



Julia Alvarez
Lydia Davis
Paul Harding
Tracy Kidder
Alice McDermott
Michael Wolff

Featured Events:
Albany Film Festival
Creative Life Series
Burian Lecture
Authors Theatre





GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR

Get ready to party like it's 1844. Throughout 2024, we will celebrate the 180th anniversary of the founding of the University at Albany on May 7, 1844. As one of the nation's preeminent literary organizations, we are proud of our role in the advancement of this great institution of higher education. UAlbany has been the home and stalwart supporter of the NYS Writers Institute over the past 40 years as we have welcomed more than 2,500 of the world's greatest writers to campus.

The first state-chartered institution of higher education, it was christened the New York State Normal School — an archaic term for the training of teachers. It began with four faculty members and 29 students in an abandoned railroad depot on State Street in downtown Albany. It was renamed the New York State College for Teachers in 1914 and the State University of New York at Albany in 1962. Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom, graces its official seal.

Fast-forward to 2024 and UAlbany has grown to more than 16,000 undergraduate and graduate students across three campuses. It is one of the most diverse public research institutions in the country and has been recognized as a national leader in providing social and economic mobility for its students.

It is fitting, therefore, in this 180th anniversary year, that we highlight writers with strong connections to UAlbany. The list is extensive: former Writers Institute writing workshop teacher Elizabeth Benedict (Jan. 31); UAlbany faculty member Jennifer Burns and UAlbany alumna Jennifer Lemak with State Poet Patricia Spears Jones (Feb. 15); UAlbany staff member Richard Mirabella (Feb. 29); UAlbany alumna Molly Guptill Manning (March 6); UAlbany alumna Alice Green (March 14); UAlbany emerita professor Lydia Davis and UAlbany faculty member Lynne Tillman (March 26); UAlbany faculty members Amina Henry and Shaun Patrick Tubbs (April 2); and UAlbany faculty member Kyra Gaunt and UAlbany alumnus Stephen Soucy (April 6).

We mourn the passing of our dear friend and Writers Institute benefactor Grayce Burian, author, teacher, actor, director, and wife of the late UAlbany theatre professor and department chair Jarka Burian. Amazing Grayce, as we called her, died on November 16, 2023 at age 96.

I close with a stanza from Pulitzer Prize-winning poet and former U.S. Poet Laureate Tracy K. Smith (April 19), whose poetry feels at once timely and timeless, like these lines from her poem "Don't You Wonder, Sometimes?"

*Time never stops, but does it end? And how many lives
Before take-off, before we find ourselves
Beyond ourselves, all glam-glow, all twinkle and gold?*

Paul Grondahl,
Opalka Endowed Director, NYS Writers Institute



SPRING 2024 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

EVENT GUIDELINES

Events are free and open to the public and take place on the University at Albany's Uptown Campus, unless otherwise noted. **All events are subject to change.** Refer to page 24 for information on free on-campus parking for events.

For the most up-to-date event information, visit our website:
www.nyswritersinstitute.org

DISCOVER MORE EVENTS Sign up for email updates and additional information on events, **visit: www.nyswritersinstitute.org**

JANUARY



Photo: Sam Harding

2023 NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST
& PULITZER PRIZE WINNING NOVELIST

January 25 (Thursday)

Paul Harding

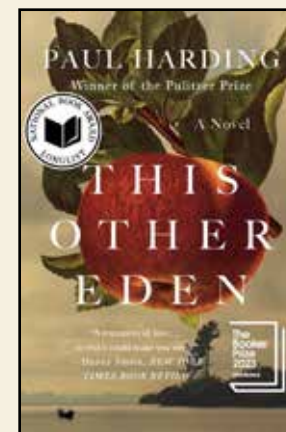
**4:30 p.m. — Craft Talk / Q&A,
Campus Center West Boardroom (1st Floor)**

**7:30 p.m. — Reading / Conversation,
Recital Hall, UAlbany Performing Arts Center**

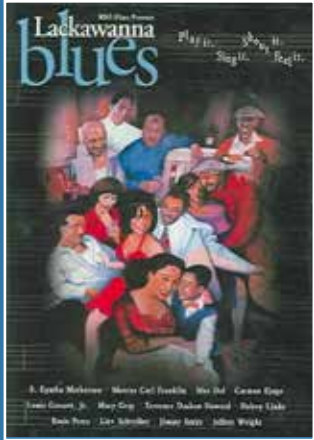
Paul Harding's new novel is *This Other Eden* (2023), based on the true story of a multiracial community that took refuge from intolerance on an island off the coast of Maine from

1792 to 1912. The novel presents the lives and experiences of a formerly enslaved Black man and his Irish wife, and multiple generations of their descendants and fellow islanders. Shortlisted for the 2023 Booker Prize, *This Other Eden* was also a finalist for the 2023 National Book Award for Fiction, and an NPR 2023 "Books We Love" Pick. A former student at the NYS Summer Writers Institute at Skidmore, Harding received the Pulitzer Prize for his 2009 first novel, *Tinkers*.

Cosponsored by the Honors College at UAlbany, the English Department's Creative Writing Program and Young Writers Project, and the Writing & Critical Inquiry (WCI) Program.



Meet Tony Award-winning actor, director, and playwright **Ruben Santiago-Hudson** at the annual **Burian Lecture on Monday, Feb. 5th!**



FILM SCREENING

January 26 (Friday)

LACKAWANNA BLUES

Screening — 7:00 p.m.,
Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue,
Downtown Campus

(U.S., 2005, 95 minutes, color, Rated PG-13)
Written and directed by George C. Wolfe.

Adapted for the screen by Ruben Santiago-Hudson from his award-winning play, **LACKAWANNA BLUES** tells the story of a big-hearted woman, Rachel “Nanny” Crosby, who becomes a rock of stability for a collection of boarders, friends, and family members in a Rust

Belt town in Western New York. Santiago-Hudson based the character on the woman who raised him after his own parents abandoned him.

#1 NEW YORK TIMES YOUNG ADULT BESTSELLER



January 31 (Wednesday)

Angeline Boulley

4:00 p.m. — Virtual Author Event
[REGISTRATION REQUIRED]
Please visit nyswritersinstitute.org
to register.

