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Connecting Readers and Ohio Writers

September/October 2015

THE RIGHT TO THINK LAWRENCE & LEE'S *INHERIT THE WIND* AT SIXTY

Sixty years ago this October, at the Ohioana Library's annual ceremony honoring outstanding literary achievements by our state's best writers, Ohioana presented a special Award of Merit. It read "To Jerome Lawrence & Robert E. Lee—Ohio Playwrights of the Year." The play for which they were honored, *Inherit the Wind*, is regarded as one of the classics of American theater.

Jerome Lawrence Schwartz was born in Cleveland in 1915; Robert Edwin Lee was born three years later and thirty miles to the west in Elyria. After college they began successful careers in radio as writers and directors. Their talents quickly took them from local stations to the big time: Lawrence for CBS and Lee for Young & Rubicam.

Although they knew about each other by reputation and had a number of mutual friends, they didn't meet for the first time until January, 1942. They hit it off immediately, and decided to form a writing partnership; their first session together happened over lunch at a Howard Johnson's in Manhattan. They soon completed and sold eight scripts to network radio. Remarkably (Lawrence would later call it "a fluke"), all eight plays ran in prime time over the period of a single week. The two young Ohioans suddenly found themselves the hottest duo of the airwaves. The entertainment weekly *Variety* ran a story about them under the headline "Lawrence and Lee Take Over Radio."

With the U.S. entry into World War II, Lawrence and Lee turned their energies to a different project. They co-founded the Armed Forces Radio Service and spent the next three years writing programs that were broadcast to American military personnel stationed around the globe.

After the war, Lawrence and Lee went back to writing for network radio, producing scripts for major shows and stars. They also began writing for live theater. While things were going well for Lawrence and Lee in the

The Director's Chair

Dear Friends,

As I write this, we are only a week away from our major fall event: the presentation of the annual Ohioana Awards. Since 1942, we have celebrated the best of the best in Ohio literature, and will do so again on Friday, October 9, in the Ohio Statehouse Atrium.

Our newsletter cover story relates to a very special pair of Ohioana Award winners. Sixty years ago, Ohioana honored Cleveland's Jerome Lawrence and Elyria's Robert E. Lee as "Ohio Playwrights of the Year" for *Inherit the Wind*. In 1955 it was the hottest ticket on Broadway; today it is regarded as one of the classic plays of the American stage. I recently had the pleasure of interviewing Jerry Lawrence's niece Deborah Robison and Bob Lee's daughter Lucy Lee, who shared their personal reflections for the fall issue of the *Ohioana Quarterly*.

Fall brings many literary events across the state in addition to the Ohioana Awards. *Showdown: Thurgood Marshall and the Supreme*

late 1940s, it was not an easy time in the United States. World War II had given way to the Cold War; it was the era of the Red Scare, McCarthyism, and blacklisting. Though not targeted themselves, Lawrence and Lee knew many of the writers and other creative people in New York and Hollywood who were affected. They decided to fight the blacklist the best way they knew—by writing a play.

They found inspiration in the famed “Scopes Monkey Trial” of 1925, in which a young teacher was arrested for violating a law that prohibited teaching evolution in a public school. The Scopes trial was a sensation, especially given the legal giants who squared off in the case—three-time presidential candidate and devout fundamentalist William Jennings Bryan for the prosecution and famed criminal lawyer and agnostic Clarence Darrow for the defense.

Although the trial served as an inspiration, Lawrence and Lee decided not to take a literal approach. As Lawrence would later say, “It’s not about science versus religion. It’s about the right to think.” Thus Scopes became a teacher named Bert Cates, Darrow became Henry Drummond, and Bryan became Matthew Harrison Brady. They called their play *Inherit the Wind*, from the Biblical verse quoted by both Brady and Drummond.

They took the play to eight Broadway producers and got eight rejections. Things looked bleak until a call came from 1,500 miles away. Tad Adoue was a play scout for Margo Jones, a daring and energetic producer and director dubbed “The Texas Tornado.” Together they had started the nation’s first nonprofit, resident professional theater company in Dallas in 1947. Jones read *Inherit the Wind* at Adoue’s urging and immediately decided she would produce it as the opening play of her 1955 season.

Lawrence and Lee went to Texas for the play’s world premiere, which took place on January 10, 1955. It was a resounding success both critically and at the box office—so much so that some of the same New York producers who rejected it at first were bidding for the rights to bring it to Broadway. With veteran actors Paul Muni and Ed Begley as Drummond and Brady, *Inherit the Wind* opened on April 21, 1955. It was an immediate hit with audiences and critics, and would run for 806 appearances over the next two years.

