Five University employees to participate in second regional writers’ festival

November 1, 2012

The second Statesboro: The Write Place event will feature five employees of Georgia Southern University, four faculty and one staff member, along with Janisse Ray, environmentalist and New York Times best-selling author. The three-day festival, which celebrates the region’s best-known and emerging authors, is the largest of its kind in southeast Georgia.

Festivities begin with a reading by the featured authors on Thursday, Nov. 1, at 7:00 p.m. at Statesboro’s Emma Kelly Theater in the Averitt Center for the Arts. Other festival events include an open-mic reading for writers on Friday evening and three writers’ workshops on Saturday. All events are free and open to the public.

Stephanie Tames is the communications coordinator for the University’s College of Education. Tames has been a freelance writer throughout her career as a journalist and essayist, and will share stories from her upcoming memoir about her father, George Tames, who photographed presidents from Franklin Roosevelt to George H.W. Bush for The New York Times. Tames has had essays published in The Washington Post, The Nature Conservancy Magazine, Salon and Parenting. She has served as a commentator and essayist for Georgia Public Broadcasting and has had pieces published in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Good Food and Diversions.

“I’m thrilled to be included among the very fine writers in the 2012 Write Place,” Tames said. “I was involved many years ago with a group called The Evening Muse that sponsored open-mic readings in Statesboro. I was always so pleased by the number of people who turned out to read their work or just to listen and appreciate the work of others. I think The Write Place picks up and expands on that early movement, and is proof that Statesboro not only has a vibrant and varied writing community but also appreciates and supports writers.”

University faculty members joining Tames for The Write Place include Dr. David Dudley, chair of the Department of Literature and Philosophy; Dr. Laura Valeri, associate professor in the Department of Writing and Linguistics; Emma Bolden and Jared Sexton, both assistant professors in the Department of Writing and Linguistics.

Dudley will read from his novel, Caleb’s Wars, an acclaimed coming-of-age story about growing up black on the World War II home-front in segregated Georgia. Dudley has focused his scholarship and teaching on African-American literature. Before earning a Ph.D. in English literature from Louisiana State University, he earned a Master of Divinity degree from Concordia Seminary and served for 10 years as a Lutheran preacher.

Valeri, praised by Booklist for her “fearless display of raw emotion,” will read from her award-winning collection of short stories, The Kind of Things Saints Do, among five winners of the Stephen F. Austin Fiction Prize and an honorable mention for the Leapfrog Press Literary Prize, and from her forthcoming collection, Safe in Your Head.

“I am grateful to Statesboro for nurturing its community of writers and delighted to be reading with such talented writers and friends,” Valeri said.

Bolden, an award-winning poet, will present readings from a series of poems she wrote this year through The Grind, a poem-or-something-a-day challenge organized by one of her friends. During The Grind, participants are assigned to a group and must e-mail a finished piece – either a new poem or a revision – to group members every day.

“I spent six months in The Grind this year and it taught me a great deal,” she said. “I learned how important writing is in my life, and I learned how I write to understand my life. I’m excited to be able to share this experience with the audience at The Write Place festival – and I’m excited to hear what others have learned and lived and written, too.”

Jared Sexton, whose fiction has been published in a variety of national magazines, will offer work from his new short story collection, An End to All Things, which was a finalist for the 2010 New American Fiction Prize.
Joining the panel from Georgia Southern, Ray, best known for her acclaimed *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*, will be reading from *The Seed Underground: A Growing Revolution to Save Food*. The book has been profiled in *The Atlanta Journal Constitution*, and *Publisher’s Weekly* calls it, “intimate, poetically conversational.”

The “Open Mic” Coffeehouse Reading will take place Friday, Nov. 2, at 7 p.m. at the Georgia Southern University City Campus, in downtown Statesboro, and is hosted by the Georgia Southern University Department of Writing and Linguistics. Everyone is invited to participate by reading original prose or poetry or work by a favorite author.

On Saturday, Nov. 3, there will be three writing workshops open to writers of all levels. Ray will lead a memoir-writing program at 8:30 a.m. at the Statesboro Public Library; Sarah Domet, noted author of *90 Days to Your Novel* will lead a step-by-step guide at 10 a.m. at The Statesboro Inn; and Mary Ann Anderson, award-winning travel writer, will facilitate a session on working as a professional at 11:30 a.m. at the Statesboro Inn. Though the workshops are free, space is limited. Reservations are required and can be made by calling the Statesboro Convention and Visitors Bureau at 912-489-1869 or emailing editor@statesboromagazine.com.

Statesboro: The Write Place is a joint event of the Georgia Southern University Department of Writing and Linguistics, Statesboro Magazine, the Averitt Center for the Arts and the Statesboro Convention and Visitors Bureau. Contributing sponsors include the Downtown Statesboro Development Authority, Books-A-Million, the Statesboro Holiday Inn, the Statesboro-Bulloch County Friends of the Library, the Statesboro Comfort Inn and The Lilly Group.