maya Angelou and Margaret Walker Alexander presented by Rosia W. Crisler and the Daughters of Margaret ensemble of Jackson.

- A tour of Natchez houses Airlie, Riverview and Melrose with living history and refreshments.

- An Old-South evening with Marylin Schwartz, Dallas author of *The Southern Belle Primer*.



THE 1996 NATCHEZ LITERARY CELEBRATION
May 30-June 1

Natchez, Mississippi

presents:

1995-96 Outstanding Students and Faculty Members
Humanities Division
Mississippi Colleges and Universities

Student Honorees: Jacquelyn Seay Sergi, Northwest Mississippi Community College, Senatobia; Robin White, Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Wesson; Christy Patt, Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Natchez; Lemoiquel Posey, Alcorn State University, Lorman; Lisa Grogan, Mississippi Delta Community College, Moorhead; Scott Blount, Mississippi University for Women, Columbus; Mardrea Williams, Mary Holmes College, West Point; Jacqueline D. Moore, East Central Community College, Decatur; Mary Catherine Nelson, University of Mississippi, Oxford; Kathleen Morgan, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg; and Vickie Malone, Southwest Mississippi Community College, Summit.

Faculty Honorees: Marian Wright, Mary Holmes College, West Point; Virginia Pace, East Central Community College, Decatur; Dr. Bridget S. Pieschel, Mississippi University for Women, Columbus; Betty Killebrew, East Mississippi Community College, Scooba; Marcia Hudson, Mississippi Delta Community College, Moorhead; Edna E. Crews, Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Wesson; Judy Daniels Wiggins, Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Natchez; Margaret Wilburn, Itawamba Community College, Fulton; Dr. Colby Kullman, University of Mississippi, Oxford; Mary Holley, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Gulfport; Nancy Holmes, Southeast Mississippi Community College, Summit; Dr. Joyce J. Bolden, Alcorn State University, Lorman; and Dr. Thomas Richardson, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg.

Program

Welcome *Dr. Leslie Bart McLemore
Chair, MHC*

Inception *Reverend Jerry A. McBride*

ORDER

Presentation of Awards

*Public Humanities Scholar Award
Dr. Ben E. Bailey
Presented by Dr. Jerry W. Ward, Jr.*

*Public Humanities Achievement Award
Dr. Katherine Ross
Presented by Dr. Gemma Seckler*

Special Recognition

*Congressman Benie C. Thompson
Senator Paul Corbin*

*Remarks by Dr. Leslie Bart McLemore
and Dr. Cass Norman*

*Outstanding Humanities Teachers
Dr. Leslie Bart McLemore*

Closing Remarks *Dr. Leslie Bart McLemore*

The Mississippi Humanities Council

presents

PUBLIC HUMANITIES ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

7:00 P.M.

The Ramada Plaza Hotel
Jackson, Mississippi
January 16, 1996

The Seventh Annual Natchez Literary Celebration
presents

SOUTHERN WOMEN: 300 YEARS OF INFLUENCE

May 30-June 1, 1996 • Natchez, Mississippi

Sponsored by Copiah-Lincoln Community College,
Mississippi Department of Archives and History, and National Park Service

PROGRAM

All events will take place in the Natchez Municipal Auditorium unless otherwise noted.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 1996

6:00-9:00 p.m. Pre-conference reception at the mansion Elms Court, honoring authors of a new book, *Classic Natchez*, with photographs and histories of Natchez mansions (\$10, Ticket A)

THURSDAY, MAY 30, 1996

9:00 a.m. Welcome, Dr. Billy B. Thames, President, Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Natchez and Wesson, Mississippi, and Welcome, Introductions, and Presiding throughout the Conference, The Honorable William F. Winter, President, Board of Trustees, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson (free)
9:15 a.m. Lecture, "The Role of Women in Shaping the South: An Overview," Dr. Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, Professor of History, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg (free)
10:00 a.m. Lecture, "The Matrilineal Kinship System of the Natchez Indians," Dr. Patricia Galloway, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson (free)
11:00 a.m. Lecture, "Rachel Jackson and Lucretia Clay: Two Heroic Southern Women," Dr. Robert V. Remini, Professor of History, University of Illinois, Chicago (free)

Lunch on Your Own

2:00 p.m. Panel, "Loyal Daughters: The Remarkable Women of America's First Public College for Women," Dr. Clyda Stokes Rent, President, and Dr. Bridget Fieschel, Associate Professor of English, Mississippi University for Women, Columbus (free)
3:00 p.m. Lecture, "A Pathway of Love: The Natchez Trace in the Works of Eudora Welty," Dr. Michael Kreyling, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee (free)
3:45 p.m. Remarks, Showing of "A Worn Path," the Public Broadcasting System's Film of Eudora Welty's Short Story Set on the Natchez Trace, by the Producer/Writer/Director Mr. Bruce Schwartz, Pasadena, California (free)

5:00-8:00 p.m. "It's About Time: A Guided Tour with Picnic, Music, Storytelling, and Living History" at Grand Village of the Natchez Indians, Historic Jefferson College, and Natchez Trace Parkway (\$20, Ticket B, includes transportation)
8:30 p.m. Comments with Readings from His Works, "A Few Women: One Writer's View," Pulitzer Prize-winning Novelist William Styron, Roxbury, Connecticut (\$10, Ticket C)

FRIDAY, MAY 31, 1996

9:00 a.m. Lecture, "Varina Howell Davis, First Lady of the Confederacy," Dr. Joan E. Cashin, Professor of English, Ohio State University, Columbus (free)
9:45 a.m. "Margaret Walker and Richard Wright's Mississippi," Dr. Maryemma Graham, Professor of English, Northeastern University, Boston (free)
10:45 a.m. Lecture, "Margaret Mitchell and *Gone with the Wind*," Dr. Darden Asbury Pyron, Professor of English, Florida International University, Miami (free)
Lunch on Your Own
1:00-5:00 p.m. Showing of the Movie, *Gone with the Wind*, The Natchezicola Hotel, (\$5, Ticket D, includes refreshments)
5:45 p.m. Presentation, "The Women of the Old South: Alive and Well in 1996," Ms. Maryln Schwartz, Author of *The Southern Belle Primer* and *New Times in the Old South*, Dallas (\$10, Ticket E)
6:45 p.m. Old-Fashioned Southern Tea Dance at Stanton Hall and the Carriage House Restaurant, with Food, Libations, Music, Entertainment, and Dancing (\$20, Ticket F)
8:30 p.m. Presentation, "America at the Crossroads," Ms. Myrtle Evers-Williams, Board Chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Bend, Oregon, and Mr. Willie Morris, Author of *North Toward Home* and Other Books, Jackson, Mississippi (\$10, Ticket G)

The Seventh Annual Natchez Literary Celebration
presents

SOUTHERN WOMEN: 300 YEARS OF INFLUENCE

May 30-June 1, 1996 • Natchez, Mississippi

Sponsored by Copiah-Lincoln Community College,
Mississippi Department of Archives and History, and National Park Service

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10:00 a.m. Lecture, "The Matrilineal Kinship System of the Natchez Indians," Dr. Patricia Galloway, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson (free)
11:00 a.m. Lecture, "Rachel Jackson and Lucretia Clay: Two Heroic Southern Women," Dr. Robert V. Remini, Professor of History, University of Illinois, Chicago (free)

Lunch on Your Own

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3:00 p.m. Lecture, "A Pathway of Love: The Natchez Trace in the Works of Eudora Welty," Dr. Michael Kreyling, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee (free)
3:45 p.m. Remarks, Showing of "A Worn Path," the Public Broadcasting System's Film of Eudora Welty's Short Story Set on the Natchez Trace, by the Producer/Writer/Director Mr. Bruce Schwartz, Pasadena, California (free)

5:00-8:00 p.m. "It's About Time: A Guided Tour with Picnic, Music, Storytelling, and Living History" at Grand Village of the Natchez Indians, Historic Jefferson College, and Natchez Trace Parkway (\$20, Ticket B, includes transportation)
8:30 p.m. Comments with Readings from His Works, "A Few Women: One Writer's View," Pulitzer Prize-winning Novelist William Styron, Roxbury, Connecticut (\$10, Ticket C)

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10:45 a.m. Lecture, "Margaret Mitchell and *Gone with the Wind*," Dr. Darden Asbury Pyron, Professor of English, Florida International University, Miami (free)
Lunch on Your Own
1:00-5:00 p.m. Showing of the Movie, *Gone with the Wind*, The Natchez Eola Hotel, (\$5, Ticket D, includes refreshments)
5:45 p.m. Presentation, "The Women of the Old South: Alive and Well in 1996," Ms. Marilyn Schwartz, Author of *The Southern Belle Primer and New Times in the Old South*, Dallas (\$10, Ticket E)
6:45 p.m. Old-Fashioned Southern Tea Dance at Stanton Hall and the Carriage House Restaurant, with Food, Libations, Music, Entertainment, and Dancing (\$20, Ticket F)
8:30 p.m. Presentation, "America at the Crossroads," Ms. Myrtle Evers-Williams, Board Chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Bend, Oregon, and Mr. Willie Morris, Author of *North Toward Home* and Other Books, Jackson, Mississippi (\$10, Ticket G)

1996
page 23

Natchez on the River

Continued from Page 11

feature crafts, antiques, vendors of all sorts. For more information, call Frances Montgomery at 445-8201.

■ The Jordan Professional Golf Tournament will take place at Belwood Country Club for all the sports enthusiasts.

■ Andrew Jackson Day will be held at Historic Jefferson College.

■ The Natchez Bicycle Classic will be held, featuring an Under-the-Hill time trial, road race, street dance and downtown cri-

terium. Call 446-6345.

■ MAY is the month-long celebration of opera with the Natchez Opera Festival offering many events every week.

Plantation recitals and opera well-known classic and comedic operas will be performed. Call 442-SING.

■ May also kicks off another Natchez Literary Celebration. Most events are free and open to the public. The celebration brings together scholars from all over the country. For information, call, 445-0353.

Early Summer
May 30 - June 1
Natchez Literary Celebration
Natchez, Miss.

Celebrated scholars and writers will come together May 30 - June 1 in Natchez to explore the impact women and women fictional characters have had on life, culture and the arts in the South.



Post and best-selling author Nikki Giovanni will present "Diversity As Art: Art Is Diversity," at the Natchez Literary Celebration, Saturday, June 1.

Many of the lecturers at the seventh annual Natchez Literary Celebration, under the guise "Southern Women: Three Hundred Years of Influence," are award-winners, including writer William Styron, author of the 1967 Pulitzer-Prize winning *The Confessions of Nat Turner* and the best-seller *Sophie's Choice*, winner of a 1979 American Book

award. Styron will present "A Few Women: One Writer's View," which will include readings by the author from his works about women, specifically Southern Women.

Other highly-acclaimed writers who will be present include poet Nikki Giovanni of Virginia Tech University and Mississippi's well-known Willie Morris, who will introduce Mississippi native Myrlie Evers-Williams, chairman of the national NAACP board of



Pulitzer-Prize winning author William Styron will grace the celebration with a lecture entitled: "A Few Women: One Writer's View."

directors. Evers-Williams will present, "Toward the 21st Century With the Betterment of Human Relations."

