



Ernest J. Gaines to Give Reading at UL Lafayette

Ernest J. Gaines, Writer in Residence Emeritus at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, will give a reading at the university's Paul and Lulu Hilliard University Art Museum, Wednesday, June 27, at 2 PM. The reading is being organized and co-sponsored by the students in Dr. Reggie Young's Major Literary Figures course that focuses exclusively on Gaines's work this summer.

Gaines is the author of eight books of fiction, including the classics *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* and *A Lesson Before Dying*. He served as a member of the UL Lafayette faculty for twenty-one years before he retired in 2005. His latest book, *Mozart and Leadbelly: Stories and Essays by Ernest J. Gaines* was compiled and edited by Young and fellow UL Lafayette faculty member Marcia Gaudet. Both Young and Gaudet, along with Ph.D. candidate Wiley Cash, are currently working on a coffee table book featuring a pictorial history of Gaines as an artist titled *This Louisiana Thing that Drives Me: The Literature and Legacy of Ernest J. Gaines*. The book is scheduled for publication by the Center for Louisiana Studies by the end of the year.

Students asked Young about inviting Gaines to give a reading because they felt it would enhance their study of his works. According to Young, "Whenever students have a chance to see and hear from an author such as Ernest Gaines, it greatly adds to their appreciation of his works." He added, "Some of these students will one day be teachers themselves, and they will be able to tell their student about their experience of hearing Ernest J. Gaines in person."

Gaines tentatively plans to read a new story that he recently wrote and has yet to read in public. A discussion will follow the reading, and he will sign copies of his books at the conclusion of the program. Many of his titles will be available for purchase at the reading.

Other sponsors of the event include the University of Louisiana at Lafayette Department of English, the Deep South Festival of Writers, and the Paul and Lulu Hilliard University Art Museum. The event is free and open to the public.