

For Immediate Release February 15, 2007

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Guest Writers to Visit 19 Chattanooga Schools During the 2007 Conference on Southern Literature

Chattanooga, TN (February 15, 2007) The Arts & Education Council (AEC) has announced that 20 Southern writers will visit 19 Chattanooga schools for classroom residencies as part of the AEC Conference on Southern Literature and its educational outreach programs.

The following residencies will take place on **March 29 and 30, 2007**:

- Greg Williamson. 21st Century Academy
- Jill McCorkle Baylor School
- Sam Pickering Brainerd High School
- Pamela Duncan Center for Creative Arts
- Katori Hall Center for Creative Arts
- Robert Hicks Central High School
- Denise Giardina Chattanooga School for Arts and Sciences
- Charlotte Matthews East Ridge High School
- Dorothy Allison Girls Preparatory School
- Ellen Bryant Voigt Hamilton County High School
- Jennifer Grotz Hamilton County Middle College High School
- Kaye Gibbons Hixson High School
- William Henry Lewis Howard School for Academics and Technology
- Jon Meacham McCallie School
- Roy Reed Ooltewah High School
- Kathryn Stripling Byer Red Bank High School
- Wendell Berry Soddy Daisy High
- Catherine Landis Sale Creek High School
- Clif Cleaveland Sequoyah High School
- Suzette Francis Tyner Academy

“The School Residency Program gives high school students the opportunity to read a writer’s work, and then meet him or her in person to discuss the material and what it means to be a professional writer,” explains Margha Davis, coordinator for the program.

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“Teachers welcome the writers into their classrooms because students are able to put a face with a given work and learn from the source about the creative process,” she says. “The authors thoroughly enjoy the residencies too. It gives them time to interact with young, budding writers.”

Suzette Francis, a successful novelist from Signal Mountain, Tenn., has participated in the residency program since 2005.

“In a time when students have a reputation for being lackluster and uninterested in school, I was pleasantly surprised to find that the students in my residencies were so well-prepared, thoughtful, and mature,” recalls Francis.

“I asked them to do a five-minute writing exercise. At first no one wanted to read aloud, but once they got started every student wanted to share. It gave them a voice and a chance to feel good about their work.”

According to AEC Executive Director Susan Robinson, “The Residency Program supports an ongoing arts education collaboration with Hamilton County public schools. It is also an integral component of the AEC’s mission to provide unique opportunities for lifelong learning and participation in the arts for all members of the community.”

Other educational outreach programs during the AEC Conference on Southern Literature include the **Creative Writing Workshop** for teachers and the **Young Southern Student Writers** contest, which brought in a record 3,400 entries this year.

The public can meet with these writers and many more during the **AEC Conference on Southern Literature on March 29-31 at the Tivoli Theatre**. Attendees can participate in all sessions, including the keynote address, readings, book signings and discussions.

The press is invited to cover all Conference on Southern Literature events and school outreach programs. Contact Laurel Eldridge at 423-267-1218 or LEldridge@artsedcouncil.org for more information.

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