Other topics will focus on Margaret Mitchell and her famous book, *Gone With the Wind*; Mississippi's Pulitzer-Prize winning writer Eudora Welty and the film version of her short story, "A Worn Path"; Rachel Jack-

son, wife of President Andrew Jackson, and Lucretia Clay, wife of Henry Clay; Natchez Indian women; 19th century feminist writer Kate Chopin; women who founded the first state-supported institution of higher learning for women; and Varina Howell Davis, wife of Confederate President Jefferson Davis.

In addition to the numerous lectures, many of which are free, the conference will offer tours, exhibits and other entertainment during the three-day program.

Ticketed events cost between \$5 and \$20 and include events ranging from receptions, film showings, lectures, a picnic and tour of historic sites and an old fashioned tea dance, among others. Tickets are available at Natchez Box Office. For credit card orders, call 1-800-862-3259 or (601) 445-0353. To order by mail, send check or money order to Natchez Box Office, P.O. Box 1264, Natchez, MS 39121.

For those keen to experience all that the Literary Celebration has to offer, a package is available which includes four nights lodging in a downtown hotel, eleven meals, tickets to all Natchez Literary Celebration events, (totaling \$120 in value) and all in-town transportation. The cost is \$275 per person. Contact (601) 446-1206 for details.

May 18 & 19
FestForAll
Baton Rouge, La.

FestForAll is an extravaganza celebrating for the twenty-third consecutive year in Baton Rouge. This major festival last year welcomed more than forty thousand people to

1996
page 24

THE YEAR 1995 IN REVIEW

1996
page 25

The Natchez Democrat

MONDAY, JANUARY 1, 1996

June

June 4: Angolians improve on bond
June 9: High school math scores improved jump
June 12: City welcomes American Queen



man tried to take off but began to pull out the pins anchoring it to the chopper dolly.

Jan. 20: U.S. Sen. Trent Lott of Mississippi introduced a bill in the Senate authorizing the Army Corps of Engineers to stabilize the bluffs of Natchez.

Jan. 21: Funt of the Loom officials, after discussing their budget, recon-

the Mississippi state health plan, according to state health official, Harold Armstrong.

FEB.

Feb. 1: Plans for a second riverboat casino in Natchez sank in the

river bottom with an announcement by Cimarron Gaming Corp. to pull out its investment in the community.

Feb. 2: The Justice Department told Adams County one of its 194 election districts for the board of supervisors must be redrawn, according to federal officials.

Director 5 represented by David Haber, made it higher



Fern and David Ross stand in front of their Orleans Street home.

and Nature Development of Tuscaloosa, Ala., rehabilitated 12 houses to create low income Section 8 housing.

Feb. 15: Adams County Christian School celebrated its 25th anniversary. Over the past 25 years, AACS has grown from about 500 students to more than

500, built four additional buildings and purchased another.

Feb. 14: U.S. Rep. Mike Parker of Mississippi has joined the fight for federal money to stabilize the Natchez bluffs.

Feb. 16: Natchez residents living on Mangrove Road banded for a fight as members of the Natchez Metro Planning Commission prepared to vote to remove 17 acres of land between U.S. 61 North and Mangrove Road for a shopping center.

Feb. 19: Louisiana videotape establishments including 19 businesses in Covington.

See REVIEW, Page 64.

Maya Angolians packed the City Auditorium in June.

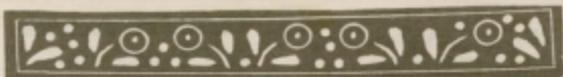
High Spring, 1996



Country Roads

Adventures Close to Home

Events and Attractions From Natchez to New Orleans Since 1983



High Spring Calendar

May 30 - June 1
Natchez, Miss.

Natchez Literary Celebration

Poet and best-selling author Nikki Giovanni will join many other distinguished writers, educators and entertainers to discuss the theme, "Southern Women: Three-Hundred Years of Influence" at the seventh annual Natchez Literary Celebration program this year.

See page 20 for full details. ♦

1996
page 26



A feminist writer with Louisiana connections, Kate Chopin will be the subject of a lecture by Dr. Emily Toth, professor of English at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge

Other speakers on the 1996 program include:

- Dr. Joan E. Cashin of Ohio State University, who will speak on Varina Howell Davis, the power behind Jefferson Davis.
- Myrlie Evers-Williams, president of the NAACP and author of *For Us, the Living*. Her topic will be human rights.
- Dr. Emily Toth of Louisiana State University, who will speak on feminist author Kate Chopin.
- Dr. Patricia Galloway of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History will present the topic of the Natchez Indians and their matrilineal kinship system.
- Mr. Thomas H. Gandy of Natchez, retired physician and historian, whose program will feature the successful leadership of Natchez women in establishing the Natchez Pilgrimage.
- Dr. Maryemma Graham of Northeastern University, who will present a program on Mississippi author Margaret Walker Alexander.
- Dr. Michael Kroyling of Vanderbilt University will speak on the works of Mississippi author Eudora Welty.

CONF

May 30 - June 1



THE NATCHEZ LITERARY CELEBRATION

**Southern Women:
Three Hundred Years of Influence**

Poet and best-selling author Nikki Giovanni will join a great many other distinguished writers, educators and entertainers on the seventh annual Natchez Literary Celebration program this year.

Following the theme, "Southern Women: Three Hundred Years of Influence," the 1996 Literary Celebration will explore the impact made by women, including fictional women, on literature, culture and the arts in the South.

"The conference will emphasize the role of women in carrying forward ideals and ideas into a world which, with its technological potential, requires humanity's reflection more than ever," said Celebration founder and co-chairman, Carolyn Vance Smith.

Nikki Giovanni is an educator at Virginia Tech University, where she is known as a shrewd observer, an exhilarating essayist and a motivating educator. As one of the most widely read poets in America, her outspokenness regarding racism and the importance of education are almost legendary. Her presence and poetry will be a highlight of the Celebration.

1996
page 27



Giovanni



Toth



Morris



Williams



Styron



Crisler



Wheeler

Excitement mounts as award-winning Celebration nears

Celebrated scholars and writers will come together May 30 - June 1 in Natchez to explore the impact women and women fictional characters have had on life, culture and the arts in the South.

"Southern Women: 200 Years of Influence" is the theme for the seventh annual Natchez Literary Celebration, which in 1995 was named winner of an Olympic Humanities Award by the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games Cultural Olympiad.

Many of the 1996 lecturers at the Celebration also are award-winners, including writer William Styron, author of a 1967 Pulitzer-Prize winning *The Confessions of Nat Turner* and the best-seller *Sophie's Choice*, winner of a 1979 American Book Award. Styron will present, "A Few Women: One Writer's View," which will include readings by the author from his

works about women, specifically Southern women.

Other award-winning writers include poet Nikki Giovanni of Virginia Tech University, described by one follower as "honest, searching, complex, lusty, and above all, individualistic"; and Mississippi's well known Willie Morris, who will introduce Mississippi native Myrlie Evers-Williams, chairman of the national NAACP board of directors. Evers-Williams will present, "Toward the 21st Century with the Betterment of Human Relations."

"The Conference will emphasize the role of women in carrying forward ideals and ideas into a world which, with its technological potential, requires humorously a reflection more than ever," said Celebration founder and co-chairman Carolyn Vasco Smith, an English instructor at

Copiah-Lincoln Community College in Natchez.

Included on the program are Emily Toth of Louisiana State University, authority on 19th-century feminist writer Kate Chopin; Marjorie Spruill Wheeler of the University of Southern Mississippi, authority on woman's suffrage; and Rosalind Wiseman, who will appear with Daughters of Margaret in interpreting works of Southern writers.

Sponsors of the Celebration are Copiah-Lincoln, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and the National Park Service. Lectures will begin each day at 9 a.m. at Natchez City Auditorium.

In addition to the numerous lectures, many of which are free, the conference will offer tours, exhibits and other entertainment during the three-day program.

An old-fashioned tea dance at National Historic Landmark

house Stanton Hall will follow a program by Dallas columnist and author Marilyn Schwartz, author of *The Southern Belle Primer*, whose topic will be "The Women of the Old South: Alive and Well in 1996."

Other programs will feature Margaret Mitchell and her famous book, *Gone with the Wind*; Mississippi's Pulitzer-Prize winning writer Eudora Welty and the film version of her short story, "A Worn Path"; Rachel Jackson, wife of President Andrew Jackson, and Lucretia Clay, wife of Henry Clay; Natchez Indian women; 19th-century feminist writer Kate Chopin; women who founded the first state-supported institution of higher learning for women; and Varian Howell Davis, wife of Confederate President Jefferson Davis.

Ticketed events are from \$5 to \$30. They include a pre-con-

ference reception honoring authors of the new book, *Classic Natchez*, to be held at Elms Court, \$10; a picnic and tour of historic sites associated with the Natchez Traces, \$20; the William Styron program, \$10; a showing of the film version of *Gone with the Wind*, \$5; the Marilyn Schwartz program, \$10; the tea dance, which includes food and drink, \$20; the Myrlie Evers-Williams and Willie Morris program, \$10; a historic house tour of Airle, Riverview and Melrose, \$15; the Nikki Giovanni program, \$10; and a closing reception, \$50.

Tickets are available at Natchez Box Office. For credit card orders, call 465-0353. To order by mail, send check or money order to Natchez Box Office, P. O. Box 1264, Natchez, MS 39121.

1996 Wright Awards go to Douglas, Morris

Mississippi writers Ellen Douglas and Willie Morris have been named winners of the third annual Richard Wright Literary Excellence Award, a prestigious prize named after the late Natchez native whose books *Native Son* and *Black Boy* were phenomenal successes when published in the 1940s.

Douglas, winner for fiction, and Morris, for nonfiction, will receive their awards during the 1996 Natchez Literary Celebration, May 30 - June 1, at Natchez City Auditorium.

"These two outstanding Mississippians are highly regarded for their decades of literary achievements," said former University of Mississippi history professor David Sansing, chairman of the committee selecting the Wright award winners.

"With the wealth of nominations received this year, the committee agreed to create two categories so that both of these popular writers could be honored," Sansing said. "That decision will set our pattern for the future, with prizes going to fiction and nonfiction winners."

Both writers will be on hand to accept the awards on the final evening of the Celebration.

1996
page 29

**TICKETS**

7th Annual
NATCHEZ LITERARY
CELEBRATION

May 29 - June 1, 1996

601-445-0353

1-800-862-3259

Natchez Pilgrimage Tours

Canal Street Depot

Canal at State Street

Open daily 'til 5:00 pm

The Seventh Annual Natchez Literary Celebration
presents

**SOUTHERN WOMEN:
300 YEARS OF INFLUENCE**

May 30-June 1, 1996 • Natchez, Mississippi

SEVENTH ANNUAL NATCHEZ LITERARY CELEBRATION REGISTRATION FORM

Please note that most of the lectures are absolutely **FREE**. Ticketed events are \$5 to \$20 per person. Please send the completed registration form with your check for the ticketed events you wish to attend. Questions? Call 1-800-647-6724 or 601-446-6345. Make your check payable to: **NATCHEZ BOX OFFICE** and mail to P.O. Box 1264, Natchez, MS 39121-1264. To order by credit card, call 1-800-862-3259 or 601-445-0353.