So magnificently written was it that many thought they had simply used the transcript of the trial. U.S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, after seeing *Inherit the Wind* in Washington, D.C., told Lawrence and Lee, “I’m glad you kept in Darrow’s speech” (referring to the “Progress is not a bargain” speech Drummond gives in Act II). But Darrow had never made such a speech—it came from the creative minds of Lawrence and Lee.

The next decade would bring more success. A year after *Inherit the Wind*, Lawrence and Lee’s *Auntie Mame* opened, starring Rosalind Russell. The duo now had two Broadway hits running at the same time. While *Auntie Mame* was a comedy, it had a message, as did many of Lawrence and Lee’s

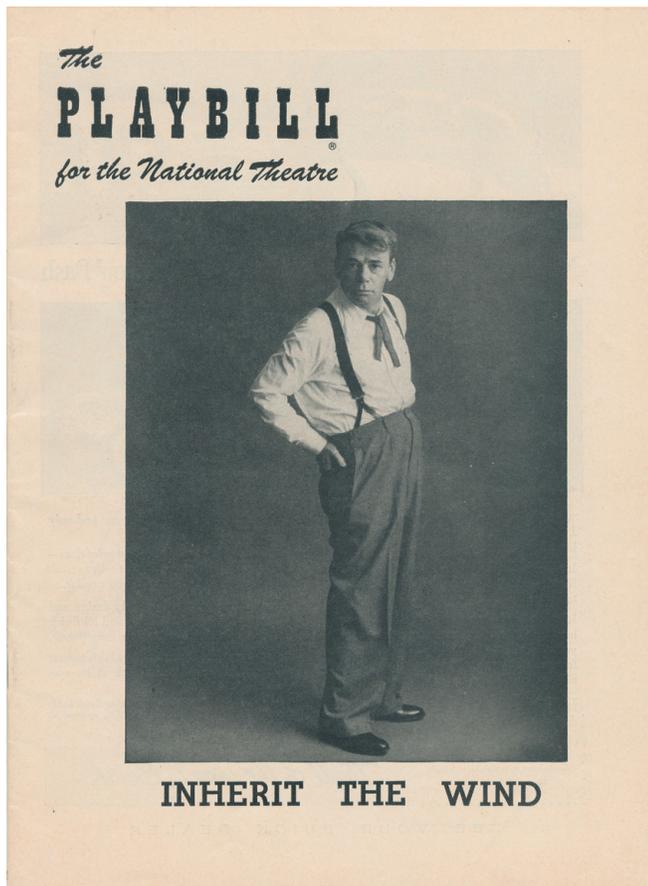
Court Nomination That Changed America is the new book by one of our past Ohioana Award winners, Wil Haygood. It is the centerpiece for “Columbus Reads: One City, One Book,” a six-week community reading event from September 28 to November 12. For more information, visit the Columbus Metropolitan Library website.

Ohioana is pleased to once again be a partner for Books by the Banks, the festival taking place Saturday, October 17, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Duke Energy Convention Center in Cincinnati. It’s a fantastic event with nearly 150 authors and programs for the whole family. Be sure to stop by our table to say hello and get a free copy of the *Ohioana Quarterly* and other goodies. See the last page of the newsletter for more details.

The Ohioana Library was founded in October, 1929, so October marks the start of a new year for us. A year ago at this time we were celebrating Ohioana’s 85th Anniversary. In the coming year, we have two major anniversaries to celebrate—the 10th annual Ohioana Book Festival (April) and the 75th annual Ohioana Awards (October). We are looking forward to these events, which truly embody our tagline, “Connecting readers and Ohio writers.”

Such milestones would not be possible without the generous support of friends like you. Thank you. Have a wonderful October—we hope to see you at the Ohioana Awards or Books by the Banks!

David E. Weaver
Executive Director



Paul Muni as Henry Drummond in the 1955 production of *Inherit the Wind*. Playbill used by permission. All rights reserved, Playbill Inc.

plays. That message was conveyed in Mame's famous line, "Life is a banquet, and most poor sons of bitches are starving to death. Live!" Ten years after the original play, Lawrence and Lee adapted it into the musical *Mame*. With songs by Jerry Herman and starring Angela Lansbury, it became an even greater success than the original.

Unfortunately, one person who did not live to see Lawrence and Lee's triumphs was Margo Jones. She had died in July, 1955, a few months after *Inherit the Wind* opened on Broadway. In 1961, Lawrence, Lee, and Tad Adoue created the Margo Jones Medal at The Ohio State University, given annually "to that citizen-of-the-theatre who has demonstrated a significant impact, understanding and affirmation of the craft of playwriting, with a lifetime commitment to the encouragement of the living theatre everywhere."

