

4-9-2010

Where Erma's Legacy Lives

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news_rls

Recommended Citation

"Where Erma's Legacy Lives" (2010). *News Releases*. 1208.
https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news_rls/1208

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Marketing and Communications at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in News Releases by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact frice1@udayton.edu, mschlange1@udayton.edu.

University of Dayton, Ohio (url: <http://www.udayton.edu/index.php>)

(url:

<http://www.youtube.com/embed/MovAFtU49y>

w mode=Opaque)

Where Erma's Legacy Lives

04.09.2010 | Campus and Community, Hot Topics CBS correspondent Mo Rocca and a crew from *CBS Sunday Morning with Charles Osgood* are traveling to Dayton next week to produce a story about the legacy of humorist Erma Bombeck.

Where better to illustrate that legacy than at a writers' workshop at her alma mater in her hometown? The piece is expected to feature author/mom blogger Tracy Beckerman, who got her start and found encouragement at the University of Dayton's

Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop. Part of this year's faculty, she is the author of *Rebel Without a Minivan: Observations of Life in the 'Burb*s and writes a humor column, "Lost in Suburbia," that's syndicated to nearly 400 newspapers. and fiction. The *CBS Sunday Morning* segment is expected to air in the spring.

The sold-out April 15-17 workshop has attracted 342 writers from 31 states and another 35 University of Dayton students who received scholarships from the National Alumni Association. Organizers believe it's the only workshop devoted to humor and human interest writing in the country.

The workshop will feature a slate of marquee names from the worlds of column writing to stand-up comedy, including *New York Times*' columnist Gail Collins; PBS personality and humorist Loretta LaRoche; "Fox & Friends" co-anchor and author Steve Doocy; *8 Simple Rules for Dating My Teenage Daughter* author W. Bruce Cameron; and "Late Show With David Letterman" Emmy-nominated writer Bill Scheft.

Bombeck's influence will be felt throughout the three days. The workshop will include a screening of the half-hour documentary *Erma Bombeck: Legacy of Laughter*, followed by a discussion with the Bombeck family. In a workshop dubbed "Erma Says," columnists Gail Collins, Mary McCarty and Laura Pulfer will talk about the universality of her columns and her influence on their words. In between, workshop faculty will offer invaluable tips for honing the craft of writing and getting published. Bombeck teased her columns out of an electric typewriter, but technological advances have created new ways for writers to find a market for their work. The workshop assists writers in navigating the possibilities of social media, such as blogs, Twitter and podcasting, while offering traditional sessions in column writing, memoirs and fiction.

Ironically, the Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop was never envisioned as anything but a one-time event when it was launched a decade ago. When the Bombeck family donated the humorist's papers to her alma mater in 2000, the University wrapped the first workshop around the presentation of her papers. Bill Bombeck tapped family friends, including humorist Art Buchwald, "Family Circus" cartoonist Bil Keane, former White House press secretary Liz Carpenter and Erma's publisher and agent, to headline the event.

Today, writers 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, Nancy Cartwright, Don Novello and Leonard Pitts. The event always sells out -- without a marketing brochure. It's run on a shoestring budget by staff, professors and volunteers who characterize the workshop as a labor of love. 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.

The workshop has spawned an online museum ([ErmaMuseum.org](http://ermamuseum.org/home.asp) (url: <http://ermamuseum.org/home.asp>)); 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 Web site (humorwriters.org (url: <http://humorwriters.org/>)), an e-newsletter and an active online discussion group. Thanks to the sponsorship of Greyden Press, all writers at this year's workshop will receive a newly published commemorative 10th anniversary book, *Snakes in the Chicken: Tales of Laughter and Life from the 2010 Erma Bombeck Writing Competition*, edited by workshop director Matthew Dewald and designed by the University's art director Frank Pauer.

"Our mission is simple: to encourage and inspire writers in the same way Erma Bombeck found encouragement and inspiration at the University of Dayton," Dewald said.

Workshop sessions will take place on campus April 15-17, with dinners held at the Dayton Marriott Hotel, 1414 S. Patterson Blvd. For more information, see www.HumorWriters.org.

This year's workshop is co-sponsored by the University of Dayton's College of Arts and Sciences and National Alumni Association; Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation; published.com; Greyden Press; Books & Co.; National Society of Newspaper Columnists; *Dayton Daily News*; and Dayton Marriott.

The workshop is supported, in part, by the Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop Endowment created by Ralph and Cindy Price Hamberg in memory of her cousin, Brother Tom Price, S.M. Price, a professor at the University of Dayton, first told Bombeck "three little words" of encouragement, "You can write."

For more information, contact Teri Rizvi at 937-229-3255 or rizvi@udayton.edu.