

## 2006 Mayborn Speakers

**Gay Talese** is credited by Tom Wolfe with creating an innovative form of nonfiction writing called “The New Journalism.” Though Talese shuns such labels, he clearly represents literary journalism’s finest. In both his books and in his many profiles in *Esquire* magazine, Talese demonstrates his extraordinary skill as the invisible narrator and a master in the use of dialogue, scene-by-scene construction and an eye for the telling detail. As one writer puts it, “What Talese does better than just about anyone is hang out, observe and listen. Another says Talese is “well known for his daring pursuit of ‘unreportable’ stories, for his exhaustive research, and for his formally elegant style.” In *Origins of a Nonfiction Writer*, Talese offers insight into his personality and his passion for storytelling. “For individuals who were as shy and curious as myself, journalism was an ideal preoccupation, a vehicle that transcended the limitations of reticence. It also provided excuses for inquiring into other people’s lives, asking them leading questions and expecting reasonable answers.” Talese’s insatiable curiosity has inspired a number of nonfiction bestsellers, including *Unto the Sons*, an historical memoir that spanned two world wars and possessed what Norman Mailer called “the sweep and detail of a grant 19<sup>th</sup>-century novel; *The Kingdom and the Power*, a meticulously researched and highly readable book that probes the history and influence of the New York Times; *Honor Thy Father*, the inside story of a Mafia family; and *Thy Neighbors Wife*, which examines the changing moral values of America between World War II and the era before AIDS. Talese’s much anticipated book, *A Writer’s Life*, is scheduled for release in April.

**Hampton Sides** is the author of the non-fiction best-seller *Ghost Soldiers*, which won the 2002 PEN USA award for non-fiction and the 2002 Discover Award from Barnes & Noble. *Ghost Soldiers* has been published in nine foreign languages, was the basis for an award-winning documentary produced by WGBH for “The American Experience” on PBS, and was the inspiration for the recent Miramax film, *The Great Raid*. Hampton’s stories have been twice nominated for National Magazine Awards for feature writing, and have appeared in *Outside*, *Esquire*, *The New Yorker*, *Men’s Journal*, *Preservation*, and on NPR’s *All Things Considered*. Sides covered the Iraq War for *The New Yorker* and *Men’s Journal*. He is the author of *Americana (Anchor)*, and *Stomping Grounds*. His new book, *Blood and Thunder*, is a narrative history about the controversial frontier hero Kit Carson and his role in the conquest of the West. Sides is a member of the Author’s Guild and a fellow of the Japan Society of New York, through which he was awarded a 1999 media fellowship in Tokyo. A Memphis native and Yale graduate with a B.A. in American history, he lives in New Mexico with his wife, Anne, and their three sons. Go to [www.americanathebook.com](http://www.americanathebook.com) for more information about the writer.

**Melissa Fay Greene** is the author of *Last Man Out: The Story of the Springhill Mine Disaster*, the compelling story of a group of men who spent nine days trapped inside a collapsed mine. Greene’s first book, *Praying for Sheetrock* won the Robert F. Kennedy Book Award and was a National Book Award finalist and a National Book Critics Circle Award finalist. Her second book, *The Temple Bombing*, also a National Book Award finalist, won the ACLU National Civil Liberties Award. Melissa’s articles for the *New York Times* and for *Good Housekeeping* about AIDS orphans in Ethiopia have become the basis of a book about a foster mother in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, named Haregewoin Teferra. *There Is No Me Without You* will be published in the fall of 2006 by Bloomsbury Press. Greene has written for numerous publications, among them *The New Yorker*, *Newsweek*, *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic* and *Ms.* She lives with her husband and children in Atlanta. Her website is: [www.melissafaygreene.com](http://www.melissafaygreene.com)

