



## Bale Boone Symposium – Past Events

### **2019: *An American Marriage***

The Gaines Center for the Humanities was pleased to welcome acclaimed author and professor Tayari Jones, who presided over the most successful Bale Boone Symposium to date, with more than 1,200 attendees present at her keynote lecture. Jones is the author of four novels: *An American Marriage*, an Oprah Book Club pick; *Silver Sparrow*, chosen for the NEA's Big Read Library; *The Untelling*; and *Leaving Atlanta*. Jones holds degrees from Spelman College, Arizona State University, and the University of Iowa. She has received fellowships from the Radcliffe Institute For Advanced Studies, United States Artist Foundation, and Black Mountain Institute. She lives in Atlanta, where she is Professor of English and Creative Writing at Emory University.

### **2018: Kentucky Reads: *All the King's Men* (An Evening with Jon Meacham)**

As a capstone to Kentucky Humanities' statewide literacy initiative Kentucky Reads: *All the King's Men*, Meacham spoke on the relevance of Robert Penn Warren's work, from politics to race to regional culture, as well as Warren's impact on literature and American culture.

### **2016: Europe Today and the Memory of Violence**

Europe today has come to symbolize the possibility of peace and cooperation among peoples, but the collective memory of the continent that will be the focus of the 2015-2016 "Year of Europe" program remains haunted by the memory of its violent past. Has Europe truly exorcised the specter of violence? Is violence a necessary product of the self-assertion dictated by modern European forms of subjectivity? Our symposium on "Europe Today and the Memory of Violence" brought together speakers from a wide range of disciplines to consider these questions.

### **2015: Legacies of the American Civil War**

2015 marked the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of that pivotal conflict. As eminent historian and our first speaker Ed Ayers notes, "The American Civil War redefined the United States but it did not resolve all that the war was meant to resolve. The legacies of slavery, the relationship between the states and the federal government, and the meaning of loyalty remain unsettled a century and a half later." As such, understanding the Civil War remains crucial to understanding ourselves today. The 2015 symposium helped us assess the War's impact on American life not simply in the past, but also in the present and future. Three speakers led us in our assessment – two pre-eminent historians of the Civil War, Ed Ayers



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(President of the University of Richmond) and David Blight (Class of 1954 Professor of American History, Yale University), and the distinguished literary and cultural scholar Coleman Hutchison (Department of English, University of Texas at Austin).

### **2012: Arts and Healing**

Since antiquity, literature, song, and the visual arts have been viewed as important ways to achieve, promote, and maintain the health of body and spirit. Today, art therapy in medical settings provides a structured forum in which patients and families can openly express and begin to work through issues surrounding hospitalization or medical crisis. In recognition of the Chandler Medical Center's important role in promoting the practices of art therapy, the Gaines Center for the Humanities presented the 2012 Bale Boone Symposium on "Arts and Healing." This five-day symposium brought medical professionals together with humanists, artists, and performers in celebration of what is becoming an increasingly important way of promoting health in people of all ages. Events included a keynote lecture by Elaine Sims, Director of the Gifts of Art program at the University of Michigan; a spoken-word performance by Hippocrates Cafe; a panel discussion about the UK Arts in Healthcare program, followed by tours of the UK Chandler Hospital's art collection; dramatic readings about addiction and PTSD by Outside the Wire followed by community discussions; a participatory drum circle led by Greg Acker and Kristen Hughes of the Kentucky Center for Performing Arts; a screening of *Open Window* and Q&A with director Mia Goldman; and a concert by Ben Sollee and John Cohen celebrating the opening of Cohen's photography exhibit in the UK Chandler Hospital's West Gallery.

### **2011: On Religion in the 21st Century**

Scholars in the fields of religion, history, and science engaged in a three-day discussion dealing with the topics of "Religion and History," "Religion and Politics," and Religion and Science." The spirited discussion that arose from "Religion and Science" attracted world-wide attention when film of the event was posted on the website of the Gaines Center and the blog kept by Professor Jerry Coyne of the University of Chicago.

