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**FIRST LADY FRANCES STRICKLAND TO ATTEND “GOOD ROOTS”  
CELEBRATION AT STATE’S FIRST OHIOANA BOOK FESTIVAL**

Columbus – The Ohioana Library announced today that it will host the inaugural Ohioana Book Festival, A “Good Roots” Celebration, September 14 and 15 in Columbus. The book festival will celebrate the state’s literary heritage and welcome home 10 distinguished Ohio authors.

First Lady Frances Strickland, the festival’s honorary chair, will attend the opening ceremony of the festival’s second day at 10 a.m. September 15 at the Ohioana Library.

“The book festival will give Ohioans of all ages a chance to spend two days learning about literature and celebrating some of the country’s most acclaimed authors,” Strickland said. “Events like this remind us of our rich literary history and the creativity and talent we have in Ohio.”

This year’s festival theme stems from the book *Good Roots: Writers Reflect on Growing Up in Ohio*, published in 2007 by Ohio University Press and edited by Lisa Watts. With a foreword by R. L. Stine and an afterword by Mark Winegardner, *Good Roots* is a collection of essays and poems by 20 authors from all corners of the state, representing Ohio’s big cities, small towns, and rural areas.

Ten of the award-winning authors who contributed to the book will appear at the festival: Jill Bialosky, Dan Cryer, Michael Dirda, Elizabeth Dodd, Anthony Doerr, Dale Keiger, Julie Salamon, Scott Russell Sanders, James Toedtman, and Lisa Watts. (brief author bios attached)

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The activities on September 14 will include afternoon visits to local schools and other organizations. Several authors will be guests in a panel discussion from 11:00 a.m. to 12 noon on WOSU 820's live, call-in show "Open Line with host Fred Andrlle."

On September 15, the festival will be held at the Ohioana Library and the State Library of Ohio from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and will feature readings, book signings, and panel discussions with the authors and book critics from Ohio newspapers, as well as other activities. The festival is free and open to the public. Book sales will be handled on site by Barnes & Noble.

"We are delighted to welcome these acclaimed writers to Columbus," said Linda Hengst, executive director of the Ohioana Library. "With this event, Ohio joins the ranks of other states such as Virginia and Texas whose book festivals draw thousands of people each year.

"Our goal is to make this year's 'Good Roots' Celebration the kickoff for what will become an annual tradition that Ohioans look forward to, from the beginning reader to the most accomplished author. We thank the wonderful partners and sponsors who have joined with Ohioana to make this event happen, and in particular we thank Frances Strickland for her leadership and support."

The festival is presented by the Ohioana Library in partnership with Ohio University Press, the *Columbus Dispatch*, WOSU Public Media, Barnes & Noble, the State Library of Ohio, and the Ohio Center for the Book. Honda of America Mfg., Inc. is the presenting sponsor, with additional major funding provided by the Ohio Humanities Council, the Ohio Arts Council, the Reinberger Foundation, and the Greater Columbus Arts Council.

For a complete list of participants, including photographs and biographies, directions, and a schedule of events, visit [www.ohioanabookfestival.org](http://www.ohioanabookfestival.org) For more information, contact David Weaver at: [info@ohioanabookfestival.org](mailto:info@ohioanabookfestival.org)

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## Biographical Sketches – Good Roots Authors

(these writers have all been scheduled for the Ohioana Book Festival)\*\*

**Jill Bialosky** was born in Cleveland, Ohio. She received her Bachelor of Arts at Ohio University (1979), received a Master of Arts from The Johns Hopkins University (1980), and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Iowa's Writer's Workshop (1983). She is the author of two poetry collections, *The End of Desire*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1997 and *Subterranean*, Alfred A. Knopf, 2001, a finalist for the James Laughlin Prize from the Academy of American Poets. She co-edited with Helen Schulman *Wanting a Child*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1998. Her first novel, *House Under Snow* was published by Harcourt in 2002. Jill Bialosky's poems and essays have been published in many magazines including *The New Yorker*, *The Nation*, *Redbook*, *O Magazine*, *Partisan Review*, *Antioch Review*, *The New Republic*, *Paris Review*, *Poetry*, *American Poetry Review* and *TriQuarterly*. Her second novel, *The Life Room* is forthcoming from Harcourt in August 2007.