Name (As you wish it to appear on nametag)

Street Address

City

State

Zip

Home Phone

Work Phone

EVENT

TIME/DATE

NO. TICKETS

PRICE/TICKETS

A. Pre-Conference Reception	Wednesday, May 29, 6-9 p.m.	_____	\$10.00	_____
B. Picnic and Tour	Thursday, May 30, 5-8 p.m.	_____	\$20.00	_____
C. William Styron	Thursday, May 30, 8:30 p.m.	_____	\$10.00	_____
D. <i>Gone with the Wind</i>	Friday, May 31, 1-5 p.m.	_____	\$5.00	_____
E. Maryln Schwartz	Friday, May 31, 5:45 p.m.	_____	\$10.00	_____
F. Tea Dance	Friday, May 31, 6:45 p.m.	_____	\$20.00	_____
G. Myrlie Evers-Williams and Willie Morris	Friday, May 31, 8:30 p.m.	_____	\$10.00	_____
H. Historic House Tour	Saturday, June 1, 2:30-5:30 p.m.	_____	\$15.00	_____
I. "Evening with the Stars"	Saturday, June 1, 7:30 p.m.	_____	\$10.00	_____
J. Closing Reception	Saturday, June 1, 9 p.m.	_____	\$10.00	_____

TOTAL PAYMENT ENCLOSED

1996
page 30

The Natchez Democrat PEOPLE

SUNDAY, MAY 12, 1996

Literature provides wide range of authors, books for any taste

By JOAN GANDY

Special to The Democrat

From satire to serious reflection, four special performances during the 1996 Natchez Literary Celebration, May 30-June 1, promise to lead audiences through entertaining, inspiring and educational experiences.

Authors and subjects range from the outrageously irreverent MaryIn Schwartz, author of "The Southern Belle Primer," or "Why Princess Margaret Will Never Be A Kappa Kappa Gamma," to the visionary Myrlie Evers-Williams, widow of civil rights leader Medgar Evers and author of "For Us, the Living."

"These programs at the seventh annual Celebration are extraordinary opportunities for Natchez-area people of all ages," said Carolyn Vance Smith, founder and co-chairman of the three-day event.

"With celebrities such as Schwartz, Evers-Williams, Willie Morris, Nikki Giovanni and William Styron featured in our evening activities, we believe this will be the most exciting literary confer-

ence we've had in Natchez," Smith said.

Most lectures at the Celebration are free, including those from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on May 30; 9 a.m. to noon on May 31; and 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on June 1, all at the Natchez City Auditorium.

Ticketed events are from \$5 to \$20 per person.

The four evening celebrity performances, also all at City Auditorium, are as follows:

- Author Styron, whose 1967 book "The Confessions of Nat Turner" won a Pulitzer Prize, will present "A Few Women: One Writer's View" at 8:30 p.m. on May 30.

Styron will read from his works, particularly passages relating to Southern women.

Tickets are \$10 per person.

Styron's first novel, "Lie Down in Darkness," centers on a Southern family threatened by their troubled relationships with each other.

Acclaimed by one critic for its "brooding, rhapsodic, sometimes searing por-

Literary Celebration highlights

diversity among authors



trait of that family," the book introduces a mother, a crippled daughter and another daughter who finally destroys herself because of her father's love and her mother's rejection.

• Dallas author and columnist Schwartz will present "The Women of the Old South: Alive and Well in 1996" at 5:45 p.m. on May 31. Tickets are \$10 per person.

Schwartz casts a sharp eye on old-time Southern traditions and turns what she sees into good-humored fun.

"This is a whole new world, where Bubba's wearing Armani, Sister's in the statehouse and Grandmother's turning over in her grave," Schwartz said in describing the New South.

Miss America contestants from the South offer a good example of the South-

"These programs at the seventh annual Celebration are extraordinary opportunities for people of all ages."

— Carolyn Vance Smith

ern woman turned modern, she said.

"Southern women no longer feel winning the swimsuit competition is the height of the pageant experience."

• Evers-Williams and Mississippi writer Willie Morris will appear in a two-part program at 8:30 p.m. on May 31. Tickets are \$10.

Morris, who wrote the introduction to the 1996 edition of "For Us, the Living," will speak of the experience with that book, both when it first was released in 1967 by Doubleday and again when he approached the book "with trepidation" during the re-trial of Byron de la Beckwith for the assassination of Medgar Evers.

Concerned that a work almost 30 years before might have been diminished by

See AUTHORS, Page 3C

1996
page 32

Natchez Literary Celebration Schedule of events

May 29

6 to 9 p.m. — Pre-conference reception at Elms Court, honoring authors of a new book, "Classic Natchez." \$10.

May 30

9 a.m. — Welcome given by Billy B. Thames, president of the Copiah-Lincoln Community College and William F. Winter, president of the Board of Trustees of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Free.

9:15 — Marjorie Spruill Wheeler discusses "The Role of Women in Shaping the South: An Overview." Free.

10 a.m. — Patricia Galloway discusses "Matrilineal Kinship and the Preservation of the Natchez Indian Chiefdom."

11 a.m. — Robert V. Remini discusses "Rachel Jackson and Lucretia Clay: Two Heroic Southern Women." Free.

2 p.m. — Clyda Stokes Rent and Bridget Prieschel discuss "Loyal Daughters: The Remarkable Women of America's First Public College for Women." Free.

3 p.m. — Michael Kreyling dis-

cusses "A Pathway of Love: The Natchez Trace in the Works of Eudora Welty." Free.

3:45 p.m. — A showing Eudora Welty's short story, "A Worn Path," set on the Natchez Trace with discussing afterward by producer/writer/director Bruce Schwartz. Free.

5 to 8 p.m. — "It's About Time: A Guided

Tour with picnic, music, storytelling and living history at the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians, Historic Jefferson College and the Natchez Trace Parkway. \$20, includes transportation.

8:30 p.m. — William Styron, Pulitzer prize-winning novelist discusses "Southern Women: Strength and Courage."

May 31

9 a.m. — Joan E Cashin discusses "The Power Behind Jefferson Davis: Varina Howell Davis of Natchez." Free.

9:45 a.m. — Maryemma Graham discusses "Margaret Walker and

Richard Wright's Mississippi." Free.

10:45 a.m. — Darden Asbury Pyron discusses "Margaret Mitchell and Gone With the Wind." Free.

1 to 5 p.m. — Showing of the movie "Gone With the Wind," at the Natchez Eola Hotel. \$5, includes refreshments.

5:45 p.m. — Marylin Schwartz discusses "The Women of the Old South: Alive and Well in 1996," as well as her book, "The Southern Belle

Primer." \$10.

6:45 p.m. — Old-fashioned tea dance at Stanton Hall with food, libations, music, entertainment and dancing. \$20.

8:30 p.m. — Presentation, "Toward the 21st Century with the Betterment of Human Relations," by Myrlie Evers-Williams and Willie Morris. \$10.

June 1

9 a.m. — Emily Toth discusses "Feminism in the Late 19th Cen-

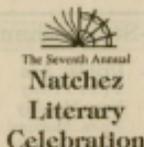
tury: A Look at Kate Chopin and Her Work." Free.

10:15 a.m. — A performance of "Profiles of Strength and Courage in Southern Women: A Tribute to Alice Walker, Margaret Walker Alexander, Lucille Clifton and Maya Angelou," by the Daughters of Margaret.

11 a.m. — Autograph party. 1:30 p.m. — Dr. Thomas Gandy discusses "Women Who Wouldn't Say 'No': The Founders of the Natchez Pilgrimage to Historic Homes and Gardens." Free.

2:30 to 5:30 p.m. — Tour of three historic homes: Airlie, Riverview and Melrose with refreshments and living history. \$15, includes transportation.

7:30 p.m. — "An Evening with the Stars." Presentation of the Third Annual Richard Wright Literary Excellence Award, introduction of Outstanding Humanities Division students and faculty members in Mississippi colleges and universities and a presentation entitled, "Diversity as Art: Art Is Diversity," by Nikki Giovanni. \$10.



1996
page 33

The women of Melrose

The McMurren women kept families, households together during a changing time

By KELLY ELDRIDGE
The Natchez Democrat

The legacy of the women of Melrose lives on in the writings of the McMurren women who lived there in the years leading up to the Civil War and afterward.

The women left behind a wealth of correspondence and literature for historians to document what life was like at Melrose and surrounding plantations.

During the 1996 Natchez Literary Celebration, Melrose will present a living history tour with actors portraying the residents of the house and discussing their concerns.

Janice Turnage, park ranger for the Natchez National Historical Park, has been documenting the women of Melrose for the tour and will be one of the participants.

"The women and men will be dressed in period costumes. Turnage said research was done to be as accurate as possible.

"We looked at old photographs of the family and descriptions of the dresses from documents to get an idea how we should dress," she said.

"It's not terribly comfortable, especially in the summer months. Some of the dresses they wore had

layer after layer of material, some up to 100 feet.

"Then there were all the contraptions they had to use to get into the dresses. It's no wonder they had all the fainting couches around the house."

Turnage said the documents give historians a picture of what life was like for these women.

"In the letters we have from the women of the house, we can read their concerns of the time — what they thought about families and life in general," she said.



LEGACY: A portrait of Mary McMurren, painting when she was 15, hangs in the bedroom shared by her and her husband, John. A sewing box, top right, still sits on a table in the bedroom. McMurren's sister wrote that she was sewing, possibly at this table, when the Essex bombed Natchez.

"We can see what their daily lives were like, what their duties were and how they spent their time with the children."△

The women of Melrose are credit-

ed with keeping the house in the preserved condition it is in today.

Turnage and other actors will show visitors through the house, pointing out delicate furnishings and draperies that were preserved thanks to a house servant, Jane.

"The loyalty she had to the family and to the house was amazing," Turnage said.

"She stayed on after the Civil War for 40 years, caring for the grounds and house, making sure everything was polished, dusted and cleaned.

"She is a big factor in keeping Melrose the most authentic house of the planter era."

Though she died in the 1940s, Jane's care of the home lives on.

