Nonfiction writing classes begin with immersion
DENTON (UNT), Texas - Aspiring writers will have the perfect place this summer to discuss great literature and practice their craft – Larry McMurtry's Archer City. The University of North Texas Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism will launch a three-week course in July in the small Texas town northwest of Dallas to study the works of top literary nonfiction writers.
"It's a book town, and we hope that the presence of the bookshop will stimulate some good writing," said Lonesome Dove author Larry McMurtry, who owns Booked Up bookstore with more than 250,000 books in Archer City. McMurtry is a 1958 graduate of UNT.
The course, titled Creative Nonfiction, will be offered July 11 (Monday) to July 28 (Thursday) in Archer City's historic Spur Hotel as part of the inaugural Mayborn Literary Nonfiction Writers Conference of the Southwest.
The conference will be held from July 22 (Friday) to July 24 (Sunday) at the Hilton DFW Lakes Executive Conference Center in Grapevine. Admission to the conference is included in the course.
Students will immerse themselves in the authors' works in Archer City, a place that resembles the fictional one-stoplight town of Thalia, Texas, in McMurtry's book, The Last Picture Show. The course is primarily aimed toward graduate and undergraduate students studying journalism and English, but is available to all students with an interest in storytelling. The Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism plans to offer the course and the conference every year.
During the conference in Grapevine, students will have the chance to talk to the authors, including Susan Orlean, author of The Orchid Thief (the basis for the film Adaptation) and My Kind of Place: Travel Stories for a Woman Who's Been Everywhere.
"The vision is to create a new generation of Larry McMurtry's -- a new generation of storytellers," said Conference Writer-in-Residence George Getschow, instructor of the course.
The authors who will be studied in the course -- and will be present at the conference -- include: Sonia Nazario winner of the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for feature writing and the Polk Award for International Reporting; Paul Hendrickson, author of Sons of Mississippi, winner of the 2003 National Book Critics Circle Award for Nonfiction and the 2003 Chicago Tribune Heartland Prize for Nonfiction; and Alex Kotlowitz, author of Never a City So Real and There Are No Children Here, a book the New York Public Library selected as one of the 150 most important of the century.
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