

Great writers are coming to Waleska

By David R. Altman
Books & Writers Editor

If you're interested in hearing from some of the region's most distinguished writers and poets this summer, Reinhardt University in Waleska is giving you that chance.

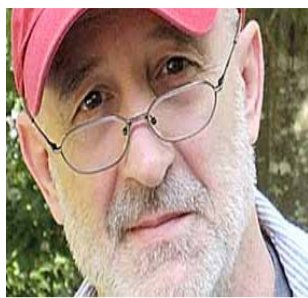
In this distinguished gathering, you have past winners of the O. Henry Award (best short story in America), the Walt Whitman Prize (one of poetry's most prestigious awards), four Georgia Author of the Year winners, a winner of the Pushcart Prize, a Pulitzer Prize nominee, a former Georgia Poet Laureate, the recipients of a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Fulbright scholar.

How's that for a summer line-up? Clearly, it beats what the Braves have been fielding.

If these great writers were athletes, they would all be Hall of Famers. In fact, one of them, David Bottoms, is already in the Georgia Writer's Hall of Fame.

All this comes as part of Reinhardt's newly accredited Etowah Valley Masters of Fine Arts (MFA) program, directed by Dr. Donna Coffey Little, a professor at Reinhardt. Little holds a Ph.D. from the University of Virginia and is also an accomplished poet.

What's terrific is that part of this excellent MFA program will be open to the public, where any of us will have the chance to listen to some South's great writers read their work. The readings in Waleska will begin on the evening of July 8th and conclude July 16th (schedule published below). The program features new and established Georgia poets,



Canton's David Bottoms, one of America's greatest poets will be among the speakers.

including David Bottoms, Georgia's former Poet Laureate and Whitman Award winner.

Here's a schedule of the authors who will be reading and the dates they will appear:

- July 7—Q&A with Kathy Kincer, host of Melodically Challenged radio show & readings by Raymond Atkins
- July 8, Donna Little and Adrian Blevins
- July 9, Bill Walsh and George Singleton
- July 12, Tony Grooms and Stephen Corey
- July 13, John Williams, Reginald McKnight and Earl Bragg
- July 14, Edison Jennings, Anjali Enjeti and Sandra Meek
- July 16, Will Wright and David Bottoms

These readings will begin at 8 p.m. and will be held in the Dobbs Science Center Atrium on the campus of Reinhardt in Waleska. Reinhardt, founded in 1883, is a private liberal arts college affiliated with the United Methodist Church.

In a related off-campus appearance, Jasper's Cliff Brooks, author of *The Draw of Broken Eyes* and *Whirling Metaphysics* and a former Pulitzer Prize nominee, will read on July 10 from 6-7:30 p.m. at the Dogwood Terrace Restaurant in Acworth.

Little, the MFA program director, told the Progress that Reinhardt offers "...a coming together of all the people of north Georgia who are interested in literature and writing and they can be involved in whatever way they want." She has students in their twenties and some in their seventies, tapping into the rich writing community that northwest Georgia has become.

"We knew there were not a lot of low-residency MFA programs in the South, so there was a need for that," said Little.

Low residency means the students only come to the campus for three times over seven semesters—and compete their master's degree requirements either on-line or through an instructor assigned to them.

Little also noted that there are many retired persons who can come and either audit the

program or be a non-degree participant at Reinhardt by selecting individual courses. "Some retirees don't really care about the degree but they do want to take the classes," she added.

Those writers who will participate in the public readings include nationally-acclaimed and award-winning poets. Besides Canton native David Bottoms, whose latest collection is *We Almost Disappear*, area residents will have the chance to hear Reginald McKnight, a UGA professor and a former two-time winner of the O. Henry Award. In addition, William (Bill) Walsh, a prolific writer who has interviewed many of the South's great contemporary poets, will be participating at least two nights at the readings and Raymond Atkins, a Rome resident and four time Georgia Author of the Year winner will be reading the opening night.

Rome's Sandra Meek has twice won the Georgia Author of the Year Award for her poetry, and she'll be joined on stage by Virginia writer Edison Jennings and award-winning writer and literary critic, Anjali Enjeti from Atlanta. Will Wright, Georgia Author of the Year in poetry and long-time Athens writer Stephen Corey, editor of the prestigious *Georgia Review* and author of nine books of poetry, will also participate in the open readings.

Other participants include well-known Atlanta writer Anthony "Tony" Grooms, a Fulbright fellow, who has published three books. Grooms is one of two Kenesaw State University professors who are participating in the Etowah Valley MFA program, the other being Melanie Sumner, a fellowship recipient from the National Endowment for the Arts and author of three novels and a short story collection.

You'll also hear from several writers outside the region, including Adrian Blevins, professor at Colby College in Waterville, Maine, and author of the award-winning poetry collection, *The Brass Girl Brouhaha*.

If you're interested in attending these readings and other parts of Reinhardt's summer outreach, check it out at www.Reinhardt.edu.



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Dr. Donna Coffey Little of Reinhardt directs the new Etowah Valley MFA in creative writing.

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