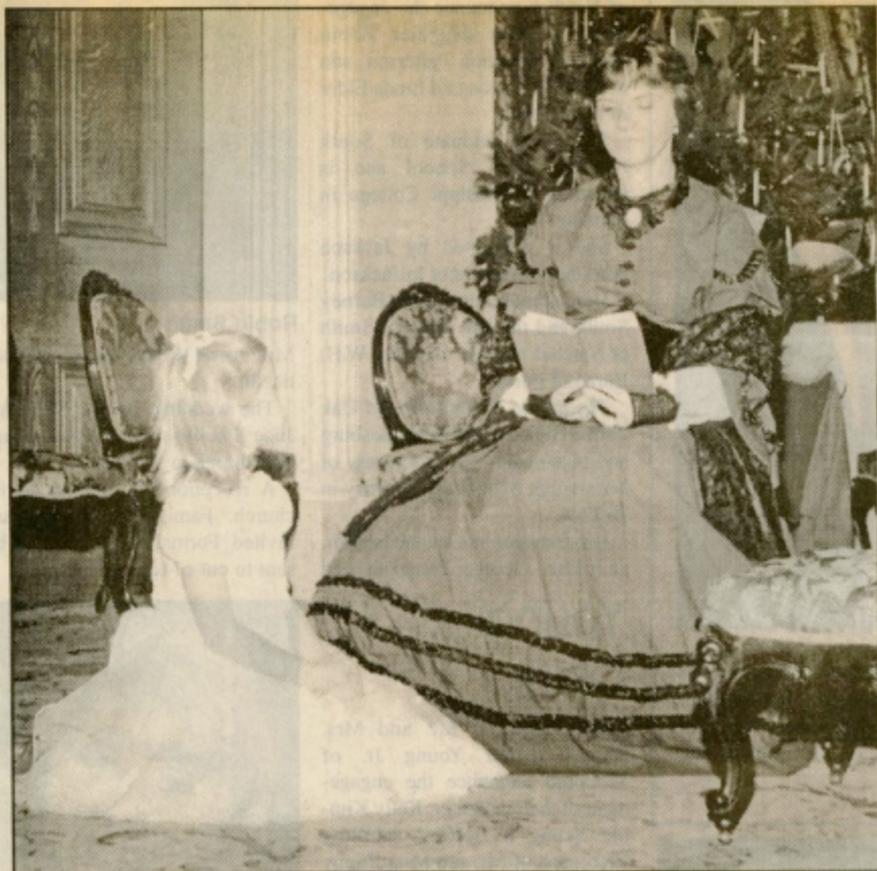
An ongoing search continues today for pieces of the women's lives at Melrose.

"We have a lot of the major pieces like furnishings and things like that," Turnage said.

"It's the little things we're lacking — personal items like linens for the table, photographs and personal items that were taken from the house when the family moved."

Turnage said the strength of the women and the bonds that they shared kept families and homes together during tragedy. "These women were the strength

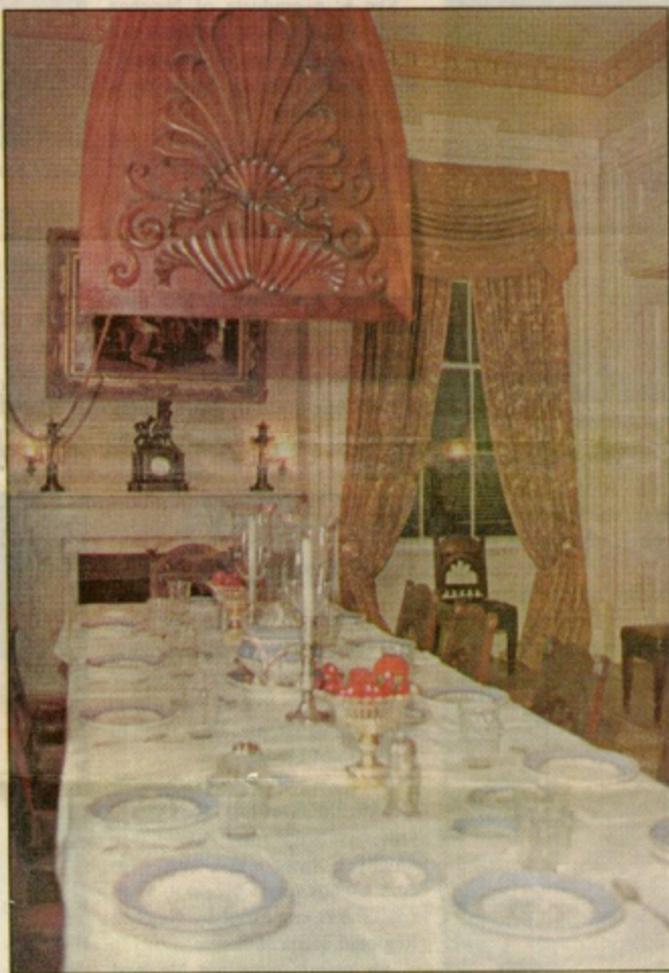
See MELROSE, Page 3C



The Natchez Democrat/Photo courtesy of Van's Photography

BACK IN TIME:

Janice Turnage, park ranger at the Natchez National Historical Park-Melrose, and Sarah Wisner, above, participated in the living history tour at Melrose during Christmas last year. Another living history presentation will be held June 1 as part of the Natchez Literary Celebration. The dining room in Melrose, right, is set with the finest china. The McMurrens always ate dinner in this room and always together. It was a family time of gathering, Turnage said.



*Photos by
Barbara
Gerard
Kaiser*

1996
page 35

Plenty of notables to attend NLC

Everyone knows that each year the Natchez Literary Celebration attracts world class writers and scholars. This year's conference is no different.

Set for May 30 to June 1 at the Natchez City Auditorium, the seventh annual celebration will headline such household names as William Styron, winner of a Pulitzer Prize and Myrtle Evers-Williams, author and board chairman of the NAACP.

We are very honored to host such celebrities. Helping us welcome them are numerous other dignitaries who also honor us with their presence. They include:

- Dr. Cora Norman of Jackson, executive director of the Mississippi Humanities Council, who will be honored May 30 with "Cora Norman Day at the NLC" on the occasion of her upcoming retirement. The MHC has funded the Literary Celebration each year since its beginning in 1990.

- Dr. Leslie McLemore of Jackson State University, president of the MHC board, who will introduce Dr. Norman at 9 a.m. May 30.

- U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran (R-Miss.), who will welcome visitors to Mississippi and Natchez Mayor Larry "Butch" Brown, who will welcome visitors to Natchez at 9:05 a.m. May 30.

- Dr. Billy B. Thames, president of Copiah-Lincoln Community College, who at 9:15 a.m. May 30 will present former Gov. William Winter, president of the board of trustees of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

Mr. Winter will serve once again as master of ceremonies and will introduce the speakers Dr. Patricia Galloway at 10 a.m. May 30, William Styron at 8:30 p.m. May 30, Maryln Schwartz at 5:45 p.m. May 31, Willie Morris and Myrtle Evers-Williams at 8:30 p.m. May 31 and Nikki Giovanni at 7:30 p.m. June 1.

- Dr. Aubrey Lucas, president of the University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, who will introduce the speaker Dr. Marjorie Spruill



Top of the Morning

TRAVIS THORNTON
Natchez campus dean

Wheeler at 9:15 a.m. May 30.

- Dr. John D.W. Guice, professor of history at USM, who will introduce the speaker Dr. Robert V. Remini of the University of Illinois at 11 a.m. May 30.

- Dr. Olon Ray of Jackson, executive director of the State Board for Mississippi's Community and Junior Colleges, who at 2 p.m. May 30 will introduce the speakers Dr. Clyda S. Rent, president of Mississippi University for Women, Columbus, and Dr. Bridget Pieschel, associate professor of English at MUW.

- Judge Mary Lee Toles, president of the Natchez Association for the Preservation of Afro-American Culture, who at 3 p.m. May 30 will introduce the speakers Dr. Michael Kreying of Vanderbilt University and Bruce Schwartz of North Hollywood, Calif.

- Dr. Joanne Hawks, director of the Sarah Isom Center for Women's Studies at The University of Mississippi, who at 9 a.m. May 31 will introduce Dr. Joan Cashin of Ohio State University.

- Dr. Alferdeen Harrison, director of the Margaret Walker Alexander Research Center at Jackson State University, who at 9:45 a.m. May 31 will introduce the speaker Dr. Mayemna Graham of Northeastern University, Boston.

- Dr. Clinton Bristow, president of Alcorn State University, who at 10:45 a.m. May 31 will introduce the speaker Dr. Darden Asbury Pyron

of Florida International University.

- Dr. James W. Stribling of Brookhaven, president of Co-Lin's Board of Trustees, who at 9 a.m. June 1 will introduce the speaker Dr. Emily Toth of Louisiana State University.

- Dr. Ann Abadie, associate director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at Ole Miss, who at 10:15 a.m. June 1 will introduce the Daughters of Margaret, a performing group from Jackson.

- President of the Adams County Board of Supervisors Thomas Campbell, who at 1:30 p.m. June 1 will welcome visitors to Adams County and introduce the speaker Dr. Thomas H. Gandy.

- Dr. Thomas H. Layzell of Jackson, Commissioner, Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, who at 7:30 p.m. June 1 will introduce Mississippi's Most Outstanding College Humanities Division Students and Faculty Members.

- The writers Willie Morris and Josephine Haxton (whose pen name is Ellen Douglas), both of Jackson, who will be presented with the 1996 Richard Wright Literary Excellence Awards at 7:35 p.m. June 1.

- The writer and scholar Dr. Margaret Walker Alexander, who won the Richard Wright Award in 1995 and will be introduced at 7:35 p.m. June 1.

It is my privilege to invite you to attend the Literary Celebration. All three of the sponsors, who are Co-Lin, Mississippi Department of Archives and History and the National Park Service, are excited about it.

The daytime lectures are absolutely free, and the ticketed events are low cost. Call Natchez Box Office for tickets and come say hello to your favorite celebrity. See you at the City Auditorium!

Travis Thornton is dean of the Natchez Campus of Copiah-Lincoln Community College.

1996
page 36

ARTS & LEISURE

THE CLARION-LEDGER ■ JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

PUZZLES - 2

BOOKS - 3

REUNIONS - 6

F

SUNDAY, MAY 19, 1996

COMING UP

HERE

■ Get back to books at the Natchez Literary Celebration May 30-June 1 in Natchez. Participants include Myrtle Evers-Williams, William Styron, Robert Remini and Willie Morris.

For more information, call 1-800-662-3259.

THERE

■ Celtic culture is celebrated at the Gallands Celtic Festival June 15-16 in Leesburg, Va. Visitors can enjoy fiddling, dancing and piping competitions, Welsh choirs, workshops on Celtic languages and a market of jarred crafts by broom-makers, weavers, blacksmiths and glassmakers.

For details, call (703) 777-3174.

1996
page 37

Opening doors to Natchez history

Literary Celebration features tour of homes

By JOAN GANDY
Special to The Democrat

Two hundred years of Natchez history, lore and architecture will come alive June 1 from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m., when the Natchez Literary Celebration offers a special tour of four sites.

Three houses — Airlie, Melrose and Riverview — along with Stratton Chapel, home of the exhibition "Natchez in Historic Photographs," will make up the tour, said Carolyn Vance Smith, Celebration founder and co-chairman.

"A tour of these very different houses and buildings provides a unique opportunity for Natchez residents, as well as the many visitors we expect from out of town," Smith said.

"The tour includes refreshments served at Riverview and a living history presentation at Melrose."

Tickets are \$15 and are available at Natchez Box Office, 445-0353.

This includes transportation with guides. Deadline for purchasing tickets is May 27.

Mimi Miller, historic preservation director of the Historic Natchez Foundation, said the tour will be a "chance of a lifetime."