### **2010: Art, Ownership, & Cultural Property**

The weeklong symposium featured a distinguished cast of seven speakers, giving lectures or engaging in debate over the space of five days. Adam Gopnik,, staff writer of the *New Yorker*, returned to



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Lexington engage in a debate with Joan Connelly of New York University and the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton, over the future of the Parthenon or Elgin Marbles: whether they should be returned to Greece or remain housed in the British Museum. A similar debate over the role of museums in the preservation of cultural property took place as James Cuno, President and Director of the Art Institute of Chicago, debated with lawyer and archaeologist Patty Gerstenblith of DePaul University. Wednesday's event featured Kwame Anthony Appiah of Princeton University.

### **2009: Science, Humanities, & Culture: In the Wake of Darwin**

This five-day symposium offered five presentations and discussions of the impact of Darwinian thought on science, humanities, and culture. Featured events included evening lectures by distinguished scholars and authors such as Adam Gopnik of the *New Yorker*, Barry Werth, author of *Banquet at Delmonico's: Great Minds, the Gilded Age, and the Triumph of Evolution in America*, and Kenneth R. Miller of Brown University, author of numerous biology textbooks and such books as *Only A Theory: Evolution and the Battle for America's Soul*.

### **2007: Democracy vs. Transparency in Certified Products Networks**

The 2008 symposium included a film festival and several public talks focused on fair trade and local foods economies.

### **2006: The Idea of "The Athens of the West": Kentucky and American Culture, c. 1792-1852**

Kentuckians often are affected by negative stereotypes of themselves and their state, stereotypes that have very serious consequences, economic as well as cultural. Our symposium seeks to counteract these negative stereotypes by investigating and publicizing a period in our history when Kentuckians were at the forefront of American culture in a wide variety of fields (education, politics, medicine, architecture, music, religion, agriculture, and other fields): the period from roughly 1792 to 1852. Co-sponsored by Transylvania University, the symposium will occupy the week of October 8-14, and will include concerts, exhibitions of books, documents, and medical instruments, a cemetery tour and lecture on historic ghosts, and other activities located on UK's and Transylvania's campuses and throughout the community. It will culminate in a two-day conference allowing for intensive discussion and the generation of new scholarship on various aspects of Kentucky history and culture in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The symposium will be of special interest to K-12 history teachers, post-



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secondary teachers of Kentucky and American history from across the state, as well as to anyone who is intrigued by Kentucky history. The University Press of Kentucky plans to publish a volume of essays from the symposium, and so extend the effects of the symposium in improving the self-image of Kentucky and Kentuckians well beyond 2006 and those who can attend the symposium in person.

### **2005: Growing Kentucky: New Directions for Our Culture of Land and Food**

Co-sponsored by Partners for Family Farms, a community non-profit organization, and UK's College of Agriculture, the symposium consisted of two days of workshops, with an evening of literary readings in between. We brought together local farmers and farming organizations, agricultural experts from many fields, writers whose work has centered on agriculture, and humanities scholars with an interest in local rural communities. Plenary lectures were given by Michael Pollan, Alice Waters, and Jon Carloftis; the evening of readings between workshop sessions was given by Wendell Berry, Barbara Kingsolver, and Davis McCombs. As the Dean of Agriculture later remarked, authors Berry and Kingsolver were treated as rock stars by the ecstatic audience. We hope that this symposium, by bringing together and energizing many crucial players, from poets to farmers to landscape preservationists to farmers market specialists, all with the enthusiastic support of the College of Agriculture, will mark a turning point in the history of Kentucky agriculture, and indeed the history of the state. Ann Yonkers, a symposium panelist and founder of the farmers' market at Dupont Circle and four other markets in the DC Area, wrote that this symposium was a "marvelous gathering of minds and hearts. . . . I've been going to conferences for twenty years and I think 'Growing Kentucky' was the most creative of any I ever attended. What made it unique was first, the vision of bringing together communities that normally don't talk, the humanities and the School of Agriculture, and then creating a structure where a new and creative conversation could take place."