Join **Angeline Boulley**, celebrated YA author and enrolled member of the Ojibwe community, for a virtual conversation as part of the School of Education’s “One School One Read” initiative. The featured book is Boulley’s bestselling 2021 debut novel, *The Firekeeper’s Daughter*, the story of

a young Ojibwe woman, newly in love and college-bound, who must put her dreams on hold after the

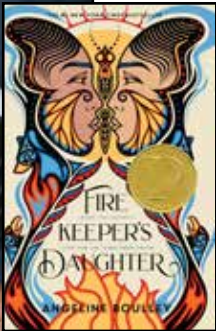


Photo: Marcella Hadden

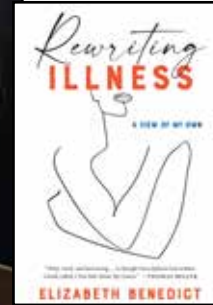
FBI pressures her to be an informant in the investigation of a local drug ring. *TIME* magazine named it a “Best YA Book of All *TIME*.” Her newest novel is *Warrior Girl Unearthed* (2023). For resources and discussion sessions, please visit www.albany.edu/education/faculty-development

Cosponsored by edTrends, AATLAS, and the UAlbany School of Education.

WRITING ABOUT CANCER WITH HUMOR, WISDOM, AND TERROR



January 31 (Wednesday)



Elizabeth Benedict

7:30 p.m.— Reading / Conversation
with Robert Boyers, Multi-Purpose
Room, Campus Center West Addition

Author of the eternally popular how-to book, *The Joy of Writing Sex: A Guide for Fiction Writers* (1996), **Elizabeth Benedict** applies her talents to retelling the story of her recent encounter with cancer in *Rewriting Illness: A View of*

My Own (2023). NPR’s Mara Liasson called it “startling, self-aware, and wickedly funny,” and Professor Kathy G.

Niknejad, MD, of Harvard Medical School said, “Her surprisingly entertaining memoir should be required reading for every medical student, resident, and physician – an ideal teaching tool.” Benedict’s 1985 novel, *Slow Dancing*, was a National Book Award Finalist. She has served on the fiction faculty of the New York State Summer Writers Institute since 1997.

Cosponsored by UAlbany’s Women in Science and Health Network (WISH).

FEBRUARY



A NEW LANDMARK ANTHOLOGY

February 1 (Thursday)

Sandra Guzmán

4:30 p.m.— Conversation / Q&A,
Assembly Hall (2nd Floor), Campus Center

Sandra Guzmán, Afro Indigenous storyteller and literary editor, presents her new anthology, *Daughters of Latin America: An International Anthology of Writing by Latine Women* (2023), a dazzling collection of essential works by 140 Latin

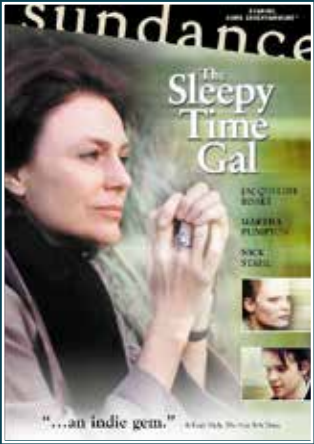


American and indigenous writers— many of them translated into English for the first time. *Kirkus Reviews* called it,

Photo: Bobby Román

“A significant collection of Latine women’s voices across five centuries... A fresh, indispensable look at the wide, multicultural world of Latine women writers.” Guzmán also served as producer and interviewer for the Emmy-nominated documentary, *TONI MORRISON: THE PIECES I AM*, which the Writers Institute screened in 2019 to celebrate the life of UAlbany faculty member Toni Morrison (1931-2019).

Cosponsored by UAlbany’s Department of Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latino Studies and the Department of Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies.



Meet film legend **Jacqueline Bisset**, star of Francois Truffaut's *DAY FOR NIGHT* and John Huston's *UNDER THE VOLCANO*, at the **4th Annual Albany Film Festival on Saturday, April 6th**, with her 2022 film *LOREN & ROSE*.

FILM SCREENING

February 2 (Friday)

THE SLEEPY TIME GAL

Screening — 7:00 p.m.,
Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue,
Downtown Campus

(U.S., 2001, 108 minutes, color, Rated R)

Directed by Christopher Munch.

Jacqueline Bisset, British actress who rose to Hollywood superstardom beginning in the 1960s, portrays an older woman who embarks on a search for the daughter she gave up for adoption in her youth, after becoming pregnant during an affair with a married man. Bisset

regards this performance as the best of her career. It was nominated for the Grand Jury Prize for Best Dramatic Feature at the Sundance Film Festival.

2023 NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST

February 8 (Thursday)

Aaliyah Bilal

4:30 p.m. — Craft Talk,
Standish Room (3rd
Floor), Science Library

7:30 p.m. — Reading /
Conversation,
Recital Hall, UAlbany
Performing Arts Center

Aaliyah Bilal's debut
story collection,

Temple Folk (2023), is a
groundbreaking portrait
of the lived experiences of Black
Muslims—a community rarely
featured in U.S. literature—as

they grapple with the challenges of faith, family, and freedom in America. Bilal, who grew up in a Black Muslim family outside Washington, D.C., presents a diverse cast of flawed, heroic, and memorable characters. Edward P. Jones said, "*Temple Folk* is more than a special literary accomplishment, it is a gift of glorious songs.... this gift should be praised from as many rooftops as possible." A finalist for the 2023 National Book Award for Fiction, it was named one of *TIME* magazines "100 Must-Read Books of 2023."

Cosponsored by the English Department's Creative Writing Program and Young Writers Project.

