UPCOMING EVENTS

Hélène Berr Exhibit
March 28th–August 10th, Burke Library
Dr. David A. Burke
October, 2014

John Davis
September 25th, 2014
Dewey Weiss Kramer
November 11, 2014

HÉLÈNE BERR EXHIBIT: MARCH 28TH–AUGUST 10TH, 2014

There’s still time to walk in the footsteps of the French Ambassador to the United States. During his recent trip to Mobile, His Excellency Mr. François Delattre visited the Berr exhibit and spoke with both Library Director Gentry Holbert and graduate assistant Shawn-Patrick Hynes.

French citizen Hélène Berr was a woman of intellect and talent. She began her Journal, which is the basis of the exhibit, at age 21. What becomes clear from her chronicling the German Occupation of France, which led to her deportation to and death at Auschwitz, is that the world lost so many promising, intelligent, talented, compassionate people during this war. Her story is a symbol of all those stolen lives.

Located on the upper level of the Burke Library in the Barter Room, the exhibit runs through 10 August 2014. Make it a point to visit. You’ll be glad you did.

FALL 2014 SPEAKERS

This year’s fall events offer an array of topics and presenters.

John Davis spent 37 years in military and civilian counterintelligence. He reflects on that time in the essays, vignettes, and poetry in Rainy Day Stories. Nuclear historian, Dr. David A. Burke (SHC, ’94) tells the story of 1960s atomic tests conducted below ground in Tatum Salt Dome, Mississippi. In his book, Atomic Testing in Mississippi, he discusses the effects these tests may have had on residents of Gulfport, New Orleans, Mobile, and other cities.

Hildegard of Bingen (1098—1179) was an artist, composer, naturalist, physician, and visionary. By examining one of her poems, songs, and illuminations, Dewey White Kramer will explore the way Hildegard of Bingen’s work addresses contemporary issues and provides inspiration for modern-day living.
If you missed this conversation with Carolyn Haines, you missed a great night. Ron O’Gorman, M.D., a student and admirer of Haines, skilfully allowed the author to discuss her growth as a writer. Beginning with romance novels, her literary career evolved to span multiple genres. This body of work has earned her an array of awards, including the 2009 Richard Wright Award for Literary Excellence and the 2010 Harper Lee Award.

The highlight of the interview was Haines’s sage, honest advice about her writing and writing in general. “Always play honest with the reader.” While most people come to literature with a love of language, for an author, “It’s all in the verbs.” Plotting and structure may present her with challenges, but characters are easy. “I live with a lot of crazy characters,” she said.

On a humorous note, Carolyn admits she can write the darker mysteries only during the day. Even funnier is the story of her pseudonym for the darker mysteries. She told her agent, there should be an R, also a C in the last name, so the book would be on the top shelf. The end result: R.B. Chesterton. When she opened a letter in her mailbox addressed to Chesterton, she said “Who’s Chesterton?” Because “all writers are nosey,” she decided to open it. What a surprise! It was an invitation to publish her book: The Seeker (2014). It is available at book stores and on www.amazon.com.

The Friends and the library sponsored two special events this season. The Friends partly underwrote the Boyle Lecture, which featured Jesmyn Ward, a faculty member at the University of South Alabama. A large crowd was on hand—students, faculty, and community members—for the reading and question and answer dialogue. Salvage the Bones, Jesmyn’s second work, won both the National Book Award and the ALA Young Adult Library Services Association Alex Award for Young Adult Readers.

This spring, the Burke Library held a signing for Dr. Michael Piafsky’s first novel, All the Happiness You Deserve. Much like Ward, Dr. Michael Piafsky is amassing accolades for his book. Critic Nancy Rubin called it “impossible to put down.” Equally laudatory, Booklist commented: “Piafsky is heading toward becoming a major writer.” Dr. Piafsky is associate professor of English and director of the creative writing program at Spring Hill College.

What could be more interesting than a writer discussing writing? The answer is obvious: nothing. Moderator Dr. Ron O’Gorman asked the right questions, and author and journalist Roy Hoffman answered with humor, candor, and insight. When asked what made his latest novel Southern fiction, he replied, “You write who you are. If a place is deep inside you, you simply are a Southern writer.” Like the Mobile he grew up in, Come Landfall resonates with character and diversity. Its title evokes not just hurricanes, but the ways people survive the storms that make landfall in their lives.

Hoffman offered advice to writers: “Give every character its space and place” and “allow yourself to make things up.” When asked if it was difficult to transition from journalism to novels, he indicated the contrary: He was more a personal profile writer than a true newspaper man. While heralding the vital support independent bookstores (Bienville Books and Page & Palette) offer local and regional authors, he lamented the Press Register’s lack of room for literary sensibility.
HONORING KATHY KICHLER AND OTHER BOOK NOOK VOLUNTEERS

For more than 15 of the Book Nook’s 20 years of existence, Kathy Kichler was at the helm. In typical fashion, she credits others, including Col. Charles Neal who started the Nook, and her grandson Rick and many more for helping to expand operating hours to two days a week. As for the Nook’s several moves, she thanks Richard Weaver: “He worked so hard.”

To honor Kathy, Richard, and so many others, The Friends have installed a plaque outside of the Friends Office in Burke Library. Kathy’s name is the first one listed, but others will be added: Dr. Samuel Eichold, Dr. Patricia Neal, Col. Charles Neal, Dr. Alice Bahr, Betty Britt, Richard Weaver, Dr. Vernon Balovich, and Merv White-Spunner.

Kathy Kichler

Kathy said, “The volunteers were/are wonderful people.” She’s right. She and the Friends are grateful to the new Book Nook Manager, Mary Virginia Titus and all the hard working volunteers: Dennis Austin, Maurice Bonner, Laura Bounds, Betty Britt, John Calametti, Ed Dahmon, Chris F. Drago, Howell Easterling, Bob Handley, Ann Marfice, and Merv White-Spunner.

Book Nook Joins betterworld books

When you donate a book to the Book Nook, the Friends second-hand book store, it is sold to benefit the library. Works that don’t sell after many years are donated to local nursing homes and schools. Even after those efforts, however, there are times when volumes remain on shelves. BetterWorldBooks.com provides a perfect way to support the College’s mission and share those works with the world.


In time, Spring Hill College Library will establish its own sidewalk sale within the BetterWorldBooks web site, but for now please shop liberally on BetterWorldBooks.com to help Burke Library and to support worldwide literacy.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

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The generosity and dues of members make it possible to continue to support the library.

Recent memorial and honoree gifts

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Another dazzling dinner capped off the Friends 2013 – 2014 events. Three of Mobile’s Azalea Trail Maids greeted guests, setting the perfect tone for celebrating the 75th anniversary of the film based on Margaret Mitchell’s landmark novel, _Gone with the Wind_. The fare was wonderful: filet mignon, a “Southern” grit cake, and a medley of snow peas and green peppers, followed by fresh strawberry cake.

The silent auction offered opportunities to bid on hard-to-find books: history, art, literature, and more. The crowning moment of the evening, however, belonged to Ann Taylor Boutwell, Spring Hill College graduate, local history columnist for the _Atlanta INTown_ paper, public speaker, and docent at the Margaret Mitchell House and Museum. With wit, she entertained all with salient moments in Mitchell’s life. One of these: “Margaret Mitchell was married to two men—but not at the same time!”

It was a wonderful evening.

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- ⃝ Check here if you would like to be active in Friends activities.