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Edwin B. Smith

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## Annual Conference Explores 'Faulkner's Families'

Events include recording of 'The Sound and The Fury: April 7, 1928,' African American heritage tour

JULY 17, 2019 BY EDWIN B. SMITH

**FaTvLiErCoSMPrSt**



This photo of William Faulkner's first home in Oxford is the poster image for the 46th annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference, themed 'Faulkner's Families.' Image from the Cofield Collection/ UM Archives and Special Collections

OXFORD, Miss. – Three first-time events highlight the **University of Mississippi's** 46th annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference, which opens Sunday (July 21) in Oxford.

Focusing on the theme "Faulkner's Families," the international conference includes five days of lectures, tours, exhibits and other presentations, which explore the Pulitzer Prize-winning author's multifaceted ancestry. The event also features panel presentations, guided daylong tours of north Mississippi and the Delta, and sessions on "Teaching Faulkner."

"Over the years, two venerable Faulkner scholars, Noel Polk and Jim Carothers, repeatedly suggested Faulkner and the family as a conference topic," said Jay Watson, Howry Professor of Faulkner Studies and conference coordinator. "Though Noel is no longer with us, Jim is, and it's in part in his honor that we have finally come around to a topic so rich and multifaceted that, year after year, we tend to talk about it anyway."

The new events scheduled this year are an introduction to conducting family history research, set for 7:30 p.m. Sunday at Tallahatchie Oxford Missionary Baptist Church on Highway 334; an African American heritage tour on Thursday (July 25); and the screening of a video recording of Faulkner's classic "The Sound and the Fury: April 7, 1928," coming up at 8 p.m. Monday (July 22) in Nutt Auditorium.

Four members of the New York-based Elevator Repair Service theater company will be present to discuss the latter production, which includes every word written in section one of Faulkner's masterpiece and deals in ingenious ways with characterization, narration, set design and choreography.

"John Collins (the director), Ben Williams (actor and sound designer), Vin Knight (actor) and Greig Sergeant (actor) will discuss the challenges they faced and decisions they made in staging Faulkner's novel and will take questions from the audience," Watson said. "It promises to be a truly illuminating session."

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## Campus Briefs

### Donations Sought for 25th Annual Books and Bears Program

OXFORD, Miss. – The University of Mississippi is asking the community to help spread a little joy this holiday season by donating to the 25th annual Books and Bears program. Donations such as toys, books, dolls, bicycles and other children's play items are being accepted through Dec. 14. All donations will be collected and sorted

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### Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship Aims to Build Leaders

OXFORD, Miss. – Twenty-five inaugural recipients of the Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship – a program hosted by the University of Mississippi School of Education in partnership with the Mississippi Association of Coaches and the Mississippi High School Activities Association – are expected to increase their impact on student-athletes and their communities. The coaching fellowship

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## Ole Miss In the News

### Clarion-Ledger: New Essay Collection Tells the Story of Meredith's Enrollment

Essays celebrate 60th anniversary of James Meredith's enrollment at University of Mississippi By Lauren Rhoades Oct. 1 marks the 60th anniversary of James Meredith's 1962 enrollment at the University of Mississippi as the school's first African-American student.

An African American Heritage Tour of Oxford and Lafayette County, which is optional for conference registrants, will be led by Rhondalyn Peairs, an educator and historian who runs a tourism and education company called HISTORICH. Like last year's "Behind the Big House" slavery tour in Holly Springs, this is a first-time, and possibly one-time, offering on the conference tour menu.

"Genealogy Roadshow" host and family history expert Kenyatta Berry will lead an introductory Q&A-based session on doing family history research at Tallahatchie Oxford Missionary Baptist Church. This session is free and open to everyone in the LOU community. Jodi Skipper, UM anthropology and Southern studies professor, will serve as moderator.

"We're hoping that it will help stimulate more genealogical research and activity in our community," Watson said.

Speakers include John N. Duvall, Margaret Church Distinguished Professor of English at Purdue University, where he is also the editor of MFS: Modern Fiction Studies; Katherine Henninger, Russell B. Long associate professor of English at Louisiana State University; John Howard, emeritus professor of arts and humanities at King's College in London and visiting professor of American studies at the University of Alabama; Caroline Levander, Carlson Professor in the Humanities and vice president for global and digital strategy at Rice University, where she is also professor of English; and Hortense J. Spillers, Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Professor in the Department of English at Vanderbilt University.

"When we think of the Faulknerian Gothic, we typically remember the spectacular family and racial traumas of 'Absalom! Absalom!', 'Light in August' or 'Go Down, Moses,' with haunted ancestral houses inhabited by ghosts that aren't yet dead," said Henninger, whose topic is "Whiteness, Childhood and the Faulknerian Gothic."

"I'll discuss Faulkner's short story 'That Evening Sun' as a gothic that uses childhood as a lens to examine precisely those interactions, and that serves as a crucial point of departure for both (Harper) Lee's and (Sally) Mann's later engagements with childhood."

The conference begins with a reception at the [University Museum](#), after which the academic program will open with two keynote addresses, followed by a buffet supper on the grounds of Faulkner's home, [Rowan Oak](#). Over the next four days, a busy schedule of lectures and panels also will make room for an afternoon cocktail reception, a picnic served at Rowan Oak, the guided tours and a closing party on Thursday afternoon.

Throughout the conference, the university's [J.D. Williams Library](#) will display Faulkner books, manuscripts, photographs and memorabilia. The University Press of Mississippi will exhibit Faulkner books published by university presses throughout the United States, and collaborators on the Digital Yoknapatawpha Project, a database and digital mapping project at the University of Virginia, will present updates on its progress at a special conference session.

To register or for more information, visit <http://www.outreach.olemiss.edu/events/faulkner/#contact>.



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"James Meredith: Breaking the Barrier," a collection of essays edited by UM professor of journalism Kathleen Wickham, honors this historic milestone with

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