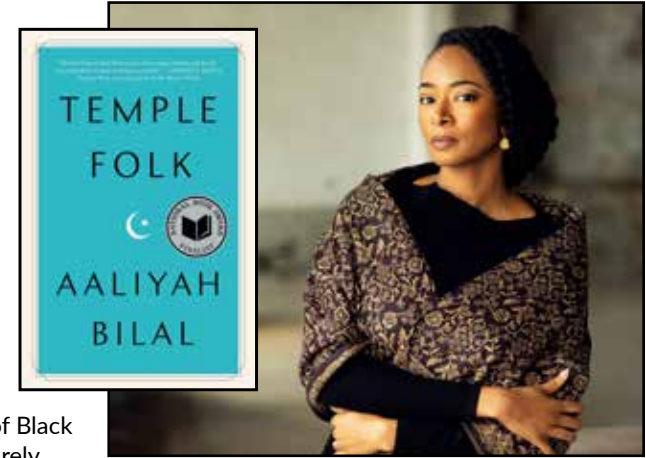


Photo: Tasha Pinelo

BURIAN LECTURE ON LIFE IN THE PERFORMING ARTS



Ruben Santiago-Hudson playwright, actor, director

February 5 (Monday)

7:30 p.m. — The 26th
Annual Burian Lecture,

Recital Hall, UAlbany
Performing Arts Center

Ruben Santiago-Hudson is a celebrated American playwright, actor, and director who has won major awards in all three categories. In 2021, he directed and starred in the Broadway production of his autobiographical play about growing up in a Rust Belt town outside Buffalo, *Lackawanna Blues*— marking the first time in Broadway history that an individual wrote, directed, and starred in a single play. He directed the 2022 Broadway production of Dominique Morisseau's *Skeleton Crew*, which received four Tony nominations including Outstanding New Play. He also directed the 2017 Broadway production of August Wilson's *Jitney*, which earned the Tony Award for Best Revival and five other Tony nominations. In 1996, he received the Tony Award as Featured Actor for his performance in August Wilson's *Seven Guitars*. His 2021 screenplay adaptation of another Wilson play, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, received several Oscar nominations, winning two for costume design and makeup.

Presented by the UAlbany Theatre Program and the Jarka and Grayce Burian Endowment in collaboration with the NYS Writers Institute.

EXHIBIT OPENING

featuring New York State Poet Patricia Spears Jones,
historian Dr. Jennifer Burns, and curator Dr. Jennifer Lemak

THE MORAL ARC TOWARD FREEDOM:

Lincoln, King, and the Emancipation Proclamation

February 15 (Thursday)

7:00 p.m. — Readings & Conversation,
Huxley Theatre, NYS Museum, 222 Madison Avenue, Albany

Join us for a lively program to mark the launch of a new temporary exhibit at the New York State Museum. The exhibit will showcase Abraham Lincoln's preliminary draft of the Emancipation Proclamation (Sept. 22, 1862), written in his own hand, and an audio recording of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivering a speech on the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation in New York City in September 1962. The program will feature poetry, readings of brief excerpts of historical documents, and a conversation with the audience about the complicated legacy of slavery and emancipation in the United States. A major force of the New York City poetry scene since the 1970s, Patricia Spears Jones is the reigning State Poet of New York (2023-25), by proclamation of the Governor and mandate of the Legislature, under the auspices of the NYS Writers Institute. Dr. Jennifer Burns is Lecturer in Africana Studies at the University at Albany. Dr. Jennifer Lemak is Chief Curator of History at the NYS Museum.

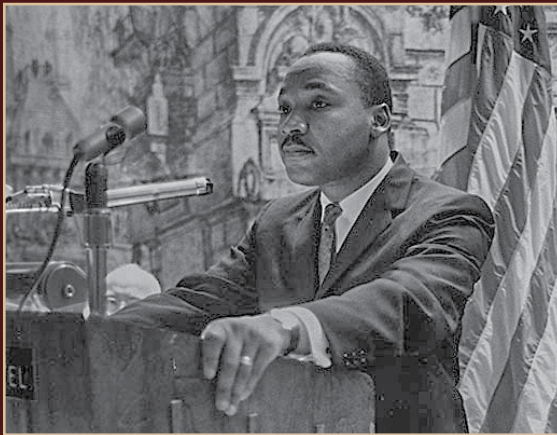


Photo: New York State Archives

Cosponsored by the New York State Education Department's Office of Cultural Education and the Archives Partnership Trust in honor of African American History Month.



Meet award-winning filmmaker and activist **Abigail Disney** at the **4th Annual Albany Film Festival** on **Saturday, April 6th**, with her 2022 film about America's culture of inequality, **THE AMERICAN DREAM AND OTHER FAIRY TALES**.

FILM SCREENING

February 16 (Friday)

THE ARMOR OF LIGHT

and Walt Disney's 1928 animated short **STEAMBOAT WILLIE**

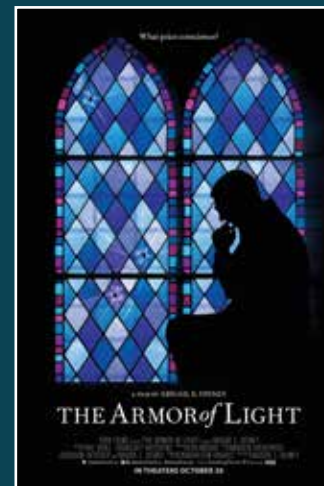
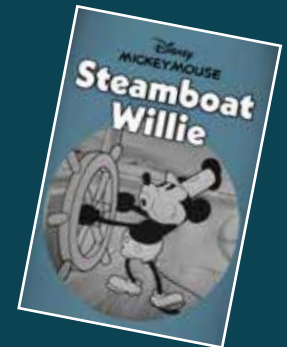
Screening — 7:00 p.m., Page Hall,
135 Western Avenue, Downtown Campus

The film screening event will open with

STEAMBOAT WILLIE

(U.S., 1928, 7 minutes, b/w, rated G)

A cultural artifact of extraordinary significance, the animated short that launched Mickey and Minnie Mouse loses its copyright protection and enters the public domain on January 1, 2024.



Featured Screening

THE ARMOR OF LIGHT

(U.S., 2015, 88 minutes, color, rated PG-13) is an acclaimed documentary directed by Abigail Disney— outspoken critic of American capitalism, philanthropist, filmmaker, and daughter of Walt Disney Company co-founder Roy O. Disney.