**Dan Cryer** served as book critic at Newsday for twenty-five years. He has been a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in criticism and vice president of the National Book Critics Circle. His book reviews have appeared in the *New Republic*, the *Washington Post*, *Salon*, the *Boston Globe*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Plain Dealer*, and other publications. Cryer contributed to *The Salon.com Reader's Guide to Contemporary Authors* (Penguin, 2000), *Conversations with William Kennedy* (University of Mississippi Press, 1997), and *Conversations with Louis Erdich and Michael Dorris* (University of Mississippi Press, 1994). He is a graduate of Wooster College and earned a PHD in U. S. History at the University of Minnesota. He and his wife live in New York City.

**Michael Dirda** - Winner of the 1993 Pulitzer Prize for criticism and a longtime columnist for the *Washington Post Book World*, Michael Dirda writes chiefly about literature and intellectual history, with a particular interest in literary fiction, children's books, contemporary fantasy, translation, and classics. Besides his reviews, he also contributes occasional features and personal pieces about books and writing, many collected in *Readings: Essays and Literary Entertainments* (Indiana University Press, 2000). Each week he conducts an online discussion called Dirda on Books for [washingtonpost.com](http://washingtonpost.com).

Dirda collected some of his longer essays in *Bound to Please* (W. W. Norton, 2004); it ranges from Herodotus and *The Arabian Nights* to Samuel Beckett, A. S. Byatt, and P. G. Wodehouse and includes pieces on Ohioans Dawn Powell and Chester Himes. He recently brought out *Book by Book*:

*Notes on Reading and Life* (Henry Holt, 2006), and is currently finishing *Beyond the Lifetime Reading Plan: The Next 100* (Harcourt, to be published in 2007).

Dirda's memoir, *An Open Book* (W. W. Norton, 2003), builds on his contribution to *Good Roots* and takes him through his first two years at Oberlin College. After Oberlin, Dirda went on to graduate work in medieval studies and European romanticism at Cornell University, where he received a PhD in comparative literature. His next book, *Classics for Pleasure*, is set for release in November 2007 from Harcourt.

**Elizabeth Dodd** - Born in Colorado, Elizabeth Dodd grew up in southeast Ohio and has lived in the tallgrass prairie region of Kansas for more than a decade and a half. An English professor and director of the creative writing program at Kansas State University, Dodd has written two books of poetry—*Like Memory, Caverns* (New York University Press, 1992) and *Archetypal Light* (University of Nevada Press, 2001); a book of criticism, *The Veiled Mirror and the Woman Poet* (University of Missouri Press, 1992); and most recently a collection of nonfiction essays, *Prospect: Journeys & Landscapes* (University of Utah Press, 2003), winner of the William Nelson Rockhill Award for nonfiction. She is a contributing editor to *Tar River Poetry* and an editorial advisory board member for *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*.

**Anthony Doerr** - For this first book, *The Shell Collector* (Scribner, 2002), a volume of eight stories, Anthony Doerr won the Barnes and Noble Discover Prize, two O. Henry Prizes, the Rome Prize, and the Ohioana Book Award. He followed with a first novel, *About Grace* (Scribner, 2004), which was named one of the five best books of 2004 and won Doerr his second Ohioana Book Award. His fiction has appeared in numerous publications, including *The O. Henry Prize Stories*, the *Paris Review*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Zoetrope: All Story*, and *The Best American Short Stories*. He also reviews science-related books for the *Boston Globe*. His third book, *Four Seasons in Rome*, will be published in June 2007 by Scribner.

After growing up in northeast Ohio, Doerr graduated from Bowdoin College in Maine. He won the 2000 Ohioana Walter Rumsey Marvin Grant for emerging young writers. Doerr has lived in Africa, New Zealand, and Rome. He lives now with his wife and two sons in Boise, Idaho.

**Dale Keiger** is senior writer at *Johns Hopkins Magazine*. He covers arts and humanities, international affairs, public policy, and any interesting characters he can dig up. He makes a special effort to find assignments that involve travel.