### **2004: Place, Community, and the Writer's Life: A Conversation with Kentucky's Three Yale Younger Poets** Featuring Tony Crunk, Maurice Manning, and Davis McCombs

This symposium celebrated the remarkable fact that three Kentucky poets won the Yale Younger Poets Award, America's most prestigious award for poets under 40, in a single decade. It featured a book-signing on the Friday night by all three poets at a local independent book store specializing in poetry and local authors, followed on Saturday by a day-long discussion of poetry and poetry workshops for local poets, again from both the community and the university. A reading by all three poets filled



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Memorial Hall that Saturday night. James Baker Hall, Kentucky poet laureate and legendary teacher of Kentucky poets for decades, was the master of ceremonies. Wendell Berry, Bobbie Ann Mason, Gurney Norman, and Ed McClanahan were all on hand, and the evening proved to be something of a passing of the torch from one generation of Kentucky writers to the next.

**2001: Making Art with Yvonne Jacquette** Using the successful format of earlier symposia, we invited University of Kentucky art students and faculty to join members of Lexington's vibrant arts community to participate in two events with Yvonne Jacquette, a prominent New York painter, whose works concentrate on depictions of urban or rural landscapes seen from above. Her lecture, co-sponsored by UK's Art Museum, was entitled "Multiple Views from the Flying Carpet with Yvonne Jacquette." Ms. Jacquette also led a workshop for local painters, art students, and Gaines Fellows entitled "Exquisite Corpses: Making Art with Yvonne Jacquette."

**2000: A Celebration of Food and Culture with Phyllis Pray Bober** We expanded the symposium this year with the addition of a major culinary event, held for community members every year since, and now named in memory of the late Professor Bober, one of America's pioneer scholars of the history of food. The lectures that year were given individual names because the general title above applied to the Symposium that was then designed in three parts: a day-long workshop, a public lecture, and the Feast, which was explicitly tied to the topic of the symposium. The lecture was titled "From Garum to Bioengineered Polenta: Cultural Issues in Cookery and Agriculture," and the two workshop discussions were "Culture and Cuisine" and "Current Issues in Food and Agriculture." The Feast was our first, a fully authentic Roman Feast, open to all members of the Lexington community. This was one of the first local events to center on local food and sustainable agriculture, and was a precursor to the 2005 symposium, "Growing Kentucky."

**1999: Documentary Film Workshop with Fred Wiseman** Following the pattern from previous years, we invited Frederick Wiseman, probably America's premier documentary film maker to be the keynote speaker for the 1999 symposium. The event included screenings not only of his films, but also films of prize-winning Kentucky documentarians Walter Brock and Eren McGinnis. Film makers and fans of documentary films came from all over Kentucky for the screenings and a day-long workshop with Fred Wiseman focusing on issues in documentary film-making.



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### **1998: A Celebration of Poetry**

This, the First Annual Bale Boone Symposium in the Humanities, set a pattern that lasted through 2001: the bringing to Kentucky of an outstanding figure in the arts, and the creation of a series of events (readings, performances, workshops) that serve as forums to bring university and community members interested in a particular art form together in a professional setting, and create extended opportunities for working with a nationally-known arts figure. This year, the symposium was titled "A Celebration of Poetry," and the featured guest was Tony Crunk, Kentucky poet and recent winner of the Yale Younger Poets Award. He worked closely with community and university poets in a day-long workshop and gave a reading in the evening. This event strengthened bonds between university poets and their counterparts in the community and energized both groups.

**The 1990s** Prior to 1998, the Bale Boone Symposium concentrated on legal and medical ethics and culture.