**Ron Powers** is the author of *Flags of Our Fathers*, a collaboration with James Bradley, a son of one of the six flagraisers on Iwo Jima. The book was No. 1 on the *New York Times* hardcover nonfiction list for five weeks and remained on the bestseller list for 46 weeks, and later became a paperback bestseller. It has been developed as a motion picture by Steven Spielberg, with Clint Eastwood directing, and will be released this summer. His latest book, *Mark Twain: a Life*, a 720-page biography of the author, is a finalist for a National Book Critics Circle Award. Powers was a media commentator for CBS News Sunday Morning and host of “Sprit of Place,” an 11-part series produced for The Learning Channel that examined the relationships between people and their environments. Powers has also been a television columnist for *GQ Magazine*, and Harcourt Brace published a collection of his columns in 1990. Powers other nonfiction books include: *Dangerous Water: A Biography of the Boy Who Became Mark Twain* and *The Cruel Radiance*, a collection of Power’s writing, including his lectures on the craft of writing. He lives in Middlebury, VT

**H.W. Brands**, a history professor at the University of Texas at Austin, was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Biography for *The First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin*. The book became a New York Times bestseller. Brands has written twenty books, coauthored or edited five others, and published dozens of articles and scores of reviews. His books include *Lone Star Nation*, *The Age of Gold*, *Andrew Jackson*, *The Strange Death of American Liberalism*, *The First American*, *TR*, *What America Owes the World*, *The Reckless Decade*, and *The Devil We Knew*. His articles have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, *The International Herald Tribune*, the *Boston Globe*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Smithsonian*, the *National Interest*, the *American Historical Review*, the *Journal of American History*, the *Political Science Quarterly*, *American History*, and many other newspapers, magazines and journals. *The Age of Gold* was a Washington Post Best Book of 2002 and a San Francisco Chronicle bestseller. *What America Owes the World* was a finalist for the Lionel Gelber Prize in international affairs. *The Wages of Globalism* was a Choice Outstanding Academic Book winner. *Lone Star Nation* won the Deolece Parmelee Award. Brands is a regular guest on national radio and television programs. His writings have been published in several countries and translated into German, French, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. He lives in Austin with his wife and their youngest child.

**Ken Wells** is a novelist and longtime editor and feature writer for Page One of The Wall Street Journal and currently editor of the Journal's book-publishing division, a joint venture with Crown Publishers. Wells grew up on a farm on the banks of Bayou Black, a Cajun enclave in southeast Louisiana. Wells launched his writing career as a nineteen-year-old part-time reporter covering car wrecks and gator sightings for his weekly hometown paper, the Houma Courier, while still finding time to help out in his family's snake-collecting business. Now, he lives in Manhattan, but he still manages to return to Louisiana frequently to write signature stories about the life and times of his Cajun people that hold readers of The Wall Street Journal in thrall. One of Well's favorite pastimes is beer drinking. And that lead to *Travels with Barley: a Journey Through Beer Culture in America*, his first literary nonfiction published by Simon & Schuster in October 2004.

**Luke Dempsey**, a senior editor at Crown Publishers, a division of Random House. Dempsey's is one of Crown's primary editors of literary nonfiction books. Since joining Crown in 2004, he has edited four New York Times bestsellers: *Elvis by the Presleys*, by Priscilla and Lisa Marie Presley; *John* by Cynthia Lennon; *Git-R-Done* by Larry the Cable Guy; and *For Laci* by Sharon Rocha. Dempsey's other books in progress include James Campbell's *Ghost Mountain Boys* (a military history); Butch Harmon's *The Pro* (a golf memoir); *First into Nagasaki* by George and Anthony Weller (military history); and *Seaworthy* by T.R. Pearson (adventure). He is also working on Nando Parrado's publication of *Miracle in the Andes*, his searing account of surviving a plane crash and walking across the mountains to survive. Under a publishing partnership with The Wall Street Journal, Dempsey works closely with Ken Wells, books editor of The Wall Street Journal's Book Division, handling a half dozen literary nonfiction books authored by Journal writers. One of them is Jim Sterba's book about the resurgence of wilderness east of the Mississippi. Dempsey's first editorial job was at Broadway Books, a division of Random House. Dempsey also spent three years at Atria Books, part of Simon and Schuster, where he edited a number of New York Times bestsellers, including *Between A Rock and A Hard Place*, Aron Ralston's account of his self-amputation in a Utah canyon, and Tommy Lee's quiet and reflective autobiography *Tommyland*.