The film tells the story of Evangelical minister Rob Schenck, a fixture on the political far right, who breaks with orthodoxy by questioning whether being pro-gun is consistent with being pro-life. The film earned the 2017 Emmy Award for Outstanding Social Issue Documentary.

2024 DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CELEBRATION



February 20 (Tuesday)

Adjoa Asamoah

Political strategist and
Civil Rights activist

7:00 p.m. — Celebration,
Campus Center Ballroom

[Note: While this event is free,
registration will be required.]

Visit www.albany.edu/odi
for more info and to register.

Adjoa B. Asamoah, co-creator of the CROWN Coalition, is a lifelong racial equity champion, award-winning social impact strategist, highly sought-after political operative, and history-making policy architect. She developed the legislative strategy for and leads the groundbreaking CROWN Act movement, which seeks to make discrimination based on hairstyle illegal in all 50 states. CROWN stands for "Create a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair." New York became the second state to sign the act into law on July 3, 2019. Asamoah also served as the Biden-Harris campaign's National Advisor for Black Engagement, and was then tapped to serve as the Black Engagement Director for the historic 59th Presidential Inaugural Committee.

Sponsored by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Student Association, and the Honors College in collaboration with the NYS Writers Institute.

TALES OF A DYING MALL IN UPSTATE NEW YORK

February 22 (Thursday)

Karin Lin-Greenberg

4:30 p.m.— Conversation / Q&A,
Assembly Hall (2nd Floor),
Campus Center

Karin Lin-Greenberg is the author of *You Are Here* (2023), a debut novel about the residents of a small Upstate New York town who must grapple with the impending closure of a once-bustling shopping mall. The novel appeared on numerous "Best of" lists throughout 2023, including *Elle* magazine's "Best and Most Anticipated Books of 2023," the *Washington Post*'s "10 Noteworthy Books for May," and *Oprah Daily*'s "Best Books You Might Have Missed in 2023." *Publishers Weekly* called it a "remarkable study of ordinary people's extraordinary inner lives." Lin-Greenberg's 2013 story collection, *Faulty Predictions*, won the Flannery O'Connor Award in Short Fiction. She is Associate Professor of English at Siena College.

Cosponsored by the Honors College at UAlbany, the English Department's Creative Writing Program and Young Writers Project, and the Writing & Critical Inquiry (WCI) Program.



FILM SCREENING

February 23 (Friday)

TURN EVERY PAGE: THE ADVENTURES OF ROBERT CARO AND ROBERT GOTTLIEB

7:00 p.m. — Screening,
Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue, Downtown Campus
(U.S., 2022, 112 minutes, Rated PG) Written and
directed by Lizzie Gottlieb.

Lizzie Gottlieb's award-winning documentary explores the remarkable 50-year relationship between two literary legends, writer Robert Caro and his longtime editor Robert Gottlieb (the film director's father who passed away in June 2023 at the age of 92). In the film, Caro was working to complete the final volume of his

masterwork, *The Years of Lyndon Johnson*, for Gottlieb to edit. *The New Yorker's* Mary Norris called it "a rare window into a relationship that usually goes undocumented... the dance between editor and writer."

the creative life



A Conversation Series at UAlbany

Created and produced by the New York State Writers Institute, University Art Museum, and UAlbany Performing Arts Center in collaboration with WAMC Northeast Public Radio, this series features leading figures from a variety of artistic disciplines in conversation with WAMC's "Roundtable" host Joe Donahue about creative inspiration, craft, and career.



William Wegman

February 27 (Tuesday)

7:00 p.m. — Conversation with WAMC's Joe Donahue, Main Theatre, UAlbany Performing Arts Center

William Wegman is a beloved American artist known throughout the world for photographs and videos that feature his Weimaraner dogs in a variety of costumes and poses. His work is held in the permanent collections

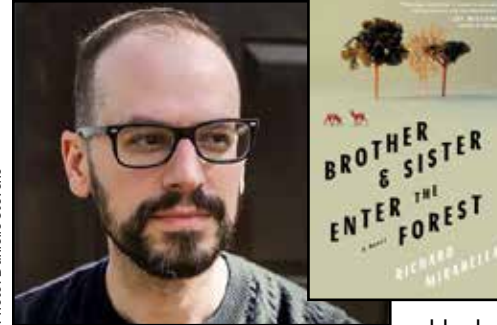
of major museums, including the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum. The author of many books for children, Wegman is also the creator of numerous short segments featuring his dogs for *Sesame Street*. His new book is *William Wegman: Writing by Artist* (2022), his first collection to focus on his multifaceted and deeply funny relationship to language, spanning the early 1970s to the present.

Major support for *The Creative Life* is provided by the University at Albany Foundation and University Auxiliary Services.



THE STRANGE LAND BETWEEN FABLE AND REALITY

Photo: Danielle Stevens



February 29 (Thursday)

Richard Mirabella

4:30 p.m.— Conversation / Q&A, Recital Hall, UAlbany Performing Arts Center

Richard Mirabella is the author of the debut novel, *Brother & Sister Enter the Forest* (2023), a queer coming-of-age novel about a young man's relationship with a violent

older boyfriend—and how he and his sister survive a terrible crime. The book was named a *New York Times Book Review* Editors' Choice, a *Washington Post* Noteworthy Book, and a *Harper's Bazaar* Best New Book of 2023. The *Vulture* reviewer said, "Mirabella writes about the strange land between fable and reality.... Part fantastical horror, part road trip narrative... [it's] an uncanny portrait of the lengths we go to protect the people we love." A member of the UAlbany community, Mirabella works for the University in the High School Program (UHS).

Cosponsored by the English Department's Creative Writing Program and Young Writers Project.

MARCH



Shown in association with a visit by legendary book editor **David Rosenthal** at the **4th Annual Albany Film Festival** on **Saturday, April 6th**. Rosenthal is the editor of Paul Newman's candid, posthumous memoir, *The Extraordinary Life of an Ordinary Man*, a *New York Times* bestseller.



FILM SCREENING

March 1 (Friday)

THE HUSTLER

Screening — 7:00 p.m., Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue, Downtown Campus

(U.S., 1961, 134 minutes, b/w)
Directed by Robert Rossen.