One of the houses featured, Airlie, is an 18th-century house shown during the first Natchez Spring Pilgrimage, but not on tour since 1964.

The interior of the house features what may be the earliest mantelpieces in the Georgian style in Adams County, Miller said.

"Airlie also has the only H-L hinges in Adams County and brick-nogged construction which is unusual for Adams County — that is bricks under siding," she said.

Airlie has the typical form of an early planter's cottage, Miller said.

The house is long, low and narrow with a full-width front gallery.

A few doors west of Airlie is Riverview, home of Dr. Kenneth Stubbs and Karen Stubbs and their four children.

"What we love best about this house is driving through the front gates," Karen Stubbs said.

"It's like coming into another world, a wonderful place with its huge oak trees and peaceful ambience."

With sections of the house built in the 19th century, some parts of the house underwent

extensive renovation in the 20th century.

In between the earliest por-



The Natchez Democrat/Submitted by Joan Gandy

OPEN DOORS: Stratton Chapel, which houses "Natchez in Historic Photographs," top, and Airlie, an 18th-century home, will both be featured on the tour, June 1.

Under restoration by James M. Love, Airlie is one of the oldest Natchez residences still standing.



The Natchez Democrat/Ernie Duke

HOME SWEET HOME: Kenneth and Karen Stubbs enjoy the day in the front yard of their home, Riverview, which will be shown on a special tour during the Natchez Literary Celebration.

tions of the house and the latest additions are such classic updates as the 1880-90 addition of a paneled dining room, reminiscent of the Newport residences being built then.

"The Brown family lived in Riverview then, and were very successful at cotton farming," Stubbs said.

"So they were for years able to furnish and live in Riverview in grand style."

The facade of Riverview belies the spacious interior of the house, she said.

"The facade is not one of the grand Greek revival style everyone thinks of when they think of Natchez houses, but the house extends to the back and is really quite large."

At Melrose, a part of the Natchez National Historical Park, tour-goers not only will get a tour of the house and grounds, but also will be treated to a living history program based on lives of some of the women who lived at the house.

Janice Turnage, a park ranger who has helped to develop the living history program, said the



The Natchez Democrat/Barbara Gerard Kaiser

LIVING HISTORY: Visitors to Melrose during the tour will not only get a look at the house and grounds, but a living history program will be performed.

Melrose women bound the families together.

Melrose is one of America's most significant structures.

Miller, in the book "The Great Houses of Natchez," written with her husband, Ron, describes Melrose as "one of the best preserved and most significant historic sites in the entire South, unusually complete and well detailed."

At Stratton Chapel the tour will include not only a large chapel, a Romanesque Revival addition to the Federal Style church, but also the exhibition of more than 450 photographs cov-

ering 100 years of Natchez history.

"The exhibition is a wonderful use of a historic addition to the church," Miller said.

"That 1901 building has been under-utilized for many years."

The photographs, provided from the collection of Dr. Thomas H. Gandy, give a great introduction to Natchez, Miller said.

The exhibit provides funds to continue preservation of the chapel.

All proceeds from the photographic exhibit go to First Presbyterian Church.

1996 page 39

O The Natchez Democrat PINION

Literary program outstanding again

The influence of women on southern life and culture is great. From authors and artists to social and civil rights leaders, women have shaped Natchez, the state and the entire South.

Many have not sought nor have received recognition.

This week, though, the Natchez Literary Celebration will change that oversight.

The celebration will explore women's role in and contribution to Southern life.

We thank the co-sponsors: Copiah-Lincoln Community College, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and the Natchez National Historical Park.

They have assembled a star cast of speakers from the national, regional and local stages. We will be honored with insights from such individuals as Myrlie Evers-Williams, chairman of the board of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; William Styron, Pulitzer Prize winning author; Willie Morris, noted Mississippi writer; Clyda Stokes Rent, president of the Mississippi University for Women; and Dr. Thomas H. Gandy, our own local historian and lecturer.

Now in its seventh year, the celebration every year has grown in stature and importance as a major literary event in the South.

For instance, the celebration has been recognized as one of the South's finest events by the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, as well as earning a grant from the Mississippi Humanities Council.

Because local residents live so close to the celebration, they might not realize its importance.

We encourage residents who have not attended the celebration before to put it on their calendars this year. The programs begin Thursday and conclude Saturday.

Many of the lectures are free and all are at the Natchez City Auditorium.

There is something about this program which takes cultural enrichment to a new level.

That the program has thrived in Natchez is a tribute to the organizers, the community and the people.

1996
page 40



Natchez City
Auditorium -
Headquarters of
the NLC
1993-1996

1996
page 41

Faces of our past

Exhibit features 300 years of Southern women

SECTION

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 1996

1996
page 42

By KELLY ELDRIDGE

The Natchez Democrat

History will come to life — at least visually — at the City Auditorium as the Natchez Literary Celebration kicks off its seventh season.

Keeping with the theme, "Southern Women: 300 Years of Influence," a group of women have compiled a visual aid depicting the women of eight eras.

Eight mannequins will be on display at the auditorium dressed in period clothing from the Natchez Indians to the Civil Rights era.

The mannequins were donated by Jack Benoist and Jo Hinton.

"This is an exhibit that's going to add a lot

to our theme, giving everyone an idea of what these women were really like," said Carolyn Vance

Smith, founder and co-chairman of the Celebration.

"Every period that will be discussed during the conference will be illustrated with these mannequins. Research was done to make sure their costumes were authentic, from their hair down to their shoes."

Jean Simonton, Donna Hart and Elizabeth Netterville were instrumental in designing the exhibit.

Also featured with the mannequins will be information describing the era, tying the women in with

a featured speaker.

The journey through time begins with the Natchez Indian noblewoman, dressed in authentic costume of her period, prior to 1720.

Simonton, a historian at the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians, researched the dress and lifestyle of the nobleman and medicine woman.

"It was very interesting to research the importance she had in the tribe," Simonton said.

"The chief was descended from the female line, not the male. She was a revered figure in the tribal makeup."

She wore feathers in her hair representing many different things, none of which was documented.



She also wore shells and animal bones on a necklace, belt and in her hair for decoration, and also featured tattoos.

"They used a shell to carve the tattoo and then rubbed black coal on the wound," Simonton said.

Next on the timeline is the frontier woman.

"This woman is dressed in probably one of her best dresses, though it's still a simple design," Hart said.

"This dress is light green with a designer pattern. For everyday wear during this period, the women would've stuck with something white and very simple for their

See FACES, Page 3C

May 29, 1996
Democrat

May 29, 1996
Democrat



SUN CLASS: A model of the Natchez Indian noblewoman will be featured in the exhibit. Jean Simon-ton, right, points out the face marking adorned by the woman. On her hand, the noblewoman holds a medicine pouch containing roots and old teeth and bones for healing.



1996
page 43



A TOUCH OF NATCHEZ: Netterville shows off the boucle style dress worn by the mannequin representing the late Katherine Grafton Miller, one of the founders of the Natchez Pilgrimage. The clothing was authentic to the late Ruth Beltzhoover, a fellow founder of the pilgrimage.

PLANTATION WOMEN 1820-1865

"She was only a living sign
and mark of all the best
that any human being
could hope to become.
In her glowing presence
for truth, independence and
forgiving love, she was
alive and standing on the
highest peak of her time
and human personality."

Very In

Margaret Walker Alexander's
Justice
1966

"She had gone back to
the source in her mind
she was still the best
example of the best
which her time and world the
world. What she had done
was, in her own way,
good, she could do again."

Written by

Margaret Mitchell's
Gone With The Wind
1936



DISCOVERY

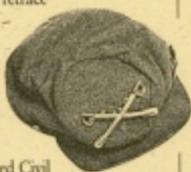
WEEKS EXCURSIONS



1996
page 45

Grant's March to Vicksburg

In this exciting excursion, you'll visit several battlesites and attend historic presentations as you retrace Grant's path. This "tour of duty" ends at the Vicksburg National Military Park, a site which has been called the nation's best-preserved Civil War battlefield.



Other highlights include a visit to Port Gibson, the town General Grant deemed "too beautiful to burn," and the haunting Ruins of Windsor, where only 23 giant Corinthian columns remain from what was once Mississippi's most splendid plantation home. You'll also visit Natchez for a carriage ride through town and an antebellum home tour.

Those wishing to stay two extra days can witness "The Siege, Battle and Fall of Vicksburg," a spectacular re-enactment.

Dates: May 19-24

Re-enactment: May 25th and 26th

Communities Visited: Clinton, Madison, Natchez

Host: Hinds Community College

Lodging: Holiday Hampton, Vicksburg

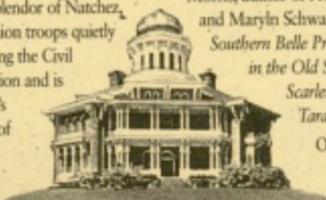
Double Occupancy: \$500 per person

Single Occupancy: \$600 per person

RV: \$400 per person including hookup

Architecture and Arts in the Deep South

Few places in America can match the old-fashioned charm and splendor of Natchez, Mississippi. Because Union troops quietly occupied the town during the Civil War, it escaped destruction and is now perhaps the South's greatest representation of antebellum style.



Today, over 500 pre-war structures can be found throughout the city. You'll tour several of them, including a number of palatial mansions.

You'll also see *Palaces of St. Petersburg: Russian Imperial Style*, an exhibition in Jackson which re-creates rooms from four Russian imperial palaces. Over 600 treasures of the tsars will be displayed.

Also on the itinerary is "Southern Exposure"—a lighthearted satire of Natchez's antebellum home pilgrimage, an exhibition of historic photographs, lectures, plus traditional and gourmet southern meals.

Dates: March 17-22

Communities Visited: Natchez, Brookhaven, Madison

Host: Co-Lin Community College/Natchez Campus

Lodging: Best Western River Park, Natchez

Double Occupancy: \$575 per person

Single Occupancy: \$700 per person

RV: \$495 per person including hookup

A Natchez Literary Journey

This tour showcases the Natchez Literary Celebration, an event which recently was awarded for excellence in the humanities after the Committee for the Olympic Games. This year's theme is "Southern Women: 300 Years of Influence."

Speakers will include Myrtle Evers-Williams, president of the NAACP and author of *For Us, the Living*; Dr. Darden Asbury Pyron, an authority of Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*; Willie Morris, author of *North Toward Home*; and Marilyn Schwartz, author of *A Southern Belle Primer* and *New Times in the Old South: Or Why Scarlett's in Therapy and Tara's Going Condo*.

Other activities include

Natchez Demo

THURSDAY, MAY 30, 1996

Literary Celebration begins with lectures

By KELLY ELDRIDGE
The Natchez Democrat

The Seventh Annual Natchez Literary Celebration kicks off today with a packed schedule of speakers and evening entertainment.

The conference moved into the auditorium Tuesday after the Natchez Opera Festival moved out.

All morning and early afternoon events are free and open to the

public.

Getting the custom bookstore together and setting up a mannequin exhibit, the auditorium transformed into a literary paradise.