Two years later, also at Ohio State and again inspired by Jones, Lawrence and Lee founded the American Playwrights Theater as a nonprofit organization to promote new plays by established writers for regional and university theaters. The APT's most successful

play would be Lawrence and Lee's own *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail*, produced for The Ohio State University centennial. As with *Inherit the Wind*, *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail* used a historic incident—the author of *Walden* being jailed in 1846 for refusing to pay a \$1 tax to support the Mexican War—to serve as a metaphor for the civil disobedience and protests against the Vietnam War that were then taking place across the United States.

Although they continued to write, in later years Lawrence and Lee also began to teach and lecture, imparting their wisdom, experience, and passion to new generations of playwrights. There were more awards, too, including their induction into the Theatre Hall of Fame in 1990. They were also honored twice more by the Ohioana Library. In 1970, they received the Ohioana Pegasus Award for *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail*. And in 1982 they were honored for their lifetime achievements with the Ohioana Career Award. Jerry Lawrence came to the ceremony, thanking the library for both himself and Bob Lee and calling Ohioana "the literary Fort Knox of our state."

The remarkable partnership of Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee lasted 52 years, until Bob Lee died in 1994 at the age of 75. One of the lines from *Inherit the Wind*—"An idea is a greater monument than a cathedral"—is inscribed on his tombstone. Jerry Lawrence passed away ten years later at the age of 88.

Lawrence and Lee wrote several of the greatest plays of the twentieth century, but none has endured and been acclaimed more than *Inherit the Wind*. It has been translated and performed in more than thirty languages around the world and presented thousands of times, from amateur productions in high schools and community theaters to adaptations for film and television and Broadway revivals with major stars.

It is a tribute to Lawrence and Lee's vision, passion, and creativity that *Inherit the Wind* is as relevant today—if not more so—as it was in 1955. It still stands as a tribute to intellectual freedom, the sanctity of the individual human mind, the power of ideas, and the right to think.

By David Weaver

NEW BOOKS

The following books were added to Ohioana's collection in July and August. Look for them at your local library or bookstore!

Nonfiction

Christenson, Dorothy. *Keep On Fighting: The Life and Civil Rights Legacy of Marian A. Spencer*. Ohio Univ. Press (Athens, OH) 2015. PB \$24.95.

Born in Gallipolis in 1920, Marion Spencer joined the NAACP at age thirteen and spent her life working for civil rights, including the desegregation of Cincinnati schools and raising awareness of industrial waste practices in minority neighborhoods. This book documents both the struggles and the victories in a long life well lived.

Curtin, Michael F., and Joe Hallett. *The Ohio Politics Almanac: Third Edition*. Kent State Univ. Press (Kent, OH) 2015. PB \$35.00.

With chapters on Ohio presidents, governors, the General Assembly, judiciary, and counties as well as information about how Ohioans voted in recent elections, this revised and expanded edition is a go-to resource for historic and current Ohio political information.

Geoghegan, Thomas. *Only One Thing Can Save Us: Why America Needs a New Kind of Labor Movement*. The New Press (New York, NY) 2014. HC \$25.95.

In this book, labor lawyer Geoghegan argues that in a society of financial inequality and rigid corporate hierarchies, a new and different kind of labor movement may be the only way to save the middle class.

Juriga, John D. *Bob Hines: National Wildlife Artist*. Beaver's Pond Press (Edina, MN) 2012. PB \$18.00.

Bob Hines was born in Columbus in 1912. Despite a lack of formal art training, he became a staff artist for the Ohio Division of Wildlife and then for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. His artwork appeared not only on stamps and in federal publications, but also in works by noted authors including Rachel Carson. This book shines a light on the life and work of an important artist and conservationist.

Krisher, Trudy. *Fanny Seward: A Life*. Syracuse Univ. Press (Syracuse, NY) 2015. HC \$29.95.

On the night of Abraham Lincoln's assassination, a conspirator attempted to kill Secretary of State William Seward in his home near Ford's Theatre. His daughter Fanny recorded that event and many others in her diaries, which form the basis of this book and describe family activities from attending dinner parties to visiting the troops, providing a unique glimpse into Civil War-era Washington.

Merrick, Lisa Ann. *Norton: Images of America*. Arcadia Publishing (Charleston, SC) 2015. PB \$21.99.

Norton Township was first organized in 1818. What began as a collection of seven individual hamlets eventually grew into a village and then a city. Extensive images from both public and private collections help tell the story of this unique community.