Hollywood icon Paul Newman stars in this all-time classic about an up-and-coming pool player, "Fast Eddie" Felson, who risks it all in a match with pool champion "Minnesota Fats," played by Jackie Gleason. The film was nominated for 9 Oscars, including Best Picture, Director, and Screenplay, winning for Cinematography and Art Direction. It frequently appears on lists of the best films of all time.

CELEBRATING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

March 3 (Sunday)

HISTORY IS HER STORY

2:00 p.m. – Performance, Recital Hall, UAlbany Performing Arts Center
Free admission. No tickets required.

Featuring: Marnie Gillard, Aya Mahmoud, Claire Nolan, and Stephanie Ward

To kick off Women's History Month, this program features four storytellers spinning yarns about strong and influential women: both past and present, famous and lesser known, real or imagined in myths, folktales and legends. Honoring and exalting their contributions and the experience of being female, the stories acknowledge that women across the world are groundbreakers shattering conventional wisdom, defying naysayers, and making history theirs.



This performance is part of a series spotlighting local artists. Presented in collaboration with the UAlbany Performing Arts Center. Funding support provided by the University at Albany Foundation, University Auxiliary Services, Office of Intercultural Student Engagement, and the Alumni Association.

THE DARK SIDE OF OVER-ACHIEVING

March 5 (Tuesday)

Prachi Gupta

4:30 p.m.— Craft Talk / Q&A,
Multi-Purpose Room,
Campus Center West Addition

7:30 p.m.— Reading/Conversation,
Multi-Purpose Room,
Campus Center West Addition

Prachi Gupta is the author of *They Called Us Exceptional: And Other Lies That Raised Us* (2023), a memoir about growing up in an ambitious Indian-American immigrant family; the pressures to over-achieve and belong; the special hell of the “model minority” stereotype; and the hidden shame of mental illness and personal trauma. Celeste Ng said, “I read it in one sitting. Wow. It aims right at the tender spot where racism, sexism, and family dynamics collide.” Gupta is an award-winning journalist and former senior reporter at the feminist news site, *Jezebel*. She received a Writers Guild Award for her investigative essay, “Stories About My Brother.”

Cosponsored by the Honors College at UAlbany, Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies and the Writing & Critical Inquiry (WCI) Program.



Photo: Ruben Chamorro

THE POWER OF WORDS AND BOOKS

March 6 (Wednesday)

Molly Gupthill Manning

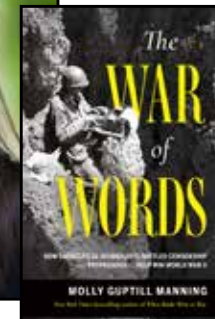
7:00 p.m.— Reading/Conversation,
Alumni House Conference Room

[REGISTRATION REQUIRED] Please
visit nyswritersinstitute.org to register.

Molly Gupthill Manning, who grew up serving ice cream at her family's famous Gupthill's Arena in Cohoes, is the author of the *New York Times* bestseller, *When Books Went to War: The Stories That Helped Us Win World War II* (2014). USA Today called it, “a tribute to the civilizing

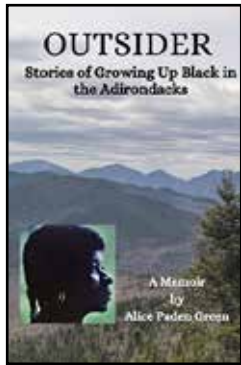


Photo: Martin Bentsen



influence of books and a careful account of what it took – a lot – to ensure that U.S. fighting men had the right stuff to read.” Her new book is *The War of Words: How America's GI Journalists Battled Censorship and Propaganda to Help Win World War II* (2023). Manning graduated Phi Beta Kappa from UAlbany, earning both a BA (2001) and MA (2002) in History.

Cosponsored by the History Department and Alumni Association at UAlbany.



BLACK LIFE IN THE NORTH WOODS

March 14 (Thursday)

Alice Green and Amy Godine

6:00 p.m.— Conversation/Q&A, Albany Public Library, Community Room (2nd Floor), 161 Washington Ave, Albany

[REGISTRATION REQUIRED]

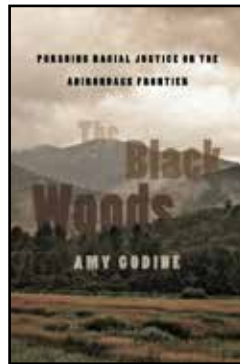
Please visit nyswritersinstitute.org to register.

Join us for a conversation about the Black history of the Adirondack Mountains with legendary civil rights activist Alice Green and historian Amy Godine.

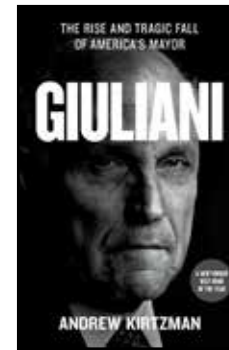
Alice Green is the author of a new, second memoir, *Outsider: Stories of Growing Up Black in the Adirondacks* (Sept. 2023), an account of her childhood and young adulthood as one of very few Black residents in the tiny hamlet of Witherbee, Essex County, where her family grappled with poverty and racial issues in the mid-20th century. Green is the executive director of the Center for Law and Justice, a civil rights organization she founded in 1985 in Albany. She earned multiple degrees at UAlbany, including a B.A. in Africana Studies, and a Ph.D. in Criminal Justice.

Amy Godine is the author of *The Black Woods: Pursuing Racial Justice on the Adirondack Frontier* (Nov. 2023), a history of the pioneering Black families who migrated to the Adirondacks in the 1800s, mostly from urban areas, to establish farms and rural communities and — significantly — secured the right to vote in New York. Filmmaker Ken Burns said, “*The Black Woods* is a beautifully written, painstakingly researched, and uncommonly nuanced story.”

Presented by the Albany Public Library and the New York State Writers Institute.



