



## THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA WRITERS' WORKSHOP: A LITERARY LEGACY

The University of Iowa Writers' Workshop is one of Iowa's most prominent contributions to the cultural life of the United States and the world. The Workshop claims among its graduates winners of virtually every major literary award, including 17 winners of the Pulitzer Prize, three recent U. S. Poets Laureate, and numerous winners of the National Book Award, MacArthur "Genius Grants," and other major honors. Its alumni—both teachers and students—are among the most visible members of the international literary community.

The fact that great literature is being created at The University of Iowa, and that so many Workshop students become great writers, speaks volumes to the world about the state of Iowa. The Writers' Workshop does more than simply place Iowa on the literary map; it promotes our University and state as fertile ground for some of the most creative minds of our time.

By providing a place where writers can deepen their understanding of the art and craft of writing, the Workshop fosters the development of writers and teachers whose work can change lives and even change the way we see the world. Workshop graduates have the opportunity to reach people (sometimes, millions of people) in profound ways. With its commitment to creativity and communication, the Writers' Workshop is making a contribution to the larger cause of human understanding—a cause that is especially relevant during this complex time in human history.



**"The Iowa Writers' Workshop isn't just any creative writing program. It's the granddaddy of them all, and still the most prestigious. . ."**

*The Wall Street Journal, 2001*



## OUR HISTORY

The University of Iowa Writers' Workshop was the first creative writing program in the nation. As early as 1922, the University had taken the radical step of granting graduate degree credit for creative work, and the writing program was officially established in 1936. One of the Writers' Workshop's first students, Paul Engle, became its director in 1941 and remained to guide, nurture, and champion the program for 25 years. During this time the number of students grew from a dozen during World War II to approximately 100 (its current enrollment); fiction and poetry sections were created as they exist today; and the Workshop gained a national reputation as the premier program of its kind. Its prominence has continued through the directorships of George Starbuck (1966-1969), John Leggett (1970-1986), Frank Conroy (1987-2005), and Lan Samantha Chang (2005-).

The Writers' Workshop became the prototype for the 300 writing programs in existence today, and maintains its standing as the best in the nation. In 1997, when *U.S. News & World Report* published its first-ever ranking of creative writing programs, the Writers' Workshop was voted number one.

Not every Workshop graduate wins a Pulitzer Prize or struggles with the Great American Novel (or poem, or short story), but many become professional writers, editors, or creative writing professors. For most, the appreciation and knowledge of writing and literature cultivated in the Workshop remains central in their lives and careers.

The University takes great pride in a program that has nurtured so many writers, including some of America's greatest literary figures. Iowa graduates such as novelists Flannery O'Connor, Wallace Stegner, and John Irving, and poets William Stafford, Donald Justice, and Rita Dove, have created some of the most important literature of our century. Says Workshop graduate Tom Grimes in the preface to his retrospective collection of short stories by graduates, "For all the importance of the Workshop as a twentieth-century institution, the diversity of voices and the human experiences that make up the place are its true legacy."

### IOWA WRITERS' WORKSHOP PULITZER PRIZE WINNERS

1945  
*V-Letter and Other Poems*  
by Karl Shapiro  
POETRY

1960  
*Heart's Needle*  
by W. D. Snodgrass  
POETRY

1968  
*The Hard Hours*  
by Anthony Hecht  
POETRY

1972  
*Angle of Repose*  
by Wallace Stegner  
FICTION

1978  
*Elbow Room*  
by James Alan McPherson  
FICTION

1980  
*Selected Poems*  
by Donald Justice  
POETRY

1982  
*The Soul of a New Machine*  
by Tracy Kidder  
NONFICTION

1987  
*Thomas and Beulah*  
by Rita Dove  
POETRY



### ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

Our goal for the future is a critical one: to maintain and enhance a program that has garnered for The University of Iowa, and the state of Iowa, a reputation as one of the foremost literary centers in the nation.