Ohlson, Kristin. *The Soil Will Save Us: How Scientists, Farmers, and Foodies Are Healing the Soil to Save the Planet*. Rodale (New York, NY) 2014. HC \$23.99.

Each tablespoon of soil contains billions of microorganisms that transform carbon dioxide from plants into carbon in the soil. Over time, poor farming practices have caused soil around the world to lose 80 billion tons of carbon, which are now floating in the atmosphere. In this book, journalist Ohlson introduces scientists, farmers, foodies, and others who are working to save the planet's most valuable natural resource—the soil that feeds us.

Spencer, Kathleen L. *Art and Politics in Have Gun—Will Travel: The 1950s Television Western as Ethical Drama*. McFarland & Company (Jefferson, NC) 2014. PB \$45.00.

For a decade beginning in 1955, television Westerns made up nearly one quarter of prime-time programs. *Have Gun—Will Travel* was lauded as one of the best.

In this book Spencer places the series in its larger social context, compares it with other popular television Westerns, and examines what made it so successful, from its star to its portrayal of women and minorities.

Stockwell, Mary. *The Other Trail of Tears: The Removal of the Ohio Indians*. Westholme Publishing (Yardley, PA) 2014. HC \$29.95.

Although less well known than the Trail of Tears, the removal of the Delaware, Seneca, Shawnee, Ottawa, and Wyandot tribes from Ohio is no less disturbing. In this book Stockwell documents the interactions of the tribes and the U.S. government from Tecumseh's death in 1813 to the removal of the last remaining Wyandots in the 1850s.

Fiction

Brice, Debra Sue. *Crossing Borders: A Novel*. Dove Publishing (Bladensburg, MD) 2015. PB \$9.99. Determined to excel in the world of equestrian sports, Dana leaves her home in Ohio to study with an elite Canadian trainer. There she finds both success as a rider and romance. But when a scandal threatens, her once-in-a-lifetime chance may come to an end.

Ireland, Ryan. *Beyond the Horizon*. Oneworld (London, UK) 2015. PB \$14.95. In the American frontier, a man lives with a pregnant woman who is not his wife. When a stranger appears and advises the man to register the unborn child at a fabled military fort, the man sets out across the desert. Soon after, the stranger kills the woman and begins a hunt for the man with the goal of rewriting the history of the American West.

Sienkiewicz, Linda. *In the Context of Love*. Buddhapuss Ink (Edison, NJ) 2015. PB \$15.95. Although Angelica always suspected there was something “off” about her family, learning the truth sends her into a tailspin of bad decisions. As an adult, she finally starts a journey of self-discovery that leads her toward home, and maybe toward a second chance at love as well.

Poetry

Bialosky, Jill. *The Players*. Alfred A. Knopf (New York, NY) 2015. HC \$26.00. The four sequences in this collection—Manhood, American Comedy, Interlude, and The Players—provide insight into coming of age, domestic life, and

family, and illuminate how one generation can shape the next.

Demaree, Darren C. *The Pony Governor*. a...p press (Indianapolis, IN) 2015. PB \$7.00. This collection of politically themed poems challenges abuse of power, sheds light on the struggles that everyday people face under corrupt leadership, and ultimately offers hope for a better future.

Young Adult

Arnett, Mindee. *The Nightmare Charade*. Tor Teen (New York, NY) 2015. HC \$18.99. In this final book in the *Arkwell Academy* series, dreamseer Dusty Everhart has a lot on her plate. She and her boyfriend Eli have been assigned to locate a powerful magical object, despite the fact that the authorities are trying to keep them apart. To add to the trouble, one of Dusty’s friends has been accused of murder and needs her help to clear his name. With lives hanging in the balance, Dusty must find a way to defeat evil, save her friends, and hopefully fall in love.

Middle Grade & Children’s

Borden, Louise. *Kindergarten Luck*. Chronicle Books (San Francisco, CA) 2015. HC \$16.99. When Theodore finds a penny one gloomy morning, his entire day turns around: the sun comes out, he excels at recess, and the teacher reads his poem to the class. Theodore decides that sometimes luck is just waiting for you to find it—and may be waiting for you to share it as well.

Jakubowski, Michele. *Beach Bummer: Perfectly Poppy*. Picture Window Books (North Mankato, MN) 2014. HC \$15.99.

Poppy has been waiting all summer to go to the beach. However, when she gets there, cold water and itchy sand put a damper on the day. With the help of her friend Millie, Poppy perseveres and tries some activities that turn her beach bummer into a beach blast.

Jakubowski, Michele. *Big Dog Decisions: Sidney & Sydney Book 3*. Picture Window Books (North Mankato, MN) 2015. HC \$17.99. When Sidney and Sydney each decide they want a dog, they start a dog walking business with their friends to show their parents that they’re responsible. They soon discover that dog walking takes time away from their other after-school activities. Can they find a solution without letting down their clients?