NEW YORK CITY MAYORS: THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE UGLY



March 18 (Monday)

Andrew Kirtzman and Terry Golway

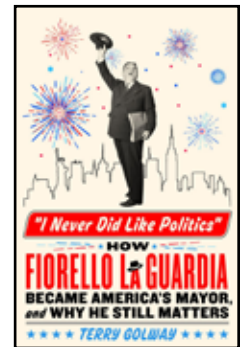
7:00 p.m.— Conversation/Q&A, Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue, Downtown Campus

Join us for a conversation about the colorful parade of characters who have served as mayor of New York City— the brilliant and the incompetent, the virtuous and the corrupt, the boring and the bizarre.

Andrew Kirtzman is the author of *Giuliani: The Rise and Tragic Fall of America's Mayor* (paperback, 2023), a *New Yorker* Best Book of the Year. *The Guardian* called it “masterful and

engrossing,” and the *L. A. Times* said it “cuts through the myth and caricature that has too often defined Giuliani.” An Emmy-winning former reporter for NY1, Kirtzman has covered Giuliani for three decades. His earlier biography, *Rudy Giuliani: The Emperor of the City* (2000)— published in paperback one year later with an added chapter about September 11th— remains the definitive portrait of the mayor at the height of his career.

Terry Golway is the author of *I Never Did Like Politics: How Fiorello La Guardia Became America's Mayor, and Why He Still Matters* (Feb. 2024), a hugely entertaining book about a mayor who, Golway argues, remains a model of public service to be emulated in our own times. Harold Holzer calls it, “A delightful man-behind-the-myth account of the iconic ‘Little Flower’—as unlikely and as successful a mayor as New York City has ever elected.” A longtime writer and editor at the *New York Times*, *New York Observer*, and *Politico*, Golway is the author of many acclaimed books, including *Machine Made: Tammany Hall and the Creation of Modern American Politics* (2014).



Meet legendary filmmaker **James Ivory**, the oldest person ever to win an Oscar for screenwriting (at age 89, for *CALL ME BY YOUR NAME*), together with documentarian **Stephen Soucy** at the **4th Annual Albany Film Festival on Saturday, April 6th.**

FILM SCREENING

March 15 (Friday)

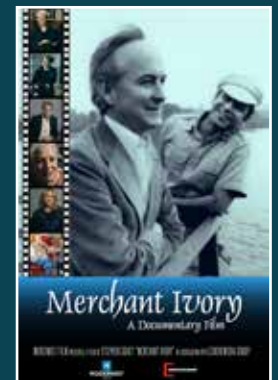
MERCHANT IVORY

Screening — 7:00 p.m.,
Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue, Downtown Campus



(U.S., 2024, 112 minutes, color)
Directed by Stephen Soucy.

Arthouse film lovers will enjoy immersing themselves in the glorious history of Merchant Ivory Productions, a film company widely credited with creating its very own genre of films steeped in literature and history, featuring lavish sets and costumes, as well as nuanced performances by first-rate actors portraying disillusioned and extremely genteel characters. UAlbany alum Stephen Soucy worked closely with cofounder James Ivory himself to reconstruct the company's extraordinary journey.



A REVOLUTIONARY APPROACH TO HOMELESSNESS

March 20 (Wednesday)

TRACY KIDDER

7:00 p.m.— In conversation with WAMC's Joe Donahue, Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue, Downtown Campus

Tracy Kidder, "a master of the nonfiction narrative" (*Baltimore Sun*), presents his new book *Rough Sleepers* (2023), the story of Dr. Jim O'Connell, a graduate of Harvard Medical School, who invented an unprecedented "community of care" for Boston's unhoused population. The author of classic works of nonfiction, including *Mountains Beyond Mountains* (2003), and *The Soul of a New Machine* (1981), Kidder spent five years following Dr. O'Connell and his colleagues as they navigated the city streets at night, working with thousands of unhoused patients. Abraham Verghese said, "I couldn't put *Rough Sleepers* down. I am left in awe of the human spirit and inspired to do better."

Cosponsored by The Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany, The Homeless and Travelers Aid Society, MVP Health Care, and Unity House of Troy, Inc.

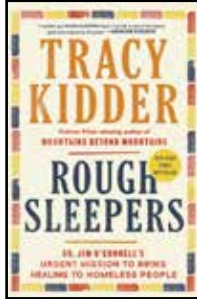


Photo: Frances Kidder



ONE OF THE MOST ORIGINAL MINDS IN FICTION

March 26 (Tuesday)

LYDIA DAVIS

4:30 p.m.—Craft Talk / Q&A,
Multi-Purpose Room,
Campus Center West Addition

7:30 p.m.— Reading/ In Conversation
with Lynne Tillman, Recital Hall, UAlbany
Performing Arts Center

Lydia Davis, one of the most accomplished writers of our time, presents *Our Strangers*:

Stories (2023), her new collection addressing topics ranging from marriage to tiny insects. The *New Yorker* called her "one of the most original minds in American fiction today," and Jonathan Franzen said, "She is the shorter Proust among us. She has the sensitivity to track the stuff that is so evanescent it flies right by the rest of us."

A former faculty member in the UAlbany English Department, Lydia Davis received the 2013 Man Booker International Prize for "continued creativity, development and overall contribution to fiction on the world stage." By request of the author, the new book is available only at independent booksellers and libraries.

Cosponsored by the English Department's Creative Writing Program and Young Writers Project, and the Writing & Critical Inquiry (WCI) Program.



Photo: Theo Cote

APRIL

AUTHORS THEATRE

April 2 (Tuesday)

LITTLE RAPES

by Amina Henry

7:30 p.m. — Staged Reading and Q&A with Playwright and director,
Arena Theatre, UAlbany Performing Arts Center

Staged reading of *LITTLE RAPES*, a play-in-progress by **Amina Henry**. Directed by **Shaun Patrick Tubbs**. Featuring the students of the UAlbany Theatre Program

Workers at an independent video store in a college town in the late 1990s navigate sexual politics and the weirdness of life as 20-somethings. When it becomes clear that Julian has had sex with fellow employees Nora, Sam, and Lucy, the previously "chill" atmosphere at Red Door Video reaches a boiling point. As *TITANIC* plays endlessly on the TVs, these workers will either sink or swim.

