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Erma Swag

05.22.2014 | Students, Campus and Community

DAYTON, Ohio — The University of Dayton's Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop has expanded its line of merchandise offered exclusively through the University of Dayton Bookstore.

All proceeds benefit the Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop Endowment Fund, which helps support the biennial workshop and keep it affordable for writers. To shop, click on the related link or visit <http://bit.ly/1s1l9pT>.

The merchandise includes:

- A set of 12 notecards with such favorite Bombeck quotes as "Seize the moment. Think of all those women on the Titanic who waved off the dessert cart." (\$10)
- A "You Can Write!" coffee mug. Bombeck said those three words of encouragement from a University of Dayton English professor changed her life. (\$9.99)
- Short- and long-sleeved T-shirts with the inspirational Bombeck quote, "When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left, and could say, 'I used everything you gave me.'" (\$16.99, \$21)
- A limited-edition autographed "You Can Write!" cartoon signed by Tony Cochran of "Agnes" and Tom Batiuk of "Funky Winkerbean" and "Crankshaft." (\$15)
- An Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop water bottle. (\$5.25)

Launched in 2000 as a way to recognize the Bombeck family's donation of Erma's papers to her alma mater, the workshop is now so popular that this year's event sold out in 12 hours.

The University of Dayton's Alumni Association underwrites the cost of scholarships that allow UD students to attend for free. In 2004, University of Dayton alumnus Ralph Hamberg and his wife, Cindy, gave a \$100,000 gift to start a workshop endowment fund in memory of her cousin, Brother Tom Price, S.M. This University of Dayton English professor first told Erma "three little words" of encouragement, "You can write."

The Hamberg family, the Bombeck family and other supporters continue to contribute to the endowment fund, which allows the University of Dayton to keep the workshop affordable.

Today, 350 writers from around the nation, inspired by Bombeck's humor and humanity, gather every other year to laugh and learn from the likes of Dave Barry, Garrison Keillor, Phil Donahue, Art Buchwald, Nancy Cartwright, Don Novello, Gail Collins, Connie Schultz, Adriana Trigiani, Lisa Scottoline and Alan Zweibel. The personal involvement of the Bombeck family, which spans three generations, makes the event at her alma mater memorable and sets it apart from the myriad other writers' workshops offered across the country.

This effort to honor Bombeck's legacy goes beyond the writers' workshop.

The workshop has spawned a blog (humorwriters.org); an online museum (ErmaMuseum.org); a documentary produced by ThinkTV and distributed nationally through American Public Television; an international writing competition co-hosted by the Washington-Centerville Public Library; an Ohio historical marker on campus; a monthly e-newsletter; a Facebook page; a Twitter feed; and an active online discussion group. In March, the city of Dayton named Erma Bombeck a "Dayton Original."

The workshop continues to attract national attention. In 2010, *CBS Sunday Morning With Charles Osgood* aired a Mother's Day tribute to Erma Bombeck, using the workshop as a backdrop for the piece. This winter, C-SPAN Cities Tour aired a segment on Bombeck's legacy and the workshop. This spring, Parade.com featured a series of interviews and podcasts about the workshop and Bombeck's enduring appeal.

For more information, email erma@udayton.edu.