Jakubowski, Michele. *Dodgeball, Drama, and Other Dilemmas: Sidney & Sydney Book 2*. Picture Window Books (North Mankato, MN) 2014. HC \$17.99. Sidney and Sydney have proven that boys and girls can be friends, even if they have the same name. But now they’ll have to survive spelling bees, dodgeball, and the school play to make it through third grade.

Jakubowski, Michele. *Party Pooper: Perfectly Poppy*. Picture Window Books (North Mankato, MN) 2014. HC \$15.99. Poppy loves her neighborhood’s annual summer party—especially the food and games. But after eating too much junk food, Poppy is tired and her stomach hurts. Will she be able to enjoy the rest of the party?

Jakubowski, Michele. *Talent Trouble: Perfectly Poppy*. Picture Window Books (North Mankato, MN) 2014. HC \$15.99. After a slow day in their neighborhood, Poppy and her friend Millie decide to have a talent show. However, Poppy is so busy planning the show that she forgets to choose a talent. Will she be the only one at the show with nothing to do?

Jakubowski, Michele. *Third Grade Mix-Up: Sidney & Sydney Book 1*. Picture Window Books (North Mankato, MN) 2013. HC \$17.99. When a new boy named Sidney walks into her classroom on the first day of third grade, Sydney is mortified. However, the two soon learn that sharing a name with someone isn't so bad—especially if that person becomes a friend. Together, they navigate third grade and plan what may be the best Halloween ever.

Krisher, Trudy. *An Affectionate Farewell: The Story of Old Bob and Old Abe*. Bunker Hill Publishing (Piermont, NH) 2015. HC \$17.95. “Old Bob” was the horse that carried future president Abraham Lincoln during his days as a circuit rider in Illinois—and also served as the riderless horse in his funeral procession. In between, readers learn about Lincoln's childhood, his presidency, and the Civil War.

Millard, Casey Riordan. *Shark Girl and Belly Button*. Blue Manatee Press (Cincinnati, OH) 2014. HC \$17.99. In this collection of five short stories, two characters with very different approaches to life (one anxious, one more easygoing) experience paper dolls, the playground, a party, and friendship.

Schuett, Michaela. *Let's Count Fish!* The Omnibus Publishing (White Marsh, MD) 2015. HC \$12.95.

When a cat goes fishing, he ends up counting more fish than he catches. Colorful illustrations and rhyming text accent this counting book for young children.

Stewart, Aileen. *Quack and Daisy*. Tate Publishing (Mustang, OK) 2015. PB \$8.99.

When Daisy the kitten and Quack the duckling meet, they instantly become friends despite Daisy's inability to swim, Quack's inability to catch a mouse, and everyone telling them it's impossible. Can their friendship survive?

COMING SOON

Thurber House Evenings with Authors September-November, 2015, at the Columbus Museum of Art. The 2015 series of author readings continues through November, featuring outstanding writers across all genres. For schedule and ticket information, visit www.thurberhouse.org.

Ohioana Book Awards October 9, 2015, 6:00–9:00 p.m., at the Ohio Statehouse Atrium, Columbus. Join us as we celebrate the winners of the 2015 Ohioana Book Awards. The event begins at 6:00 p.m. with a reception, followed by the awards presentations, author roundtable, and book signing.

Books by the Banks October 17, 2015, 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m., at the Duke Energy Convention Center, Cincinnati. This regional book fair features a book sale, author signings, children's and teen activities, panels and workshops, and—new this year—author awards. For more information visit <http://booksbythebanks.org>.

Buckeye Book Fair November 7, 2015, 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., at Fisher Auditorium, Wooster. The 28th annual book fair is a great chance to get a jump on holiday shopping. For more information visit www.buckeyebookfair.com.

Ohioana Book Club November 18, 2015, 10 a.m. – noon, Ohioana Library, Columbus. The book for November is *Neil Armstrong: A Life of Flight* by Jay Barbree. The club meets in the Ohioana reading room from 10:00 a.m. to noon. If you would like to attend, please e-mail us at ohioana@ohioana.org.

Don't miss the region's largest book festival!



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to 4 P.M.

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Anthony Marra
Cleary Wolters



Plus: James and Kimberly Dean (Pete the Cat), Tad Hills (R is for Rocket), John and Sherry Petersik (Lovable Livable Home), Christian Rudder (Dataclysm), Leah Stewart (The New Neighbor), Katherine Howe (The Appearance of Annie van Sinderen), and many more!

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