Conference Overview

The Mayborn Literary Nonfiction Writers Conference of the Southwest, presented by the University of North Texas Mayborn Graduate School of Journalism, provides a forum for journalists, writers, readers, students, educators and the general public to listen to, be inspired by and practice their craft at the highest possible level. We seek to enhance the quality of nonfiction writing, encourage innovation, and create a community of factual storytellers who maintain an unflinching faith in the narrative craft. Each year, we gather some of the most talented storytellers in the country to explore the aesthetic elements of nonfiction narrative prosewriting that elevate the reading experience without ever compromising factual truth.

As a result, “The Mayborn Conference has very quickly risen to preeminence among the nation’s literary conferences,” says Hampton Sides, author of Blood and Thunder. Texas Monthly contends “The Mayborn Conference has street cred among literati and a reputation for hot-button banter.”

This year’s conference is bringing some of the most renowned literary nonfiction authors to North Texas, including keynote speakers N. Scott Momaday, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, Bob Shacochis, an editor at large for Outside magazine and author of The Immaculate Invasion, and Candace Millard, a former writer for National Geographic and author of River of Doubt.

The conference also offers undiscovered literary nonfiction writers the chance to compete for cash prizes and recognition. The conference is offering a $3,000 cash award for the first prize winner in the manuscript competition, along with a publishing option with UNT Press. The conference is also awarding $12,000 in cash prizes in two categories: $6,000 for the best reporting-based narratives and another $6,000 to the best essays. The 10 best nonfiction narratives and essays will be published in the second edition of “Ten Spurs,” the Mayborn’s literary journal.