



NEWSLETTER

President's Letter

Dear MKR Society Friends –

I was a late adopter of the stories and novels that I now dearly love by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. I have always loved regional literature. The three books that I read until the binding fell apart in college were Fannie Flagg's *Daisy Fay and the Miracle Man*, Betty Smith's *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, and Lee Smith's *Fair and Tender Ladies*. They kept me grounded by reminding me that I too had strong roots from a small town in Alabama, Muscle Shoals, which simultaneously defined and challenged me. *The Yearling* would have been a perfect addition to that list, but I had not found my way to it by that time. Instead, a college professor introduced me to the works of Ellen Glasgow. After reading *Barren Ground*, I was hooked. I

needed to know everything about Glasgow. Her works became the basis for my dissertation and research for many years.

Like so many Florida residents, I am not a native of the state. I found my way here through the dwindling job market for English professors. In spite of not being a native Floridian, I have firmly planted my roots here. My daughter is a true Floridian, catching lizards in the backyard, swimming like a fish by age 3, and collecting her own army of ibises with whatever foodstuffs she can scrounge up from the kitchen. She already knows Rawlings from the copy of *The Secret River* on her bookshelf and has a copy of *The Yearling* waiting for her. My path to Rawlings seemed to sprout organically, like so many Florida plants, and take on a life of its own after I moved here. During my first year in Florida, I was asked to present on my research at a local colloquium being offered by Daytona State College. I am a faculty member at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, just across the street from Daytona State. Attending that colloquium was Denny Bowden, a longtime Rawlings aficionado and member of the society. After hearing my presentation on Glasgow, he wanted to know whether my research had included Rawlings, given her close relationship to Glasgow.

The next year, I attended my first Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Conference, presenting on Glasgow and Rawlings, and was hooked. Her life and literature speak to so many experiences that are shared by the writers I most admire. From her "Hyacinth Drift" river adventure with Dessie to sharing a drink at Marineland with Hemingway, Rawlings embraced life with an exuberance that inspires me. My introduction to Rawlings was also my first introduction to Florida, the scrub around Cross Creek, the many natural springs with clear water fed by aquifers that serve as the home to manatees in the winter, a reluctant acceptance of the variety of snakes that share my new habitat. My love for Florida is tied to my love for Rawlings. I am grateful to have found them both.

Announcements

- The MKR Trustees will meet at noon on October 31st at the Markland House, 102 King Street, St. Augustine.
- 29th Annual MKR Conference, Florida Yacht Club, Jacksonville, April 1-2, 2016.

Ashley Lear

**MKR Officers**

President
Steve Brahle

Vice President
Anne Pierce

Secretary
Pam Davis

Treasurer
Janice Arinon

Exec. Director
Anna Lillios

Lifetime Members

Mary Bridgman
Richard and Isabelle Brown
Patricia Ann Davis
Roy Hunt
William Jeter, Jr. and
Deanne M. Clark
Grady Johnson
Claire and Martin Koshar
Shirley Lucas
Gloria and Philip May, Jr.
Spence Perry
Marsha and Michael Phelts
Anne Pierce
Dana Preu
Victoria Register-Freeman
Shirley and Pierre Thompson
Lynn Weaver
Mrs. C.V. Whitney

Lifetime Honorary Trustees

J.T. "Jake" Glisson
Philip S. May, Jr.
Kevin McCarthy
Idella Parker
Rodger Tarr

Trustees Emeriti

Patricia Nassif Acton
Roy Hunt
Jake Jacoway
Claire Koshar
David Nolan

29th Annual Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Conference

The Florida Yacht Club, Jacksonville

April 1-2, 2016

The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society invites you to attend the 29th Annual Rawlings Conference, which will take place at the beautiful Florida Yacht Club in Jacksonville. The locale was chosen in honor of Rawlings Society founder, Phil May, who lives a few miles from the club.

The Conference hotel is the Hilton Garden Inn, 145 Park Avenue, Orange Park, FL 32073. Phone: (904) 458-1577. A block of rooms has been reserved under the name, "Rawlings Society." Cost is \$109, plus tax. Please note that the cut-off date is March 16, 2016.