**Sonia Nazario**, a writer for *The Los Angeles Times*, is a nationally acclaimed journalist and author. In 2003, her story of a Honduran boy's struggle to find his mother in the U.S., entitled "Enrique's Journey," won more than a dozen awards, among them the Pulitzer Prize for feature writing. Her book with the same title was recently released by Random House. HBO is also producing a mini-series on "Enrique's Journey." Nazario often writes about complex social issues involving people who are in danger, particularly kids. Bringing the plight of these kids to life through narrative storytelling is the hallmark of Nazario's work.

**Kurt Eichenwald**, a senior writer and investigative reporter for the *New York Times*, is the author of *Conspiracy of Fools: A True Story*. The book explores the greatest corporate scandal in history: Enron. The New York Times bestseller has become a cause célèbre in its own right, and made Eichenwald one of the most talked about business journalists in America. A two-time winner of the George Polk Award for excellence in journalism and a finalist for the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for a series of articles about how business interests were influencing the system for medical clinical trials, Eichenwald has been selected repeatedly for the *TJFR Business News Reporter* as one of the nation's most influential financial journalists. His previous book, *The Informant*, about the Archer Daniels Midland price-

fixing case, is currently in development as a major motion picture directed by Steven Soderbergh. He lives in Dallas with his wife and three children.

**Skip Hollandsworth**, executive editor of *Texas Monthly*, has been a finalist four times for the National Magazine Awards, the magazine industry's equivalent of the Pulitzer Prize, and his work has been included in such prestigious publications as *Best American Crime Writing* and *Best American Magazine Writing*. He has worked as a reporter and columnist for newspapers in Dallas, and as a television producer and documentary filmmaker. Since joining *Texas Monthly* in 1989, Hollandsworth has won numerous writing awards, including a National Headliners Award, the national John Hancock Award for Excellence in Business and Financial Journalism, the City and Regional Magazine Association Writer of the Year for feature writing, the Texas Institute of Letters O'Henry award for magazine writing, and the Charles Green award for outstanding magazine writing in Texas, given by the Headliners club of Austin. His nonfiction account of the murders of seven women in Austin, Texas in the year 1885 will soon be released by Harper Collins. Hollandsworth was raised in Wichita Falls, Texas and graduated with a B.A. in English from Texas Christian University.

**Robert Rivard** is editor of the *San Antonio Express-News* and author of *Trail of Feathers: Searching for Philip True*, a riveting narrative account of the murder of one of Rivard's reporters in a remote corner of western Mexico. Rivard has served as the editor of the *San Antonio Express-News* since 1997. He was awarded the 2002 Maria Moors Cabot Award from Columbia University and the Society of Professional Journalists' top prize for foreign correspondents in 1982. Both were in recognition of his work as a journalist in Latin America. He is married to Monika Maeckle. They have two sons.

**Macarena Hernández** is an editorial columnist for *The Dallas Morning News*. Born in Roma and raised in La Joya, Texas, Hernández graduated from Baylor University in 1996 and earned her master's degree in journalism in 1998 from the University of California at Berkeley. Prior to coming to the *Dallas Morning News*, Hernández was the Rio Grande Valley Bureau Chief for the *San Antonio Express-News*, where she covered South Texas and Northern Mexico. Hernández has written for *The New York Times*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Los Angeles Times*. She has also written for national magazines and her work has been anthologized in college textbooks. "The Ballad of Juan Quezada," a documentary piece she co-produced and reported, aired in May on PBS/Frontline World. Hernández is a veteran national speaker; she has participated in journalism, migrant labor and educational conferences. Hernández, who also taught high school English and college journalism courses, currently conducts writing workshops for teachers. She is also a member of Macondo, the writing collective led by writer Sandra Cisneros. In 2003, *Latina* named Hernández one of the magazine's Women of the Year and the following year *Hispanic Magazine* named her a Trendsetter for 2004. In December 2004, the *Express-News* published "One Family, Two Homelands," a 16-page series detailing the death of her family's Mexican birthplace.