With the help of generous contributors, the Workshop hopes to achieve an overall campaign goal of \$5.5 million, funding that will strengthen every aspect of the program. Within the University's comprehensive campaign, we have identified four major funding priorities and seek support from individuals and organizations that share a commitment to exceptional writing for the following endowments and capital goals.

#### IOWA WRITERS' WORKSHOP PULITZER PRIZE WINNERS

1991  
*Near Changes*  
by Mona Van Duyn  
POETRY

1992  
*A Thousand Acres*  
by Jane Smiley  
FICTION

*Selected Poems*  
by James Tate  
POETRY

1995  
*The Simple Truth*  
by Philip Levine  
POETRY

1996  
*The Dream of the Unified Field*  
by Jorie Graham  
POETRY

1998  
*Black Zodiac*  
by Charles Wright  
POETRY

1999  
*The Hours*  
by Michael Cunningham  
FICTION

*Blizzard of One*  
by Mark Strand  
POETRY

2005  
*Gilead*  
by Marilynne Robinson  
FICTION

### MAKING OUR HOUSE A HOME

### \$2 MILLION GOAL

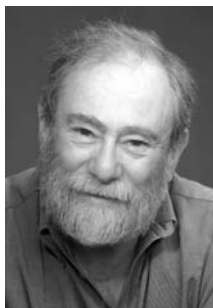
Plans are being finalized for one of the most exciting projects in the history of the Writers' Workshop: A renovation of the Dey House (the historic Victorian-style 1857 residential building in which the program is located) and a new, connecting building, the Glenn Schaeffer Library, that will more than double the program's current space. When work is complete, the Workshop will have a beautiful and functional home on a bluff overlooking the Iowa River, in a building it can inhabit with pride—and that will serve for generations to come.

For many years, the Writers' Workshop was located in the English-Philosophy Building (EPB), where Workshop classrooms were scattered throughout the building. When the program was consolidated into the Dey House on Clinton Street in 1997, this new home offered a centralized location supportive of conversation and camaraderie among faculty and students. But the Dey House in its current state does not sufficiently support the unique teaching style of the program—nor does the facility suit the stature of the writing program it houses.



Architect's rendering of the Glenn Schaeffer Library as seen from the northwest (Dey House in background)

This building project will enhance the Writers' Workshop facility by adding 8,500 square feet and enabling better use of existing facilities. Building and renovation plans will result in more classrooms, a large gathering room, sufficient faculty and administrative office space, and a library and archives that will house the Workshop's growing collection of historic manuscripts by graduates and faculty.



**"The excellence of the Writers' Workshop rests on the ability of faculty to teach and write simultaneously at an exceptionally high level. Individual support makes it possible for faculty to do both—teach and write—at the height of their powers."**

**Marvin Bell**  
**Flannery O'Connor Professor**  
**Emeritus of Letters**  
**Writers' Workshop**

The new building will be named for Glenn Schaeffer, a 1977 Workshop graduate and entrepreneur whose generous commitment of \$1 million to the project reflects his lifelong commitment to literature in American culture, and his recognition of the importance of the Writers' Workshop in the nation's literary history.

For other contributors, the following recognition opportunities exist within this facility initiative:

**THE FRANK CONROY READING ROOM \$500,000**

This large space within the Glenn Schaeffer Library building will house the Workshop's library, and provide a room in which students and others can study this significant collection.

**SEMINAR ROOMS \$125,000 each**

Current classroom space is adequate but cramped even for small Workshop classes, which have a maximum enrollment of 20. Plans call for creating two classrooms better suited to the roundtable discussion that is central to the teaching style of the Workshop.



**DIRECTOR’S OFFICE**

**\$100,000**

A gift at this level will lend the donor’s name to the office space of the Writers’ Workshop director.

**FACULTY TEACHING OFFICES (8)**

**\$75,000 each**

The new building plan will result in eight faculty teaching offices—rooms that will provide individual office space for permanent faculty members, and that are generously sized to function as classrooms in which faculty can teach workshops and other courses.