The day will begin at 9 a.m. with Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, associate professor of history at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg.

Her topic will be "The Influential Southern Woman: An

Overview."

At 10 a.m., Patricia Galloway will explore the importance of the women in the Natchez Indian tribe. Galloway, a special projects officer at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History in Jackson, explains the kinship system and the line of chiefdom from the female.

At 11 a.m., Robert V. Reimini, professor of history at the Univer-

See LITERARY, Page 10A

Literary

Continued from Page 1A

sity of Illinois in Chicago, will take a look at the heroines of the antebellum time.

"Rachel Jackson and Lucretia Clay: Two Heroic Southern Women," will explore the strength of women left behind to take care of the finances and households when their husbands traveled to Washington.

Two presentations will be featured at 2 p.m.: "Pauline Orr: Educator and Activist," by Bridget Smith Pieschel, associate profes-

sor of English at Mississippi University for Women, and "Loyal Daughters: The Remarkable Women of America's First Public College for Women," by Clyda Stokes Rent, president of Mississippi University for Women.

Eudora Welty's work will be the focus of "A Pathway of Love: The Natchez Trace in the Works of Eudora Welty," at 3 p.m. by Michael Kreyling, professor of English at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn.

The look at Welty will continue at 3:45 p.m. with "A Worn Path," a film based on her short story, introduced and presented by pro-

ducer-director, Bruce Schwartz of Hollywood.

The guided tour of the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians, Historic Jefferson College and Mount Locust, scheduled from 5 to 8 p.m., has already sold out.

The day will end at 8:30 p.m. with the Pulitzer Prize winner William Styron reading passages from his works about women, specifically Southern women.

Tickets for this event are \$10. Tickets for any event throughout the conference may be purchased at the Natchez Box Office or at the door. For more information, call the Box Office at 445-0353.

1996
page 46

Schedule of Events

On tap today:

• 9 a.m.

(free) — "Kate Chopin and Women's Secrets," by Emily Toth, professor of English



Toth

and women's studies at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, La.

Novelist and short story writer, Chopin, was very spicy for the 1800s.

Chopin's writings include what inquiring minds want to know: about family, money, love triangles, women's friendships and forbidden dreams.

• 9:45 a.m. — Break.

• 10:15

a.m. (free) — "Profiles of Strength and Courage in Southern Women:



Wade-Crisler

A Tribute to Alice Walker, Margaret Walker Alexander, Lucille Clifton and Maya Angelou," by Rosia Wade-Crisler and the Daughters of Margaret of Jackson.

• 11 a.m. — Autograph party honoring lecturers.

• 12 noon (free) — Break.

• 1:30 p.m. (free) —

"Women Who Wouldn't Say 'No': The Founders of the Natchez Pilgrimage to Historic Homes and Gardens," by Dr. Thomas Gandy, author and historian of Natchez.

Thursday, May 30, 1996

In 1932, when members of the Natchez Garden Club sponsored the first Spring Pilgrimage, they drew attention to the need to preserve their city's history, architecture and natural beauty.

• 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. (\$15 ticket, including transportation from auditorium) — A tour of these historic houses and "Natchez in Historic Photographs" at Stratton Chapel Gallery. Tour includes Airline, Melrose and Riverview.

• 7:30 p.m. (\$10 ticket)

— "An evening with the Stars," including a presentation of the Richard Wright Literary Awards to Ellen Douglas (fiction) and Willie Morris (nonfiction), introduction of Outstanding



Giovanni

Humanities Division Students and Faculty Members in Mississippi Colleges and Universities, Nikki Giovanni, professor of English at Virginia Tech University, will follow with her program, "Diversity as Art: Art is Diversity."

• 9 p.m. (\$10 ticket) — Reception honoring all lecturers and the Literary Award winners, hosted by the Natchez Association for the Preservation of Afro-American Culture, at The House on Ellicott Hill.

Literary Celebration makes change

The Natchez Literary Celebration has announced a change in its schedule of events for this week.

Myrtle Evers-Williams and Willie Morris, who will present the lecture "America at the Crossroads," were originally scheduled for Friday at 8:30 p.m.

This lecture has been moved to Friday at 1 p.m.

Tickets are \$10.

To accommodate this change, the first half of the movie "Gene With Wind," will be shown Friday at 2:30 p.m. and the second half will be shown at 8:30 p.m.

The ticket to see both parts of the movie is \$5 per person.

For more information, call the Natchez Box Office at 445-0353.

1996
page 47

1 May 30, 1996

Natchez Literary Celebration

DAY
1

Schedule of Events

On tap today:

• **9 a.m. (free)** — "Margaret Walker and Richard Wright's Mississippi," by Dr. Maryemna Graham, scholar-in-residence at the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History in Washington D.C.

Walker and Wright knew Mississippi quite differently. For Wright, it was the land of his birth. For Walker, it was a place which could and did become a safe haven, despite its inevitable racial and political conflicts.

• **10 a.m. — Break.**

• **10:30 a.m. (free)** — "Margaret Mitchell and Gone With the Wind," by Dr. Darden Asbury Pyron, professor of history at Florida International University in Miami.

The Southern social drama imposes parts of mother, father and child, but also of woman and man.

Writing "Gone With the Wind," was an escape and affirmation of these roles.

• **11:30 a.m. — Break.**

• **1 p.m. (\$10 ticket)** — "America at the Crossroads," by Myrlie Evers-Williams, National Chairman of the NAACP board of Bend, Oregon, and Willie Morris, author and editor of Jackson.

The 1990s have proven an appropriate time to walk again with heroes of the 1960s who fought and died for civil rights.

From almost 30 years ago, leaders such as Medgar Evers offer an enduring message of hope as America and the world approach the 21st century.

• **2:30 p.m. (\$5 ticket, including refreshments)** — Showing of the first half of the movie, "Gone With the Wind," at the Natchez Eola Hotel.

• **5:45 p.m. (\$10 ticket)** — "The Women of the Old South: Alive and Well in 1996," Marylin Schwartz, author and columnist of Dallas.

The women of the Old South living in the New South cope very well. Examples abound in her two award-winning books, "A Southern Belle Primer, or Why Princess Margaret Will Never be a Kappa Kappa Gamma," and "New Times in the Old South or Why Scarlett's in Therapy and Tara's Going Condo."

• **6:45 p.m. (\$20 ticket)** — Old fashioned tea dance at Stanton Hall with food, libations, music and dancing.

• **8:30 p.m. (\$10 ticket)** — Showing of the second half of the movie, "Gone With the Wind," at the Eola Hotel.



Graham



Pyron



Evers-Williams



Schwartz

1996
page 48

May 31, 1994
Natchez Democrat
Day II

Jackson, Clay demonstrate courage

Early life proved difficult for both women

by KELLY ELDRIDGE
The Natchez Democrat

They were women of strength, courage and most of all, tragedy. Their husbands were two of the most well-known men of the 18th century.

Rachel Jackson, wife of Andrew Jackson, and Lucretia Clay, wife of Henry Clay, led two distinct lives, different in many ways, yet similar in circumstances.

Robert V. Remini, professor of history at the University of Illinois in Chicago and a leading Jacksonian scholar, gave an intimate look at these women and their lives in the public eye during the first day of the Natchez Literary Celebration Thursday.

Both women experienced difficult early years, transplanted to the frontier states of Kentucky and Tennessee, as their fathers tried to tame areas for white settlers.

"Rachel lived under the most difficult circumstances one can imagine as a child of 13," Remini said. "There was constant warfare and starvation. Finally her father sent her to live in Kentucky."

Though Rachel is always remembered as the wife of Andrew Jackson, he was not her first husband.

"In Kentucky she met a man named Robars, whom she had a turbulent life with for many years," he said. "They left one another several times and finally, after Rachel met Andrew, Robars filed for divorce."

A woman of Rachel's time never divorced, and this was a strain on her heart for the rest of her life.

The affair she and Andrew indulged in before her divorce was final was the focus of vicious attacks during Andrew's first presidential campaign.

Being the daughter of the first family of Tennessee, this wasn't exactly a conventional life Rachel had chosen.

"She lived with her decisions for the rest of her life, and the pain of the attacks during the campaign never left her," he said.

"Regardless of what anyone said about her, she was Jackson's first and only true love."

They wrote regularly when Andrew was in



The Natchez Democrat/Barbara Gerard Kasser

AUTOGRAPH: Dr. Robert V. Remini signs a book for Virginia Whitaker of Monroe.

"I know many people who consider Andrew Jackson the John Wayne of his day, he was a very romantic man."

— Robert V. Remini

Washington D.C., and he kept all of her letters though some were burned in a house fire.

"I know many people consider Andrew Jackson a John Wayne of his day, he was a very romantic man," Remini said.

"He wore Rachel's likeness around his neck all his life. Though her life was cut short by a heart attack, he never married again."

When Andrew was away, Rachel oversaw 1,000 acres in Tennessee and 500 acres in Mississippi and dictated all the financial decisions.

Andrew always acknowledged her for that and gave her credit for keeping his holdings intact. Though a mutual love was shared by Rachel and Andrew, Lucretia and Henry Clay were a more complex couple.

Her beginnings were much like Rachel's, being brought to the frontier of Kentucky

when she was very young.

She has been called one of the kindest women in history and one of the most tragic, Remini said.

"She was very domestic — wanting to take care of her home and her children," he said.

"He, on the other hand, was a ladies' man, attending all the Washington balls, without his wife, of course."

Like Rachel, Lucretia stayed home while her husband was away and took care of their land and finances.

"They owned cotton and hemp plantations, plus numerous cattle, horses and other animals that were cared for," he said.

"She sold butter, milk, eggs and cured ham to make sure they lost nothing."

"It is said that every time Henry would leave home, he'd give her a check to take care of expenses while he was gone. Every time he returned, she would give him the check back."

That determination and strength were characteristics of a tragic home life.

The Clays had 11 children. All six daughters died before the age of 30 and their sons were troublesome, with two spending time in mental institutions, one becoming an alcoholic and two becoming soldiers (one dying in the Mexican War and one fleeing to Canada).

1996
page 49

The Natchez

FRIDAY, MAY 31, 1996

Serving Natchez, Vidalia and the Miss-Lou

Democrat

Natchez, Miss.

50 CENTS



The Natchez Democrat/Barbara Gerard Kaiser

LITERARY CELEBRATION: Speaker Dr. Patricia Galloway (left) chats with Carolyn Vance Smith and Dr. Cora Norman.

1996
page 50

Natchez on the River

Literary Celebration presents
final day of lectures, events

By KELLY ELDRIDGE
The Natchez Democrat

The Literary Celebration will present its final roster of the conference today at the City Auditorium.

With a continued focus on the strength and courage of Southern women, the lecturers will focus on the women of the late 19th and 20th centuries.

The day will begin at 9 a.m. with a look at Kate Chopin and her sometimes controversial writings about passion, sex and women's liberation.

Emily Toth will explore the writer who shocked some and liberated others with her writing.

At 10:15 a.m., Rosia Wade-Crisler will look at the lives and writings of several women who made a mark on the 20th century.