Activities at the conference will include a Friday afternoon excursion (yet to be arranged). The tour will be followed by cocktails and a banquet dinner. The Saturday, April 2, luncheon will be held at the historic Club Continental, on the St. Johns River. This locale was the former estate of Caleb Johnson, heir to the Palmolive Soap Company.

We are seeking speakers for the conference. If you'd like to present a 20-minute talk on any aspect of Rawlings's life or works, her circle of friends, Cross Creek or her other landscapes, the Cross Creek trial, her political/social/economic/gender/literary views; please send a title and brief description of your talk to Anna Lillios at Anna@ucf.edu. Deadline is March 1, 2016. Please respond asap, because our sessions will fill up fast.

A special feature of this year's conference will be the third annual silent auction fundraiser. Roy Hunt kicked off the original auction at the 2014 Gainesville conference by donating a set of 12 red MKR fine bone china plates (similar to the blue ones sold by Bill Jeter a few years ago). If you have any special items that you would like to donate to the Society, please contact Elaine Bradbury at hhfsouth@embarqmail.com.

For more information about the conference, please contact Anna Lillios at Anna@ucf.edu.

Call for Papers

The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Journal of Florida Literature seeks articles, creative fiction and poetry, book reviews, and notes in the spirit of or regarding the life and work of Rawlings, her circle, and other authors who use the state of Florida as a source of creativity. The *JFL* is a peer-reviewed journal sponsored by the Rawlings Society. Contact Editor Anna Lillios at Anna@ucf.edu.

Celebrating MKR's 119th Birthday



Shirley and Pierre Thompson and Elaine Spencer attended the July 31st party in honor of Rawlings's 119th birthday. Shirley sent back this message: "a photograph from Marjorie's celebration—delicious cake and fresh churned vanilla ice cream. We sang and chased the chickens. Elaine and her group do an excellent presentation. Glad she is a new trustee!"

Third Annual Silent Auction Fundraiser

By Elaine Bradbury

It's time to start thinking about the annual auction for 2016. Be on the lookout for any items from anyone that would have mass appeal to the conference attendees. MKR books, plates, etc. are always the favorite and top-money makers. Gift certificates are also popular. We're looking not only for Rawlings memorabilia—but also Florida-themed items, real art work, or books, especially signed, or other items of general interest. Every year I am amazed at other items that bring in high bids. Last year we donated a Downton Abby basket with goodies that did very well. Use your imagination. Maybe someone can get a big-ticket item for a raffle. We can run that at the same time. This would be an additional income source.

Please bring auction items to the trustees meeting or contact me if you'd like to donate an item(s). Please list the following: 1) the item; 2) its description; and 3) estimated value. I will continue to collect items all year. We made over \$3000 last year—and want to continue the trend.

Thank you for the support.
Elaine Bradbury and Claire Koshar
Contact: hhfsouth@embarqmail.com

Fall Events

Saving the Sunshine State: Women Leaders in the 20th Century

Tuesday, Sept. 1 – Saturday, October 31, 2015, FREE

The Matheson Museum at the University of Florida is hosting an exhibition honoring the lives and legacies of six of Florida's most influential women leaders: the three "Marjorie(y)s" (Marjorie Harris Carr, Marjory Stoneman Douglas, and Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings), Mary McLeod Bethune, Zora Neale Hurston, and May Mann Jennings.

Thursday, October 1: MKR Farm House Re-Opens

Fall cleaning and maintenance closed the MKR House during August and September, but now it is open for tours again.

The MKR Writing Award

The 2016 Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Writing contest is now open for college-age and graduate students. Prizes include \$1,000 for a graduate-student essay and \$500 an undergraduate essay. Students are expected to write 1500–3000 words—either a critical essay or a piece of creative work—on a subject related to the works, career, or legacy of Rawlings. They are expected to present their work at the next annual Rawlings conference at the Florida Yacht Club in Jacksonville. The deadline is February 1, 2016.

For more information, please write to Anna Lillios at Anna@ucf.edu

Rawlings Society
PO Box 117005
Gainesville, FL 32611-7005

IS IT TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

Please check your address label. The date that you see on the label is the date your dues are due. If your membership is current, we thank you! Renewal card at:
<http://rawlingssociety.org/>