**Robert Kaiser**, 43, is the first "writing coach" for the *San Antonio Express-News*. In Kaiser's first full year as writing coach and senior editor at the *Express-News*, the paper won for the first time PME's, Paper of the Year in Texas. He joined the paper in September 2003 after six and a half years as a senior Metro reporter at the *Chicago Tribune*, where he specialized in writing front-page narratives. For the *Tribune's* Sunday magazine, Kaiser covered national stories such as the Confederate flag controversy, the school shootings in Kentucky and Oregon and the homecoming of Jessica Lynch. Kaiser also wrote many impressionist pieces for the *Tribune*, including a portrait of Chicago in white after the Blizzard of '99, a dispatch from aboard the City of New Orleans after a fatal train crash on that historic cross-country line and a story about old motels. After 9-11, Kaiser was assigned to drive around the country and write about how the terrorist attacks had changed life in America, a tour of the nation's back roads and psyche that lasted two and a half months. His dispatches, 10 in all, ran under the title, *Home Front: An American Journal*. In 1999 Kaiser wrote a four-part narrative series on the shooting death of a Chicago cop that was anthologized in *Best Newspaper Writing 2000*. A two-part narrative about life in Sears Tower after the terrorist attacks was the centerpiece of a package of stories the *Tribune* published a year after the World Trade Center fell. Kaiser also wrote for *The Cincinnati Enquirer* and the *Lexington (Ky.) Herald-Leader*, his hometown paper. Kaiser has received numerous awards from the Society of Professional Journalists and various other news organizations. In 1996 the Kentucky Press Association named him best columnist in the state. Kaiser received a B.A. with honors from the University of Kentucky and was a Duke University-Knight Ridder fellow in 1994. Kaiser has lead writing and editing workshops and has lectured on the art of narrative writing to newspapers and journalism organizations across the nation, including the Poynter Institute's May 2004 National Writers Workshop; the Texas Outdoor

Writers Association; the *Lexington-Herald-Leader*; the University of Kentucky School of Journalism; the Kentucky Press Association's winter convention in 2000; and Trinity University in San Antonio.

**Kevin Helliker** is a senior editor for The Wall Street Journal. He won the Pulitzer Prize for explanatory reporting in 2004 for a series on aortic aneurysms as a common and preventable killer that the medical profession has largely ignored. At the Journal, Helliker has served as a bureau chief in Chicago and Dallas, as a correspondent in London and as a Page One editor in New York. His first job out of college was working as a Journal reporter in Houston for Houston Bureau Chief George Getschow, now the Mayborn Conference's writer in residence. A native of Kansas City, Ks., Helliker received a B.A. with honors from the University of Kansas.

**Karen M. Thomas** has worked at the Dallas Morning News for 13 years, specializing in family issues, essays and narrative writing. Thomas's stories delve deep into the fabric of family life. She has followed a family of Russian immigrants to describe a three-generational adjustment to American life. She has traced the impact of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream on the lives of several generations of one family and examined a chronically ill mother's drive to make her children's musical dreams come true. She tracked the journey of a Chinese orphan and his American host family as he underwent physically transforming surgery that left him and the family also emotionally transformed. Before joining the News, Thomas was Southwest correspondent for the Chicago Tribune and a general assignment reporter at the Springfield Daily News, Springfield, Mass. Thomas is a 1986 graduate of the Columbia School of Journalism and earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. She recently completed a year-long Kaiser Family Foundation Media Fellowship in Health. Thomas has won several major awards for narratives. In 2004, Ms. Thomas received a career achievement award from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism's Let's Do It Better Workshop.