Alice Walker, Margaret Walker Alexander, Lucille Clifton and Maya Angelou will be in the spotlight.

Natchez will take the forefront as Dr. Thomas Gandy explores the Natchez

Pilgrimage and the women who founded the event to save the historic homes of their city.

At 1:30 p.m., Gandy will discuss the strength and determination of these women who had a far-reaching vision of preservation.

A tour of homes will be presented from 2:30 to 3 p.m. At Melrose, park rangers will present a living history tour of the house to ticket-holders.

Airlic and Riverview, now private homes, have not been open to the public in many years.

At 7:30 p.m., the conference will close with the presentation of the Richard Wright Literary Award winners and the introduction of the Outstanding Humanities Division awards.

Nikki Giovanni will follow with her lecture, "Diversity as Art: Art is Diversity."

All events will be at the Natchez City Auditorium. The tour will also depart from the auditorium.

Saturday, June 1

• 9 a.m. (free) — "Kate Chopin and Women's Secrets," by Emily Toth.

• 9:45 a.m. — Break

• 10:15 a.m. (free) — "Profiles of Strength and Courage in Southern Women: A Tribute to Alice Walker, Margaret Walker Alexander, Lucille Clifton and Maya Angelou," by Rosia Wade-Crisler and the Daughters of Margaret.

• 11 a.m. (free) — Autograph party honoring lecturers.

• 12 p.m. — Break.

• 1:30 p.m. (free) — "Women Who Wouldn't Say 'No': The Founders of the Natchez Pilgrimage to Historic Homes and Gardens," by Dr. Thomas H. Gandy.

• 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. (\$15 ticket, includes transportation) — Tour of three historic homes and "Natchez in Historic Photographs," housed at Stratton Chapel in First Presbyterian Church. Houses include Airlic, Melrose and Riverview.

• 7:30 p.m. (\$10 ticket) — "An Evening With the Stars," including:
• Presentation of Richard Wright Literary Excellence Awards to Ellen Douglas and Willie Morris.

• Introduction of Outstanding Humanities Division Students and Faculty Members in Mississippi Colleges and Universities.
• "Diversity as Art: Art Is Diversity," by Nikki Giovanni.

• 9 p.m. (\$10 ticket) — Reception honoring all lectures and the Literary Award winners, hosted by the Natchez Association for the Preservation of Afro-American Culture at The House on Ellicott Hill.

For tickets or more information, call the Natchez Box Office at 445-0353.



The Seventh Annual
Natchez
Literary
Celebration



The Seventh Annual
**NATCHEZ LITERARY
CELEBRATION**
presents...

**SOUTHERN WOMEN:
300 YEARS OF INFLUENCE**

An Olympic Award-winning conference devoted to
Literature • Arts • History • Culture

May 30 - June 1, 1996 • Natchez, Mississippi

- Meet Nikki Giovanni, Renowned Poet and Author
- Meet Myrlie Evers-Williams, Chairman of the NAACP Board
- Hear authors William Styron, Robert Remini and Willie Morris
- Spend an Evening in the Old South with Maryln Schwartz, Dallas Author of *The Southern Belle Primer*.

For more information, call

1-800-647-6724 or (601) 446-6345

Natchez Convention & Visitors Bureau

For ticket information, call

1-800-862-3259 or (601) 445-0353

Natchez Box Office

The South's Warmest Welcome
MISSISSIPPI

This project is partially funded through a grant by the Mississippi Department of Economic and Community Development and the Mississippi Humanities Council. Hosted by Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Mississippi Humanities Council and the National Park Service.

Democrat
May 31, 1996

MISS-LOU

Literary Celebration
schedule of events,
lectures5A

Ladies of the South

7th Annual Natchez Literary Celebration begins Thursday

By BRIAN HAWKINS
The Natchez Democrat

Southern women have come a long way, but many old attitudes still exist. That was the theme of the opening lecture of the Natchez Literary Celebration given by Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, an associate professor of history at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Wheeler, who has written several books on the women's suffrage movement in the United States, said discussing Southern women of the 19th century brings to mind images of the grand ladies of the plantation.

"These women were endowed with a magic spell to cast over any man she encountered," Wheeler said.

"They were endowed with grace, beauty and morality — an image carried forward into the late 19th century. Southern men worshipped her and would deny her nothing, but they had no direct influence."

The ideal of the Southern woman was part of a cultural creation, Wheeler said.

"When the Europeans first settled the South, they brought with them the ideas of

See NATCHEZ, Page 9A



The Natchez
Democrat/Barbara Ginnard
Kaiser

INTRODUCING:
Judge Mary Lee
Toles introduces
Welty Scholar
Michael Kreyling
from Vanderbilt
University in
Nashville.

Welty had personal affection for the Trace

By MARK LAFRANCIS
The Natchez Democrat

Just as the Natchez Trace weaves its way through the Magnolia State to Nashville, Tenn., so, too, did Mississippi author Eudora Welty weave the Trace through her voluminous works.

Welty scholar Michael Kreyling explained Welty's deeply literary and personal connection with the Trace dur-

ing the Seventh Annual Natchez Literary Celebration.

Kreyling is professor of English at Vanderbilt University in Nashville and has done extensive research on Welty and her writings.

He was introduced by Adams County Justice Court Judge Mary Lee Toles, a long-time friend of his.

See AUTHOR, Page 5A

1996
page 53

Indians practiced matrilineal kinship

By KELLY ELDRIDGE
The Natchez Democrat

The Natchez Indians stressed the family structure and emphasized kinship through the female lineage.

Patricia Galloway, special projects officer at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, explored the matrilineal kinship of the Indians during her lecture Thursday as part of the Natchez Literary Celebration.

During this time, the family usually revolved around the female member of the family.

"In this region especially, families were usually female-oriented and included a large extended family," Galloway said.

"The husband and wife lived with the female's family and her influence was apparent in everyday life, including chieftom and nobility lines."

This didn't change until the Industrial Revolution when farming was no longer the dominant industry.

"The French, particularly Antoine Simon Le Page Du Pratz, left us a detailed account of what life was like in the Natchez Indian tribe — what the women did and what their place was within the tribe," she said.

There were three classes within the tribe: nobles, honored and stinkard, or commoners.

"Your place in the caste system was determined by your mother, not your father," Gal-

loway said.

"The Sun Class, or nobility came from the mother. If she had a son, he would be a member of this class, but his children would decline in the system one level and their children another level."

Only by marrying a noblewoman could a man enter the noble class.

Women in the tribe were skilled in many areas, including some surprising acts, documented in the French accounts.

"There are details that some of the female members of the tribe could kill alligators with their hands, but they were also expected for the more traditional duties, such as cooking, farming and healing," Galloway said.

Author

Continued from Page 1A

His talk was titled, "A Pathway of Love: The Natchez Trace in the Works of Eudora Welty."

Kreyling said Welty used both Natchez and the Trace to add unique dimensions and textures to her stories.

"Welty had come to think of the Trace in sophisticated if not wholly conscious ways as a kind of layered inscription that she would rather interpret or decode than actually write from the ground up," Kreyling said.

"The stories were already there, so to speak, in the deposit the Trace had made and continued to make on her imagination."

Kreyling said Welty would put characters deliberately in settings near the Trace, have them travel the Trace and have people in her stories talk about the Trace because of her love for the roadway. The Trace was the main — and at time sole — route from the

Mississippi River in southwest Mississippi to points north.

It was used by all types of individuals — merchants, socialites, drifters, salesmen, scholars, etc. — from a wide range of economic levels.

The Trace also was filled with robbers, who preyed on Trace travelers.

Sometimes, Kreyling said, Welty transported her characters from one setting to the Trace.

"Actually, we can see the beginnings of this turn to the Trace for imaginative wind in a story about 'Old Mr. Grenada,' first published in the 'Southern Review' in 1938, but later revised and retitled 'Old Mr. Marblehall' for publication in 'A Curtain of Green,' her first published collection of short stories.

"In its first version... the story seems fairly flat.... Moving the story to Natchez in revision, though, makes the call upon the reader to feel something forbidden more forceful."

Kreyling said during Welty's



The Natchez Democrat/Barbara Gerard Kaiser

PROFESSOR: Dr. Michael Kreyling speaks on Eudora Welty.

long writing career, her references to the Trace gradually shifted from direct historical references to more imaginative, literary references.

"The Trace can also show deep

down in Welty's work, a more private and personal story; it is the mark her own decisions and intuitions made on the way to becoming a writer," Kreyling said.

Natchez Literary Celebration

Humanities chief recalls 25

Norman calls her work 'a journey'

By MARK LAFRANCIS
The Natchez Democrat

The year was 1972. Mississippi was a hotbed of anxiety, mostly about integration of public schools and universities.

Arts and humanities for the masses was hardly a topic which burned in people's minds.

That year, Cora Norman, trained in chemistry and physics, became the first executive director of the Mississippi Humanities Council.

She retired on Friday and on Thursday, she was honored at the Seventh Annual Natchez Literary Celebration. Thursday was "Dr. Cora Norman Day."

In an interview at *The Natchez Democrat*, Norman said her position gave her the voice she had been seeking to make a lasting change in society.

But, her newly created department had humble beginnings. Her budget was modest; her office austere.

"There was no structure," Nor-

man said. "I'd travel around the state and on the road, I'd dictate letters to myself and then go back to the office and type them."

She recalled the time she asked state officials for a part-time secretary.

"They asked me where my files were. I said I didn't have any files. They asked, 'If you don't have any files, why do you need a secretary?'"

She did get a secretary and her files grew.

And, so did the role of her office, but not without its frustrations.

"We traveled all over the state trying to sell a product to our people, but they didn't know what we were trying to sell."

She said the humanities council's role still is not fully understood by Mississippians.

The fundamental mission, she said, "is to broaden the horizons of the people out there working every day and give them something that

would enrich their lives.

"That is the reason the Natchez Literary Celebration has been so close to that mandate.

"It's been held in the city auditorium and not on a campus. And many of the lectures are free."

She admits, though, it was tough to put a label on the mandate to enrich people's lives.

Often "enrichment" came in the form of enticing college professors to visit rural or inner-city elementary schools and share their wisdom.

Or, it came from an art exhibit, a radio talk show on literature, a writing workshop.

Sometimes, that has meant putting an artist in the community for a period of time to do more than a one-shot visit.

In each instance, though, the intent of the council was for the public to have what Norman called "a dialogue" with the learned and artistic.

"We didn't want a lecture, but a dialogue," she said.

And often, the benefits of the

June 1, 1996

DAY
2

years with council



The Natchez Democrat/Barbara Gerard Kaiser

JOURNEY: Cora Norman was the first director of the Mississippi Humanities Council.

program or project were not immediately evident.

Most often, the council has sought advice and requests from the communities where the programs were to take place.

To Norman, her retirement hardly represents an ending.

"It's a journey. The only closure is looking at some files," she said, noting with humor that, indeed, the council has files.

1996
page 56

On tap Saturday:

• **9 a.m. (free)** — "Kate Chopin and Women's Secrets," by Emily Toth, professor of English and women's studies at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, La.

