

Daughter of Author Richard Wright to Speak at Southern Miss Sept. 14

Contributed by David Tisdale - 601.266.4499
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The eldest daughter of acclaimed novelist Richard Wright will be on The University of Southern Mississippi campus Sunday as part of her international tour celebrating the 100th birthday of her late father and honoring his legacy and Southern roots.

Julia Wright will present "Richard Wright's Homecoming: The Centennial Return of a Native Son" in the Thad Cochran Center, Ballroom III Sept. 14 at 5 p.m. The event is sponsored by the university's Department of English, Center for Black Studies and Committee on Services and Resources for Women. Admission is free.

A native of Roxie, Miss., Wright overcame the racial, economic and political challenges faced by African-Americans during the Jim Crow era to become one of the world's most celebrated writers. His works "Native Son" (1940) and "Black Boy" (1945) are testament to his personal struggles against adversity and his skill of using "words as weapons."

"Wright's novels, especially "Native Son," may elicit a range of responses from readers who are made aware of their common humanity with his powerful, passionate use of language," said Southern Miss English professor Dr. Sherita Johnson.

Wright also lived in Jackson before moving to Memphis, Chicago, New York and, eventually, overseas. He left the United States in 1946 to escape racial injustice and to secure civil equality for himself and his family. He traveled the world and eventually settled in Paris, but never returned.

Southern Miss history professor Dr. Curtis Austin described Richard Wright as an "American icon who wrote his way out poverty and oppression."

"His importance to the state of Mississippi and the nation as a whole can hardly be understated since he set the bar on literary excellence with his scathing, but truth-filled novels and short stories," Austin said.

Julia Wright has lectured widely in the United States and in Europe on her father while also working on a memoir of her life with him, using the working title "Daughter of a Native Son";

For more information about this event, contact the Southern Miss Department of English at 601.266.4319 or the Southern Miss Department of Marketing and Public Relations at 601.266.4499.

Julia Wright
(Photo by Pr. Toru Kiuchi)

Richard Wright
(Submitted photo)

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