Amina Henry is a Brooklyn-based playwright. Her productions include *The Animals*, *Ducklings*, *Hunter John and Jane* and *The Johnsons* (all at JACK in Brooklyn); and *P.S.* produced by Ars Nova (NYC). Winner of the 2020 Sarah Verdone Writing Award, she teaches contemporary theatre at UAlbany, and her play *Interstate* was featured in Authors Theatre in 2021.



Shaun Patrick Tubbs is Visiting Assistant Professor of Directing in the UAlbany Theatre Program. Recent directing credits include *Ragtime* (Union Avenue Opera), *Defacing Michael Jackson* (Miami New Drama), *The Tempest* (Powerhouse Theatre), and *Troilus and Cressida* (Juilliard). He directed the 2019 Authors Theatre reading *Talkin' to this Chick Sippin' Magic Potion* by James Anthony Tyler.

Featuring staged readings of original plays-in-progress or adaptations of work from other genres, *Authors Theatre* is designed to focus on dramatic writing as literary text and to provide a mechanism to assist playwrights in the creation of new work.

Presented by the UAlbany Theatre Program and the Jarka and Grayce Burian Endowment in collaboration with the NYS Writers Institute.



**ALBANY
FILM
FESTIVAL**

**UNIVERSITY
AT ALBANY**

**Saturday,
April 6, 2024**

www.albanyfilmfestival.org

FEATURING:
LOCAL SHORT FILMS
FEATURE FILMS
FILMMAKERS
SPECIAL GUESTS
PANEL DISCUSSIONS

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

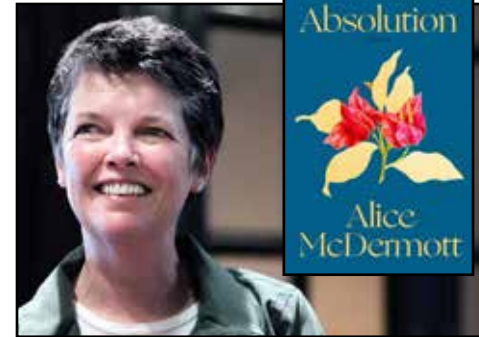


Photo: Beowulf Sheehan

"A MORAL MASTERPIECE"

April 11 (Thursday)

ALICE MCDERMOTT

4:30 p.m.—Craft Talk / Q&A,
Multi-Purpose Room, Campus Center
West Addition

7:30 p.m.— Conversation with
WAMC's Joe Donahue,
Campus Center West Auditorium

Alice McDermott, one of the leading
novelists of her generation, is the

author of the New York Times bestseller, *Absolution* (2023), about the lives of American women on the margins of the Vietnam War. Wives have appeared as minor characters in Vietnam War fiction, but in *Absolution* they take center stage. Novelist Ann Patchett said, "*Absolution* is one of the finest contemporary novels I've read. It is a moral masterpiece." McDermott is the author of nine novels, including *Charming Billy*, winner of the National Book Award, and *That Night, At Weddings and Wakes*, and *After This*—all three of them finalists for the Pulitzer Prize.

Cosponsored by the English Department's Creative Writing Program and Young Writers Project, and the Writing & Critical Inquiry (WCI) Program.

IT HITS YOU LIKE A COMET

April 16 (Tuesday)

DAVID WALLACE-WELLS

4:30 p.m.—Craft Talk / Q&A,
Multi-Purpose Room, Campus Center
West Addition

7:30 p.m.— Conversation,
Campus Center West Auditorium

David Wallace-Wells is the author of *The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming* (2019), a #1 New York Times bestseller, now available in a new 2023 Young Adult edition. The book argues that the state of the world, environmentally speaking, is "worse, much worse, than you think. If your anxiety about global warming is dominated by fears of sea-level rise, you are barely scratching the surface of what terrors are possible—food shortages, refugee emergencies, climate wars and economic devastation." Farhad Manjoo said, "*The Uninhabitable Earth* is the most terrifying book I have ever read," and Andrew Solomon said it "hits you like a comet." Wallace-Wells is a weekly columnist and staff writer for the New York Times.

Cosponsored by UAlbany's Office of Sustainability, UAlbany Environmental Humanities Lab, and the Honors College at UAlbany.



Photo: David Wallace-Wells

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Photo: David Wallace-Wells

Photo: David Wallace-Wells

BELOVED FICTION WRITER AND POET

Julia Alvarez

April 18 (Thursday)

4:30 p.m. — Conversation / Reading
Recital Hall, UAlbany Performing Arts Center

Julia Alvarez is one of America's most acclaimed and best-loved fiction writers and poets. Her novels about the Dominican and Dominican-American experiences have not only inspired new generations of Latinx authors, they have also helped to enlarge the map of world literature. Her magical new novel, *The Cemetery of Untold Stories* (April 2024), explores what happens to stories that are left unfinished. Her 1991 novel, *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*, was named one of "21 new classics for the 21st century" by *Library Journal*. Her 1994 novel, *In the Time of the Butterflies*, was selected for "The Big Read" by the National Endowment for the Arts. In 2013, President Obama awarded her the National Medal of Arts and, in 2021, Mattel unveiled a Barbie doll in her honor.

Cosponsored by UAlbany's Department of Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latino Studies, and the Writing & Critical Inquiry (WCI) Program.

