

PRESS RELEASE:

June 6, 2011

For immediate release:

Through July 10, 2011



For more information:

Laura C. Lieberman, 770/949-2787

**2011 TURNER CASSITY LITERARY FESTIVAL AT CAC:
The First Annual Writers Event Honoring Southern Poet Offered in July 2011**

Douglasville, Georgia – The Cultural Arts Council of Douglasville/Douglas County is pleased to present the first annual Turner Cassity Literary Festival on July 8th, 9th and 10th at the Cultural Arts Center in order to provide aspiring writers an opportunity to develop their writing skills and prepare their works for publication under the guidance of expert and experienced authors as well as to honor poet Turner Cassity whose work and dedication to literary excellence in Georgia inspires this and their endeavors. Featured authors include poet and educator David Axelrod, editor and “book doctor” Bobbie Christmas, poet Gregory Fraser, memoirist and editor Emily Hipchen, and poet Will Wright. All writers 18 years old or older are eligible and encouraged to participate.

The 2011 Festival Schedule begins with an opening reception on Friday, July 8th, from 6 until 8 p.m., with readings from Cassity’s work and light refreshments. On Saturday, July 9th, there will be three sessions of workshops offered on various topics led by the festival’s featured authors during the morning and afternoon, a boxed lunch, and an evening with readings by workshop participants and a special performance of Douglasville-based poet Alice Shapiro’s verse play, “Four Voices.” On Sunday, festival participants will have an open discussion followed by one-on-one critiques of their work by the workshop leaders and featured authors, and then the Cultural Arts Center will be open to the general public for readings and book signings by the featured writers, from 3 until 5 p.m.

The fee to participate in the full festival including the Friday evening reception, three Saturday workshops, the boxed lunch on Saturday, Saturday evening performances, and Sunday discussion and readings is \$40 per person (\$35 for CAC members). For Saturday only, the fee is \$30 per person (\$25 for CAC members). Individual critiques on Sunday are offered for an additional \$25 per one-on-one session. Non-festival participants may attend the Saturday evening performance and readings for \$7 per person (\$5 for CAC members). The Sunday afternoon readings and book signings are free and open to the general public. Cold Stone Creamery will provide the refreshments.

“The Turner Cassity Literary Festival has been made possible by an anonymous contribution,” stated CAC director Laura C. Lieberman. “And we are very grateful and even more delighted to be able to encourage local writers and to honor such an important Southern poet with this new event in our community.”

THE CULTURAL ARTS COUNCIL OF DOUGLASVILLE/DOUGLAS COUNTY

8652 Campbellton Street
Douglasville, Georgia 30134
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www.artsdouglas.org

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2011 Turner Cassity Literary Festival

Poet, playwright and short-story writer Turner Cassity earned fame for his prolific publication of formal poetry. His verse is known for its wit, humor, stringent satire, and iconoclastic views, as well as for its musicality. Allen Turner Cassity was born on January 12, 1929, in Jackson, Mississippi. Raised a Calvinist, he grew up in Jackson and Forest, Mississippi. He attended Millsaps College in Jackson, graduating in 1951, and then enrolled at Stanford University in Stanford, California, earning a master's degree in English in 1952. Cassity also received a master's degree in library science from Columbia University in 1955. In 1962 Cassity accepted the position of librarian in the Robert W. Woodruff Library at Emory University in Atlanta, from which he retired in 1991. He co-founded the Callanwolde Readings Program, which highlights poets and writers, with poet Michael Mott.

Cassity began writing poetry at age fifteen. His books include *Watchboy, What of the Night?* (1966); *Steeplejacks in Babel* (1973); a verse play *Silver Out of Shanghai* (1973); *Yellow for Peril, Black for Beautiful* (1975); *The Defense of the Sugar Islands* (1979); *Phaëthon unter den Linden* (1979); *Keys to Mayerling* (1983); *The Airship Boys in Africa* (1984); a verse play *The Book of Alna* (1985); *Hurricane Lamp* (1986); *Lessons* (1987); a book-length poem *To the Lost City, or the Sins of Nineveh* (1989); *Between the Chains* (1991); *The Destructive Element: New and Selected Poems* (1998); *No Second Eden* (2002); and *Devils and Islands* (2007), for which Cassity received the Georgia Writers Association's Georgia Author of the Year Award. He also received the Levinson Prize for Poetry, Michael Braude Award of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Ingram Merrill Foundation Award, and a National Endowment for the Arts grant.

Cassity considered himself a southerner yet disagreed with the notion that southernness is merely a "literary convention," since such a convention can no longer describe modern southern life. Rather than continuing the myths of a tragic and guilt-ridden South evoked by William Faulkner and other writers, Cassity's poetry implies that southern writers can and should reinvent their language and subject matter. Considered by poet and critic Dana Gioia to be perhaps the "most brilliantly eccentric poet in America," Cassity continued to use traditional literary form to express his complex and imaginative vision until his death. He died in Atlanta on July 26, 2009, and was buried in Forest, Mississippi.