Novelist and short story writer, Chopin, was very spicy for the 1890s; in the 1990s, she is still a sage woman.

Chopin's writings include what inquiring minds want to know: about family, money, love triangles, women's friendships and forbidden dreams.

• **9:45 a.m.** — Break.

• **10:15 a.m. (free)** — "Profiles of Strength and Courage in Southern Women: A Tribute to Alice Walker, Margaret Walker Alexander, Lucille Clifton and Maya Angelou," by Rosia Wade-Crisler and the Daughters of Margaret of Jackson.

• **11 a.m.** — Autograph party honoring lecturers.

• **12 noon (free)** — Break.

• **1:30 p.m. (free)** — "Women Who Wouldn't Say 'No': The Founders of the Natchez Pilgrimage to Historic Homes and Gardens," by Dr. Thomas Gandy, author and historian of Natchez.

Throughout Natchez history, women have wielded great influence over activities in their community.

In 1932, when members of the Natchez Garden Club sponsored the first Spring Pilgrimage, they drew attention to the need to preserve their city's history, architecture and natural beauty.

• **2:30 to 5:30 p.m. (\$15 ticket, including transportation from auditorium)** — A tour of three historic houses and "Natchez in Historic Photographs" at Stratton Chapel Gallery. Tour includes Airlie, Melrose and Riverview.

• **7:30 p.m. (\$10 ticket)** — "An evening with the Stars," including a presentation of the Richard Wright Literary Awards to Ellen Douglas (fiction) and Willie Morris (nonfiction), introduction of Outstanding Humanities Division Students and Faculty Members in Mississippi Colleges and Universities. Nikki Giovanni, professor of English at Virginia Tech University, will follow with her program, "Diversity as Art: Art is Diversity."

• **9 p.m. (\$10 ticket)** — Reception honoring all lecturers and the Literary Award winners, hosted by the Natchez Association for the Preservation of Afro-American Culture, at The House on Ellicott Hill.



Toth



Wade-Crisler



Gandy



Giovanni

The Natchez Democrat

SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 1996

Serving Natchez, Vidalia and the Miss-Loa

1996
page 58

Strength, courage and faith

Myrlie Evers-Williams
pulls through tough times

By KELLY ELDRIDGE
The Natchez Democrat

Strength, courage and faith. These are the traits that Myrlie Evers-Williams credits for pulling her through her toughest times, including the assassination of her husband, Medgar Evers-Williams.

Evers-Williams traveled to Natchez Thursday night to present a lecture at the Natchez Literary Celebration Friday.

Her life has been one of triumph and tragedy — from the Civil Rights Movement in the 50s and 60s to her new position as chairperson of the National Board of Directors of the NAACP.

It was a life in the spotlight she did not seek, and as a shy, young mother and wife when her husband began his work, she took the conventional role of supporter, wife and mother to her family.

"Back then women had totally different roles than they do now," Evers-Williams said.

"I was (expected to be in the forefront of the Civil Rights Movement, which was fine with me. That was my husband's job and dream — to make a change."

But she was active in his work — staying by his side all the way, through bomb and death threats and sweeping changes.

"It was time that was trying for me and my family and in the beginning it was difficult on my marriage," she said.

"I wanted in to leave Mississippi so we could have a normal life. Medgar wouldn't bear of it. He told me, 'I can't fight the white man all day and come home and fight with you at night.'"

That was the turning point, she said. She realized she had to stay by his side. On June 12, 1963, he was assassinated at their home in Jackson in the driveway.

"I moved to California then because it was too much for me to bear, but I felt a terrible feeling of loss leaving behind family, friends and most of all my husband's work," she said.



The Natchez Democrat/Robert Howard Kaiser

FAITH: Myrlie Evers-Williams stayed active in her husband Medgar Evers' work in civil rights, but stayed out of the spotlight.

Strength

Continued from Page 1A

A year later she returned for a visit.

"I was taken to a restaurant where I was afraid to eat the food or have my back to anyone," she said.

"There were times I didn't think I would make it, but Medgar was with me, and I knew, for the children, I had to."

It would be 30 years before justice would be done, when in 1994, Byron De La Beckwith, then 73, was finally convicted for the assassination. It was a time of closure for her.

"When they announced the verdict, every demon and spirit in my body escaped after 30 years," she said.

"I finally felt free."

Evers-Williams has mixed emotions about the movie being made about the case (some of which was filmed in Natchez last month), directed by Rob Reiner.

"I read several scripts in the beginning and made many, many strong suggestions about the content," she said.

"They have the right to take creative license, as they call it, but it's such an important story to me."

She said her regret is that it doesn't focus on the life of her husband, but the death.

"This is not what my dream movie would be about Medgar because there's no depth in his character, but I pray someday there will be one."

After her husband's death, Evers-Williams continued her

fight for equal rights and also furthered her education and career.

She became the first black woman to head the Board of Public Works in Los Angeles, one of many positions she held before finally deciding to run for chairperson of the National Board of Directors for NAACP.

"There were many people in the organization that wanted me to run, but there was also Medgar, who I knew would want me to do it, and my husband, Walter Williams was also encouraging me in that direction," she said.

Williams died in 1995.

"He told me it would be the last thing he ever asked me to do, and I promised him I would," she said.

The task at hand was one of the most difficult Evers-Williams said she had ever faced.

With a deficit of almost \$5 million, a tarnished image of scandals, a dwindling membership and friction in the board itself, she would have to use the strength she gained from Medgar to make progress. She did.

She has cut the deficit to \$1.2 million, and membership has increased, especially in the younger generation.

Though her life is tinged with tragedy, Evers-Williams said she is blessed.

"I have always been blessed, though my life has been emotionally difficult," she said.

"It's like the story of God being the potter and his children the clay. You have to allow Him to mold you the way He wants you.

"It's not until the pottery is put into the fire, that it gains strength and becomes strong."

May 31 - June 1

1996
page 59

Southern belles live on in '90s

By BRIAN HAWKINS
The Natchez Democrat

Southerners are a breed all their own. Steeped in tradition, Southern culture has been passed down through the years and is often a topic of discussion for those unfamiliar with its tenets, especially when it comes to Southern women.

"Being Southern has its own rules, more so than royalty," said Maryln Schwartz, an award-winning columnist for *The Dallas Morning News* and author of two books that have sold more than a half-million copies.

"You are born that way. People anywhere else just can't understand why you can drink a 32-ounce glass of iced tea at a restaurant any time of the year, even during an ice storm."

See BELLES, Page 5A



The Natchez Democrat/Brett Duke

SOUTHERN: Award-winning columnist Maryln Schwartz spoke on the unusual attributes of being Southern, like "drinking iced tea any time of the year."

Belles ^{May 31} _{June 1}

Continued from Page 1A

Schwartz spoke Friday at the Natchez Literary Celebration. She is the author of "The Southern Belle Primer, or Why Princess Margaret Will Never Be a Kappa Kappa Gamma" and "New Times in the Old South, or Why Scarlett's in Therapy and Tara's Going Condo."

Her two books focus on the idiosyncrasies of Southern culture, especially when it relates to the most famous icon — the Southern belle.

"People have strange ideas on what a Southern belle is — so many have images of the Old South," Schwartz said.

"Well, this is the New South, where sister's in the statehouse, Bubba's wearing Armani and grandmother is rolling over in her grave."

"The Southern Belle Primer..." Schwartz's first book got its surname from a visit made by Great Britain's Princess Margaret to Dallas, and her attendance at a formal afternoon reception.

Princess Margaret's presence caused quite a social scandal, Schwartz said.

"First, she showed up two hours late and was wearing a pink chiffon dress before 5 p.m.," Schwartz said.

"Her pink satin shoes did not match her dress, and she was walking around the party smoking a cigarette, which you just don't do in polite society in the South.

"It was heard all over that party that she would never make a sorority at the University of Texas."

Though times have changed in the South, many of the old Southern traditions — and belles — persist, Schwartz said.

"We all know our Miss Maybelles — the ladies who were

always a Southern belle and always will be no matter what changes take place," Schwartz said.

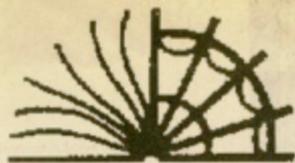
"The Miss Maybelles are the ones who say a Southern woman could be president because it was no harder than getting into the Junior League in Atlanta."

Some Southern women have moved up above the Mason-Dixon line and tried to pass as Northerners, but constantly fail, Schwartz said.

"There are 10 things that are a dead give-away for a Southern girl up north, but I can only name a few," Schwartz said.

"First, they always call a couch a sofa, and, no matter how old they are, call their father 'Daddy.' Her shoes must always match her cocktail dress, she owns a deviled egg plate and she would rather walk down Fifth Avenue naked before wearing white shoes before Easter or after Labor Day."

1996
page 60



"Southern Women:
300 Years of Influence"
May 30 — June 1, 1996

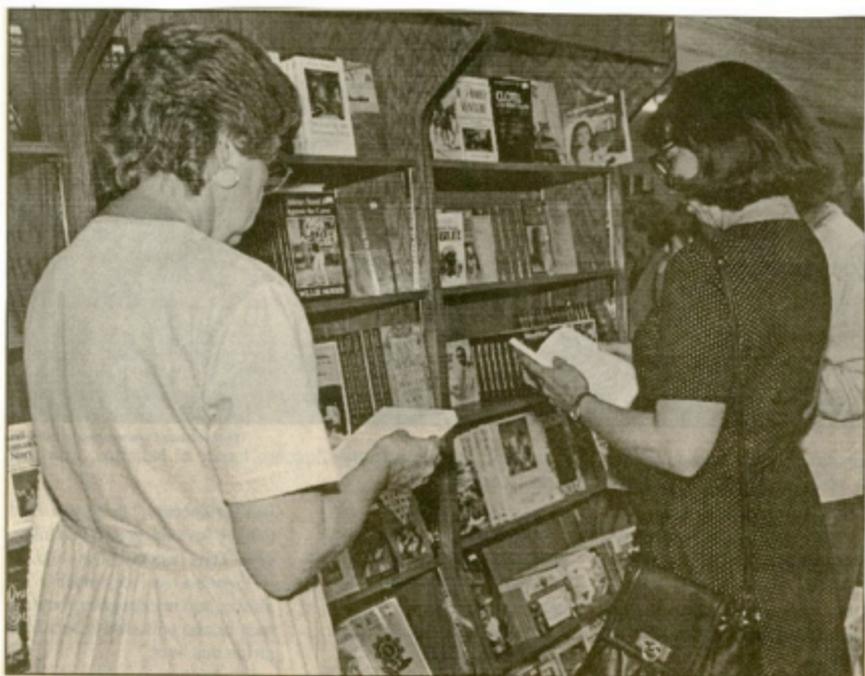
Natchez Literary

Sunday, June 2, 1996

THE NATCHEZ DEMOCRAT, Natchez, Miss. • 5A

Celebration

DAY
3



BOOKWORMS: Donna Carr, left, and Sydney Buckner, both of Natchez, enjoy looking over the selections at the custom bookstore at the City Auditorium between lectures.

1996
page 61