**Michael Granberry**, an award-winning narrative writer for *The Dallas Morning News*, delights in transforming the personal essay into literary art. His personal essays have included a homage to a childhood friend who died of breast cancer; a lamentation on the fate of the Cotton Bowl; the impact Harriet Miers' Supreme Court nomination had on the high school and college he attended; his comical frustrations with a 12-year-old son who eats only chicken nuggets and fries; why the holidays just aren't what they're cracked up to be; and the quite different paths taken in life by his 20-year-old son and his grade school classmate, Heisman Trophy winner Reggie Bush. Humor infuses much of his writing. In 2004, Granberry was awarded a Katie by the Dallas Press Club for humor writing. His piece was a parody of the television show, *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*. After losing 100 pounds, he was asked by the editors of Fashion Dallas to serve as guinea pig for their own version of *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, submitting himself to a "makeover" by five members of Dallas' gay community. In the same competition, he was also a finalist for best writing portfolio, for his stories on Officer Tippit's widow; a profile of Fern Holland, an American aid worker slain in Iraq; the "makeover" piece; and his coverage of the 2004 Super Bowl in Houston. Before joining The Dallas Morning News, Granberry worked for 19 years at the *Los Angeles Times* as a sportswriter, feature writer and hard-news reporter in San Diego. At the *News*, Granberry has written profiles of actresses Renee Zellweger and Morgan Fairchild, playwright Beth Henley, CBS newsman Scott Pelley and Kristin Armstrong, the ex-wife of bicycling great Lance Armstrong. Granberry has written numerous narratives about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. These include a study of two photographers, each of whom took a picture of Jack Ruby killing Lee Harvey Oswald. The story looked at how each man's life was dramatically changed — albeit in drastically different ways — by photographing the same incident only six-tenths of a second apart. The story was named Best Feature Story of 2002 by the Texas Headliners Foundation. More recent stories include a profile of the widow of Officer J.D. Tippit, who was slain by Oswald on the same afternoon as President Kennedy's assassination; a study of five survivors of the presidential motorcade; and a look at how the assassination forever changed the life of former Dallas housewife Ruth Paine. Granberry was born and grew up in Dallas and graduated from Southern Methodist University in 1974.

**James D. Hornfischer**, president of Hornfischer Literary Management in Austin, is one of the few agents in the country who is both a licensed attorney and a former New York book editor. In thirteen years as a literary agent, he has handled eight *New York Times* nonfiction bestsellers (including two number ones) and several finalists for major book prizes. Recent projects include *Andrew Jackson: His Life and Times* by H. W. Brands, and *Mark Twain: A Life* by Ron Powers. Prior to becoming an agent in 1993, Hornfischer was an editor at HarperCollins in New York, where he worked on books by authors including Erma Bombeck, Erica Jong, Jared Diamond, Philip Caputo, Beryl Bainbridge, and Ginger Rogers. He began his publishing career at McGraw-Hill in New York. Hornfischer is also the author of *The Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors* (Bantam 2004), winner of the Samuel Eliot Morison Award for

Naval Literature and a Main Selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club. His next book, *Ship of Ghosts: The story of the USS Houston, FDR'S Legendary Lost Cruiser, and the Epic Ordeal of her Survivors*, will be published by Bantam in October.

**Jim Donovan**, president of Jim Donovan Literary, has worked in the book business for more than 20 years. He began as a bookstore clerk, became manager, and then bookstore chain buyer. He was a trade book editor for five years before starting his own Dallas-based literary agency in 1993. Jim handles commercial fiction and nonfiction, particularly in the areas of history, biography, sports, popular culture and reference, and business. Books he has sold have been made into movies and have hit *The New York Times* Best-Seller List. He is also the author of several books, most recently *Custer and the Little Bighorn*.