

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**AEC ANNOUNCES DATES AND SPEAKERS FOR ITS BIENNIAL
CONFERENCE ON SOUTHERN LITERATURE**

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn.— For almost three decades, well-known and widely acclaimed Southern authors have converged on Chattanooga for the AEC Conference on Southern Literature, a biennial celebration that brings hundreds of avid readers and writers together for three days of discussion, speakers and fellowship with the great literary minds of the time.

Hosted by the Arts & Education Council (AEC), the Conference will be held in Chattanooga, Tenn. on March 29, 30 & 31, 2007. Kicking off the Conference on Thursday is Chattanooga native and *Newsweek* managing editor **Jon Meacham**, whose latest best-selling work of non-fiction is *American Gospel: God, the Founding Fathers and the Making of a Nation*. **Wendell Berry**, award-winning author of over 30 works of poetry, fiction and non-fiction, will provide the keynote address on Friday evening, and **Robert Hicks** (*Widow of the South*) will speak to attendees at the Saturday luncheon. Other guest speakers include **Catherine Landis** (*Harvest* and *Some Days There's Pie*); **William Henry Lewis**, a 2005 PEN/Faulkner finalist and the author of *I Got Somebody in Staunton*; and poet **Greg Williamson** (*The Silent Partner* and *Errors in the Script*.)

Additional literary heavyweights in attendance include members of the prestigious **Fellowship of Southern Writers**, which holds its biennial meetings in conjunction with the Conference and houses its archives in Chattanooga. Participating members include **Richard Bausch, Allan Gurganus, Josephine Humphreys, Bobbie Ann Mason, James Applewhite, Fred Chappell, Kaye Gibbons, Ellen Bryant Voigt, Madison Smart Bell, and Louis D. Rubin, Jr.** New Fellowship inductees and recipients of the

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Fellowship's literary prizes will also participate in the Conference by giving readings and engaging in panel discussions, all centering on the Conference theme, "**The Southern Writer: Exploring the Life Within.**"

"The biennial AEC Conference on Southern Literature is without doubt the leading literary event in the South," says Dr. Louis D. Rubin, Jr., award-winning novelist and publisher and past Chancellor of the Fellowship of Southern Writers. "It draws visitors not only from throughout the region but from all over the United States. To be invited to take part is an honor coveted by the South's leading authors."

In addition to the scheduled Conference events, authors will also visit 17 area classrooms to give students a first-hand peek into the life of an author, a program that Dr. Rubin calls "a model for communities everywhere."

"The AEC Conference is a *writers' conference for readers*. It provides a venue for fans to connect with their favorite authors, and discover some newly emerging writers at the same time," says Susan Robinson, AEC Executive Director. "Over the years, this Conference and its partnership with the Fellowship of Southern Writers has made Chattanooga a destination for lovers of literature and the great authors and scholars that represent the South and its culture."

Registration for the Conference will begin in January. Cost is \$110 for all three days (\$95 before February 28). The public is invited to participate in all sessions during the Conference including the keynote address, readings and discussions. For the full schedule of events and to register, visit www.ArtsEdCouncil.org or call 1-800-267-4232 to request a brochure.

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