The mission of the Cultural Arts Council of Douglasville/Douglas County is to nurture, guide and stimulate the enjoyment of and participation in the arts among Douglas County residents by providing an atmosphere conducive to the arts, broadening the spectrum of quality exhibits and performances available to the community, and fostering individual interactions with the arts through a wide range of satellite organizations. The Cultural Arts Council is supported by the City of Douglasville, Douglas County Board of Commissioners, Georgia Council for the Arts through appropriations from the State General Assembly, and the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes a great nation deserves great art.

The Cultural Arts Center is located at 8652 Campbellton Street in historic downtown Douglasville, Georgia, about 20 miles from Atlanta and just off I-20 (exit 36 – Chapel Hill). For detailed directions and more information, please contact the Cultural Arts Council at 770/949-2787 or visit our web site --- www.artsdouglas.org.

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More about the 2011 Turner Cassity Literary Festival's Featured Authors

Poet and educator **David B. Axelrod** is the author of numerous books of poetry, recipient of many and varied awards, and a highly regarded teacher. He received a B. A. from University of Massachusetts, M. A. from The Johns Hopkins University Writing Seminars, M. F. A. from the University of Iowa Writing Workshops, and his Ph. D. from Union Institute. He has sponsored international writers' programs covering dozens of countries and nearly 40 languages. From 2007-2009, he served as Suffolk County (Long Island, New York) Poet Laureate. With his third Fulbright Award, Axelrod became the first official Poet-in-Residence appointed in the People's Republic of China in 1993.

Book Doctor **Bobbie Christmas** is the author of *Write In Style*, a creative-writing guide that won three awards. With more than 40 years in the publishing and communications industry, she has run Zebra Communication, her book-editing firm in metro Atlanta, since 1992. Past president of the Georgia Writers Association, Christmas is also involved with the South Carolina Writers Workshop, Florida Writers Association, Southeastern Writers Association, Atlanta Writers Club, and Society for the Preservation of English Language and Literature (SPELL).

2010 Georgia Author of the Year, **Gregory Fraser** has published poetry in the *Southern Review*, *Paris Review*, *Ploughshares*, and many other literary journals. Twice a finalist for the Walt Whitman Award, Fraser's book *Strange Pietà* was published in 2003, and his second collection, *Answering the Ruins*, published in 2009 from Northwestern University Press. He is the co-author of the forthcoming *Poetry Writing: Creative-Critical Approaches*. A National Endowment for the Arts grant recipient, Fraser is an associate professor of English at the University of West Georgia. He earned his doctorate from the University of Houston, his M.F.A. from Columbia University, and his B.A. from Ursinus College.

An associate professor at the University of West Georgia, **Emily Hipchen** earned her Ph.D. at the University of Georgia and B.A. from Furman University. Her memoirs, essays, and poetry have been widely published and garnered many prizes including the Susan Atefat Prize for Nonfiction, Lush Triumphant Prize for Nonfiction, and *Georgetown Review's* first prize. A 2008 Fulbright Scholar, she has received a National Endowment for the Humanities grant and Newberry Library Fellowship. Hipchen has edited the *Journal of Auto/Biography* since 2000 of *Adoption & Culture* since 2007. Her memoir, *Coming Apart Together*, was published in 2005.

Co-editor of *The Southern Poetry Anthology*, a multi-volume series celebrating contemporary poetry of the American South, **William Wright** is author of four poetry collections: the forthcoming *Bledsoe, Dark Orchard* (winner of the 2005 Breakthrough Prize), and two chapbooks – the forthcoming *Sleep Paralysis* (winner of the South Carolina Poetry Initiative Prize) and *The Ghost Narratives* (2008). His poetry and translations have appeared or will be published in *AGNI*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Antioch Review*, *Nimrod*, *North American Review*, *Colorado Review*, *Indiana Review*, *Southern Poetry Review*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, and *New Orleans Review*. He received his doctorate from the University of Southern Mississippi in 2009.



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CALENDAR LISTINGS: LITERARY EVENTS

TITLE: 2011 TURNER CASSITY LITERARY FESTIVAL:
Writers Workshops, Readings, Performance & Book Signings

PLACE: The Cultural Arts Center of Douglasville / Douglas County
8652 Campbellton Street
Douglasville, Georgia 30134

DATE: Friday, July 8th, Saturday, July 9th & Sunday, July 10th

TIME: Friday, 6 - 8 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. – 9 p.m.; Sunday, 12:30 – 5 p.m.

COST: \$40 for full festival (\$35 CAC members); \$30 Saturday only (\$25 CAC members);
\$7 Saturday evening readings and performance (\$5 CAC members);
Sunday afternoon readings & book signings free to the general public

CONTACT: Laura C. Lieberman, 770-949-2787

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