A 1976 graduate of the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University, Dale freelanced for 11 years, a stint that was short on cash but long on fascinating experiences. His work has appeared in many national publications, including *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Boston Globe*, *Travel & Leisure*, *Business Week*, *Connoisseur*, and *Advertising Age*. Over the years, he has interviewed one billionaire, one deaf boxer, two bounty hunters, a cardinal, one Nobel laureate, and his late Aunt Gladys, bingo champ of Cincinnati's west side.

He has won several journalism awards. Most of them were pointless, but he's proud of two: a 1989 Washington Monthly journalism prize for national reporting, and an H.L. Mencken Award for Investigative Reporting in the same year. He has also been a visiting associate professor of creative writing at the Johns Hopkins Writing Seminars.

**Julie Salamon** has been a staff critic, essayist, and reporter for the *New York Times* and a film critic for the *Wall Street Journal*.

Her books are varied. *The Devil's Candy* (Houghton Mifflin, 1991) looks at big-budget Hollywood movie-making. Since then her books have taken her many places. In *The Net of Dreams* (Random House, 1996), she retraces her parents' journey from the Carpathian Mountains to the Appalachian foothills via Dachau and Auschwitz. She has written a novella about the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree. *Facing the Wind* (Random House, 2001) is a nonfiction account of a killing that involved women with blind children, a father who appeared to rise above difficulty, and how their lives met at the intersection of mental illness, innocence, and retribution. Her most recent book is *Rambam's Ladder* (Workman, 2003), a reported rumination that connects the teachings of the twelfth-century philosopher Maimonides with the complexities of modern-day philanthropy. Both *Facing the Wind* and *Rambam's Ladder* were winners of the Ohioana Book Award.

Salamon is the daughter of Hungarian Jews, the only Jews in Seaman, Ohio, a town of 800 otherwise populated by southern Baptists, Methodists, and a smattering of Presbyterians. Her parents, survivors of the Holocaust, presented their two daughters with a daunting example: how to remember the great evil done to them and their families while approaching life with hopefulness and compassion. Writing may not have been inevitable, but it became for Salamon essential.

**Scott Russell Sanders** - Versatile and prolific, Sanders has won much acclaim for his novels, collections of short stories, creative nonfiction, personal essays, and children's books. His most recent books are *Hunting for Hope* (Beacon Press, 1998), *The Country of Language* (Milkweed Editions, 1999), *The Force of Spirit* (Beacon Press, 2000), and *A Private History of Awe* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006), a memoir.

His work has been selected for *The Best American Essays*, the *Kenyon Review* Award for Literary Excellence, the PEN Syndicated Fiction Award, and the John Burroughs Essay Award; it has been honored by the American Library Association and the National Council of Teachers of English; it has been twice nominated for the National Magazine Award; and it has won the Lannan Literary Award. His fiction and essays have been reprinted in *The Norton Reader*, *The Art of the Personal Essay*, *The Dolphin Reader*, *The Riverside Reader*, *The Harper and Row Reader*, and more than fifty other anthologies. He has been awarded fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Lilly Endowment. He is a contributing editor to *Audubon* magazine.

A professor of English at Indiana University since 1971, he has received the Frederick Bachman Lieber Award for Distinguished Teaching, the highest such award given at the university. He is married with two grown children, Eva and Jesse.

**James Toedtman** - A veteran journalist, newspaper editor, and Pulitzer-Prize team member, Toedtman is editor of *AARP Bulletin*. Before that appointment in 2005, he worked for *Newsday* for thirty-two years, serving as managing editor responsible for the production of the paper's New York City edition and later as Washington bureau chief and chief economics correspondent. Toedtman was also executive editor of the *Boston Herald American* and editor of the *Baltimore New American*.

**Lisa Watts** is a writer and editor of a number of college and lifestyle magazines. From 1996 to 2005 she lived in Wooster, Ohio, where she edited the College of Wooster alumni magazine and worked as a freelance writer. Now living in Greensboro, N.C., she edits magazine sections on destination cities for a number of in-flight magazines.

A native of Cleveland, Watts lived in Atlanta, Baltimore, and Boston before moving her young family to Wooster.