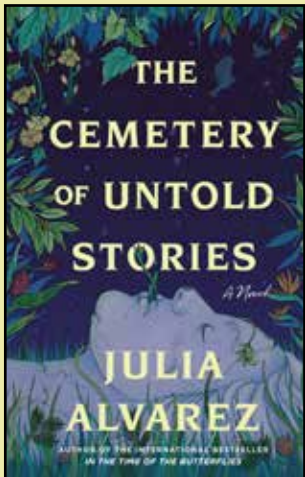
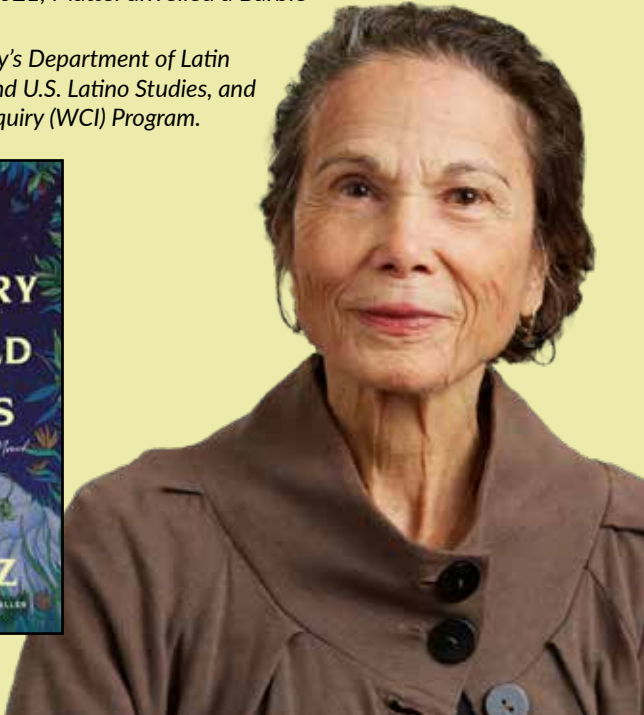


Photo: Todd Balfour
for Middlebury College



2024 ANNUAL MCKINNEY CONTEST GUEST SPEAKER

22nd Poet Laureate of the United States
and Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Life On Mars*

Tracy K. Smith

April 19 (Friday)

7:00 p.m. — Reading and McKinney Writing Contest Awards
EMPAC Building, Rensselaer (RPI), 110 8th St, Troy



Photo: Rachel Eliza Griffiths

Tracy K. Smith is an award-winning poet, memoirist, editor, translator, and opera librettist. She received the Pulitzer Prize for her 2011 poetry



collection, *Life on Mars*, an elegy for her father, a scientist who worked on the Hubble Space Telescope. Her memoir, *Ordinary Light*, was a finalist for the 2015 National Book Award for Nonfiction. Smith served as the 22nd

Poet Laureate of the United States from 2017-19. Her new book is *To Free the Captives: A Plea for the American*

Soul (Nov. 2023), a stunning personal manifesto on memory, family, and history that explores how we in America might—together—come to a new view of our shared past. The book was named a *TIME* and *Washington Post* Best Book of the Year.

Sponsored by Rensselaer's Annual McKinney Writing Contest and Reading in partnership with the NYS Writers Institute.

For more information, contact McKinney@rpi.edu



AMUSINGLY VICIOUS AND VERY WELL-TIMED

April 25 (Thursday)

Michael Wolff

7:00 p.m. — Conversation

Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue, Downtown Campus

Michael Wolff blew the lid off the Trump White House with his 2018 book *Fire and Fury*— written after being granted unprecedented access as a “fly on the wall” observer inside the West Wing throughout most of the first year of Trump’s presidency. The book debuted at number one on the

New York Times bestseller list in January 2018, and within a week had become the fastest selling book in the history of Henry Holt and Company, with over 700,000 orders shipped and 1.4 million orders placed. Wolff’s new book is *The Fall: The End of Fox News and the Murdoch Dynasty* (2023). Michelle Goldberg of the *New York Times* called it, “Amusingly vicious and very well-timed.”

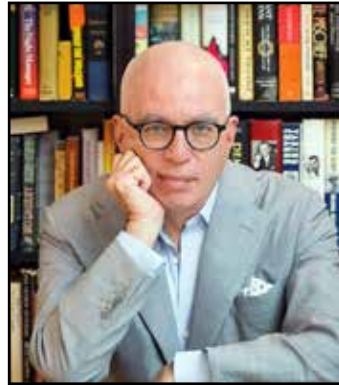


Photo: Jen Harris

Grayce Burian, Remembering a Creative Force

The Writers Institute bids farewell to our dear friend Grayce Susan Burian, a creative force — actor, director, educator, flamenco dancer, wood sculptor, jewelry designer, garment maker, world traveler, memoirist, and philanthropist. Grayce supported and helped shape one of our longest-running programs: the Burian Lecture series (see pages 4/5 and 17), which brought dozens of leading theatre scholars and practitioners to the Albany campus over the course of 25 years. Her remarkable life is chronicled in her 2013 memoir, *From Jerry to Jarka: A Breezy Memoir of a Long, Peripatetic Marriage* (2013), about her life with Jarka Burian, a long-time Theatre professor at UAlbany. Grayce received her B.A. and M.A. from UAlbany, and served as director of the Schenectady County Community College theatre program, which she founded and nurtured into one of the state’s most successful two-year theatre programs. She died November 16, 2023 at age 96.



BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

LITERATURE IN PERFORMANCE

April 27, 2024 (Saturday)

selected **SHORTS**
Let us tell you a story.

Performance — 7:30 p.m.,

Main Theatre, UAlbany Performing Arts Center

Advance tickets: \$15 general public • \$10 students, seniors & UAlbany faculty-staff.

Day of show tickets: \$20 general public • \$15 students, seniors & UAlbany faculty-staff. For tickets, visit www.albany.edu/pac/tickets

It’s story time...
for adults

The acclaimed weekly public radio broadcast turned touring show has a simple premise: take great stories by well-known and emerging writers and have them performed by terrific actors of stage and screen. Be transported through the magic of fiction in this unique night of literature in performance. **Stay tuned to nyswritersinstitute.org for more updates on the featured stories and cast.**

Presented in collaboration with the UAlbany Performing Arts Center with support from the University at Albany Foundation and University Auxiliary Services.

To sign up for email updates and for additional information on events, video clips, and literary news, visit our website at: www.nyswritersinstitute.org and follow us on **Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Twitter (X).**

On Campus Parking:

Courtesy parking for Writers Institute events on the Uptown Campus will be available in the **State Quad Student Parking Lot** one hour prior to and one hour after events.

Visitor Parking lots are also available for \$5 per vehicle, though parking spaces are very limited.

For Downtown Campus events, courtesy parking will be available in the **Thurlow Student Parking lot** on Western Avenue.

Handicapped entrances available: Milne Hall (from Washington Avenue) and Richardson Hall (Page Courtyard, Western Avenue).

For maps of the campuses including parking lots, visit: www.albany.edu/map

With special thanks to our primary sponsors,

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