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Celebrating Erma

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This spring's Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop at the University of Dayton sold out in a record 12 hours, but three events are free and open to the public — a celebration honoring the winners of the 2014 Erma Bombeck Writing Competition and book signings with *New York Times*' bestselling author Lisa Scottoline and nationally syndicated "Funky Winkerbean" cartoonist Tom Batiuk.

Dayton Daily News columnist Mary McCarty will emcee the 2014 Erma Bombeck Writing Competition ceremony, which will be held at 7 p.m., Wednesday, April 9, at the Centerville Public Library, 111 W. Spring Valley Rd., in Centerville, Ohio.

This free event celebrates the winners of the biennial Erma Bombeck Writing Competition sponsored by the Washington-Centerville Public Library and the University of Dayton's Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop. To read the winning entries, click on the related link.

In 2014, 853 writers from 48 states and 13 countries entered previously unpublished essays in humor and human interest categories — roughly 382,500 words.

Nancy Cartwright — the voice of Bart Simpson — and a slate of accomplished writers from around the country and Canada judged the entries. The four winners receive \$500 and a free registration to the workshop.

In another event that's free and open to the public, *New York Times*' bestselling author Lisa Scottoline will introduce her latest novel, *Keep Quiet*, at Books & Co. at The Greene, 4453 Walnut St., in Dayton, Ohio, at 7 p.m. on Thursday, April 10.

A prolific writer, Scottoline has written 22 novels and pens a weekly *Philadelphia Inquirer* column with her writer-daughter Francesca Serritella. Called "Chick Wit," the column is a witty and fun take on life from a woman's perspective.

Scottoline and Serritella will offer one of the keynote addresses at the April 10-12 Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop.

Nationally syndicated cartoonist Tom Batiuk, creator of the popular "Funky Winkerbean" and "Crankshaft" comic strips will sign copies of his books from 2-4:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 13, at Wright Memorial Public Library, 1776 Far Hills Ave., in Oakwood, Ohio. His newest books include *The Complete Funky Winkerbean Volume 3* and the upcoming *Strike Four! The Crankshaft Baseball Book*.

Batiuk, part of the faculty at the Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop, employs a gentle humor to sensitively explore such social issues as alcoholism, cancer, teen-dating abuse, teen suicide, guns in the school and teen pregnancy. His compelling breast cancer storyline, "Lisa's Story," was a Pulitzer Prize Finalist in 2008 and collected into an award-winning book by Kent State University Press. "Funky Winkerbean" and "Crankshaft," created with Chuck Ayers, are carried in more than 600 newspapers worldwide and have an audience of more than 60 million readers.

The 2014 University of Dayton's Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop has attracted 350 writers from around the nation. For more information, visit the workshop's website.

Contact Teri Rizvi at erma@udayton.edu (url: <mailto:erma@udayton.edu>) or 937-229-3255.