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You Can Write!

11.30.2009 | Hot Topics The 2010 Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop at the University of Dayton has attracted a slate of marquee names from the worlds of column writing to stand-up comedy. Keynote speakers include 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.

Online registration for the workshop, slated April 15-17, opens at noon on Tuesday, Dec. 1, at <http://www.HumorWriters.org>. The registration fee is \$375, with some scholarships available for University of Dayton students.

"Our presenters come from a lot of fields: traditional column-writing, television, blogging, podcasting, twittering, photography, memoirs, fiction and stand-up. Some favorite faculty from past years are coming back, and we have plenty of new, very funny and accomplished folks to keep the conversations fresh," said Matthew Dewald, director of the workshop.

If past workshops are any indication, the popular event will fill up quickly.

"The 2008 workshop sold out in three days, and the 2006 workshop sold out in 12, so attendees should register as early as possible," Dewald said. "In both of those years, we had a couple hundred people on the waiting list. We'd open more spaces if we could, but we're at capacity."

The 2010 workshop is expected to bring more than 300 writers to Dayton. Why the enormous appeal? The workshop has attracted such household names over the years as Dave Barry, Phil Donahue, Art Buchwald, Nancy Cartwright, Don Novello and Garrison Keillor, but the personal involvement of Erma Bombeck's family makes the event at her alma mater memorable and sets it apart from the myriad other writers' workshops offered across the country. Alumnus Bill Bombeck and his children, Betsy, Andy and Matt, attend the workshops.

Here's the line-up of keynote speakers:

Gail Collins joined The New York Times in 1995 as a member of the editorial board and later as an op-ed columnist. In 2001 she became the first woman ever appointed editor of the Times' editorial page. In 2007, she began a leave to finish her newest book, *When Everything Changed: The Amazing Journey of American Women from 1960 to the Present*. She returned to the Times as a columnist in July 2007. She's also written two other books, *America's Women*, *Scorpion Tongues: Gossip, Celebrity and American Politics* and *The Millennium Book*.

Loretta LaRoche is an international stress management and humor consultant whose wit and irreverent humor, has, for more than 30 years, raised the nation's humor potential. She is a well-recognized TV personality on PBS and author of seven books, including the newly published *Lighten Up!* She writes a weekly syndicated column, "Get a Life."

Steve Doocy serves as one of FOX News Channel's co-anchors for its morning show "FOX & Friends." The Emmy Award-winning broadcaster has written two books, *Tales From the Dad Side: Misadventures in Fatherhood* and The New York Times' bestseller *The Mr. and Mrs. Happy Handbook*.

W. Bruce Cameron hit the best-seller list in 2001 with his first book, *8 Simple Rules for Dating my Teenage Daughter*. It was made into a TV series starring John Ritter. The National Society of Newspaper Columnists voted his *Creators Syndicate* column the #1 best humor column for newspapers with a circulation of over 100,000 in 2003 and again in 2006. He has been called the "Dave Barry of modern family life."

Bill Scheft, a 15-time Emmy-nominated writer, has worked for David Letterman since 1991. He has written three novels, *Everything Hurts*, *The Ringer* and *Time Won't Let Me*, which was a finalist for the 2006 Thurber Prize for American Humor.

Other workshop speakers include:

- Craig Wilson, USA Today columnist and author
- Suzette Martinez-Strandring, award winning author of *The Art of Column Writing: Insider Secrets from Art Buchwald, Dave Barry, Arianna Huffington, Pete Hamill and Other Great Columnists*
- Christian Lander, author of the hugely popular tongue-in-cheek blog "Stuff White People Like" and the newly published book, *Stuff White People Like: The Definitive Guide to the Unique Taste Of Millions*
- Sophronia Scott, author and coach who teaches principles of effective writing and marketing of books
- Tracy Beckerman, author of *Rebel Without a Minivan: Observations of Life in the 'Burbs* and the nationally syndicated humor column "Lost in Suburbia"
- Wade Rouse, author of memoirs, *America's Boy and Confessions of A Prep School Mommy Handler*
- Karen Walrond, author/photographer/creator of popular blog Chookooloonks, a Web site that helps readers see that their ordinary lives are, in fact, extraordinary
- Donna Gephart, author of *As If Being 12 ¾ Isn't Bad Enough, My Mother Is Running for President!*, winner of the Sid Fleischman Humor Award for the best humorous children's book of the year
- Katrina Kittle, local author whose fourth novel, *Dancing at the Church of St. Equine*, will be published in 2010
- Danny Gallagher, humorist, blogger, reporter and writer
- Nettie Hartssock, digital strategist and teacher
- Terri Nighswonger, co-owner of TNT Publications
- Terry Whalin, author of more than 60 non-fiction books, including the newly published *Jumpstart Your Publishing Dreams*, and creator of *Right-Writing.com*
- David Jackson, podcast consultant, coach and instructor
- Andrea Langworthy, newspaper columnist
- Dave Glardon, humor columnist and stand-up comic
- Jerry Zezima, syndicated columnist and blogger

The Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop is co-sponsored by the University of Dayton's National Alumni Association, the University of Dayton's College of Arts and Sciences, National Society of Newspaper Columnists, Dayton Daily News, Dayton Marriott and the Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop Endowment. Workshop sessions will take place on campus, with dinners held at the Dayton Marriott Hotel, 1414 S. Patterson Blvd. Follow the workshop on Twitter at twitter.com/ebww.

Matt Dewald, director of the University of Dayton's Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop, at 937-229-1404.