**DEPARTMENT OFFICE SUITE**

**\$75,000**

This space provides offices for key personnel, including one professional administrator, two administrative assistants, and two work-study students.

**GRADUATE STUDENT OFFICES (5)**

**\$30,000 each**

Each term, a number of graduate students receive fellowships to teach undergraduate workshops and seminars. The five graduate offices will accommodate up to 15 graduate students, providing much-needed space in which to hold office hours and perform teaching-related activities.



**“Our ability to remain a vital writing program depends on continuing to attract the most promising student writers and the most dynamic faculty, and providing the support they need to be creative both in and out of the classroom. Being able to offer student and faculty support, and a workspace that promotes the kind of classroom interaction the program is known for, is the best way to ensure our future excellence.”**

**Frank Conroy  
Director  
F. Wendell Miller Professor  
Writers’ Workshop,  
1987-2005**

**SUPPORTING STUDENT WRITERS**

**\$1 MILLION GOAL**

The Workshop is fortunate that its reputation attracts applications from some of the nation’s most promising writers, and the number of strong students interested in attending always exceeds the number of students the program is able to accept. Nonetheless, the Workshop’s ability to retain and help the most talented of these students through financial assistance is severely limited.



Architect’s rendering of the Glenn Schaeffer Library as seen from the north

**ENDOWED STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS (16)                      \$60,000 each**

Aid through tuition scholarships, research assistantships, fellowships, and private awards is currently available to only about one-third of Workshop students, and competition for these resources is keen. Many times, talented students are admitted to the program but are unable to afford tuition and living expenses, and so decline our offer of admission. The ability to offer scholarships is crucial to ensuring that the program continues to attract and retain the strongest student writers.

**SUPPORTING A NATIONAL RESOURCE    \$2 MILLION GOAL**

The Writers' Workshop library collection will contain books, theses, and rare manuscripts by Workshop graduates and other Iowa writers. This collection will not only serve as a "centerpiece" for our new building, but as a resource for students and faculty in the program, the University, the state of Iowa, and beyond.



**LIBRARY ARCHIVIST    \$1 MILLION**

A collection of this breadth and importance will need to be overseen by a professional archivist, a position that will be supported by this endowment.

**LIBRARY SUPPORT    \$1 MILLION**

This endowment will provide ongoing support for the library to ensure the collection is maintained and enhanced over time.

**“Writing isn’t just about waiting for the Muse to strike; it needs to be a regular event. Thanks to fellowships I have received as a student in the Writers’ Workshop, I’ve been able to really focus on my work and stay immersed in the craft of writing. This year, I was even able to start a novel.”**

Frances Peebles  
Graduate student  
Writers' Workshop



Architect's rendering of the exterior of the Glenn Schaeffer Library



### **SUPPORTING EXCELLENT TEACHING**

**\$500,000 GOAL**

Providing world-class instruction requires a world-class faculty. One reason for the Workshop's success is having a faculty that consists not only of excellent teachers, but teachers who are among the nation's foremost writers. These faculty members maintain a learning environment that rivals any writing program in the country, and the program must ensure that this atmosphere will be maintained in the future. The best way to attract exceptional students is by attracting and retaining faculty who are recognized leaders.

#### **FACULTY FELLOWSHIPS (5)**

**\$100,000 each**

Faculty fellowships recognize noteworthy accomplishments among Workshop faculty and provide endowed funds to support writing projects, professional travel, continuing education, and other activities that will encourage and advance professional and academic goals.

### **RECOGNITION FOR CONTRIBUTORS**

For those who are able to lend their support at especially generous leadership levels, the University has identified the recognition opportunities listed for each priority, enabling the contributors or someone special to them to have their name forever linked with the literary legacy of the Writers' Workshop at The University of Iowa. In addition, membership in The Presidents Club—which recognizes the University's most generous contributors—is offered to those who support the Workshop at higher levels.



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For more information about supporting the Writers Workshop campaign goals, contact:

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*The Campaign to Advance Our Great University*