

**Katherine Anne Porter,  
J. F. Powers, and  
Katherine A. Powers**

By Katherine A. Powers

J. F. Powers was the author of two novels: *Morte D'Urban* (1962) and *Wheat That Springeth Green* (1988), and three collections of short stories: *Prince of Darkness* (1947), *The Presence of Grace* (1957), and *Look How the Fish Live* (1975). All are in print, published by New York Review Books, with the short stories bound in one volume as *Collected Stories*.

Katherine A. Powers lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and writes a column about books for the *Boston Globe*. She is compiling a volume of her father's correspondence and would be pleased to hear of any letters from him that readers of this newsletter might know of. Her e-mail address is pow@world.std.com.

My parents, J. F. Powers (1917-1999) and Betty Wahl Powers (1924-1988) named their first child, me, after Katherine Anne Porter. I feel sure that they would not have done this if Katherine Anne's name had been different—though it's hard to think that it could have been. In any case, giving me her name provided a way for my father, in particular, to pay homage to a master of the short story and to express his gratitude for the support she had given him.

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**Lynn Freed Awarded First Katherine Anne Porter Prize**

Lynn Freed was awarded the inaugural Katherine Anne Porter Award in Literature at the annual induction and award ceremony of the American Academy of Arts and Letters on Wednesday, May 15, 2002, at the Academy's headquarters in New York City. Established by the Literary Trust of Katherine Anne Porter, the biannual monetary award recognizes a fiction writer in mid-career. The members of the Awards Committee for Literature are Hortense Calisher, Galway Kinnell, Robert Pinsky, Horton Foote, Ann Beattie, and Russell Bank. Presented to Ms. Freed by Hortense Calisher, the citation for the award read: "Lynn Freed's trenchant novels, all forays into the lore of her native South Africa, and into areas perhaps new to us, are also seductive meditations, on people, love, and circumstance, that belong to literature at large."



*Lynn Freed, winner of the inaugural Katherine Anne Porter Prize, and Barbara Thompson Davis, Trustee of the Literary Estate of Katherine Anne Porter, after the American Academy of Arts and Letters Award Ceremonial, May 15, 2002, New York City.*



*Lynn Freed, seated on the stage of the auditorium of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, prior to the Ceremonial. Keynote speaker Edna O'Brien, engaged in conversation with Gold Medal winner Frank Gehry, is seated in the first row in front of Ms. Freed.*

A naturalized U. S. citizen, Lynn Freed was born and grew up in Durban, South Africa. She came to New York as a graduate student, receiving her M.A. (1969) and Ph.D. (1972) in English Literature from Columbia University. After moving to San Francisco, she wrote her first novel, *Heart Change* (New American Library, 1982; republished by Story Line Press in 2000 as *Friends of the Family*). Since then, she has published four more novels: *Home Ground* (William Heinemann Ltd., London; Summit Books/Simon & Schuster, 1986; Penguin, 1987; Penguin Books UK, 1988; Spring, 1999: Story Line Press), *The Bungalow* (1993: Poseidon/Simon & Schuster; Fall 1999: Story Line Press), and *The Mirror* (1997: Crown Publishers; 1999: Ballantine Books; 1999: Flamingo, HarperCollins UK)—all of which have been on the *New York Times* "Notable Books of the Year" list. Her new novel is *House of Women* (2002, Little, Brown & Co. and Flamingo, HarperCollins UK) Ms. Freed's short fiction and essays have

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## Katherine Anne Porter Society

*The Newsletter of the Katherine Anne Porter Society* is published at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, by the Katherine Anne Porter Society, with the sponsorship of the UNLV English Department. Membership inquiries and renewals should be directed to Beth Alvarez, Archives and Manuscripts, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, Maryland 20742, ra60@umail.umd.edu. Entries for the annual bibliographical essay on Porter should be addressed to Christine Hait, Department of English, Columbia College, Columbia, South Carolina 29203, chrishait@colacolledu. Articles, announcements, and comments for the newsletter should also be sent to Beth Alvarez.

The officers of the Katherine Anne Porter Society are Beth Alvarez, President and Newsletter Editor; Darlene Unrue, Past President; and Janis Stout, Secretary. Members of the Executive Committee are Beth Alvarez, Thomas Austenfeld (North Georgia College & State University), Virginia Spencer Carr (Georgia State University), Christine Hait (Columbia College), John Edward Hardy (emeritus, University of Illinois at Chicago), George Hendrick (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Janis Stout, and Darlene Unrue.

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### KAP Society Membership

Katherine Anne Porter Society annual dues are \$10 a year. Checks made payable to KAP Society, UNLV Foundation, should be mailed to Beth Alvarez, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, MD 20742. The KAP Society has tax exempt status through the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Foundation, the fundraising arm of UNLV.

## Katherine Anne Porter, J. F. Powers, and Katherine A. Powers

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Though they had corresponded for almost twenty years, the two writers did not meet in person until 1966. Their association began indirectly through Kerker Quinn, editor of *Accent*, the literary magazine which published Powers's first two stories, "He Don't Plant Cotton" and "Lions, Harts, and Leaping Does." Upon receiving the second submission, which, except for an inadequate ending, the editors thought far superior to the first, they forwarded it to Porter asking her opinion. She wrote back saying it would be good if the editors could get Powers to rework it; but even if he wouldn't, they should publish it anyway. Quinn returned the manuscript with a transcript of Porter's comments and Powers redid the story, and it remains one of his best and most famous.

A few years later, in October, 1947, Powers wrote to Porter on Quinn's advice asking her if she would provide a reference for him for a Guggenheim Fellowship. His letter shows embarrassment at asking this favor: "I don't know if you would care to do this, only wish I knew, especially if you are not going to like being approached in this manner. Please don't hesitate to say no if there's any reason at all. I understood from Kerker once or twice and also from Elizabeth Ames at Yaddo. . . that you had liked my work" [10-5-47].

Porter's reply was graciousness itself, and she told Powers—thinking, now, that he had not known—how she had written to *Accent* saying that they should "be sure not to let such a writer get away. . . ." "So all this time," she continued, "I have had such real satisfaction in thinking I had been of some use, . . . for there is nothing better than to see a good new talent take its first flight. . . ." [10-7-47]. Powers wrote back, saying that he had read her comments on "Lions, Harts, and Leaping Does" "again and again" when they had been sent to him in what had been very dark days. "Now, as then," he continued, "your interest manifests itself at the vital, saving moment. Until Yaddo, I had never met any real writers, my link with them, except as a reader, was such comment as yours . . . and of course yours was the greatest to come my way" [10-14-47]. He told her that he had wanted to dedicate "Lions, Harts, and Leaping Does" to her, but the editors at *Accent* told him not to. Porter answered, in a letter of November 5, 1947, that "by some mysterious standard of etiquette which I do not pretend to grasp," they were probably right in preventing the dedication. Still, she said, "I like both your impulse and the motive which prompted it, and if it was *gaucherie*, I still prefer it to many other kinds I have seen."

Perhaps it was that sentiment which emboldened my parents to fix on Katherine Anne as my name when I was born, just a few days later, on November 11, 1947. That it charmed Porter is certain, and she wrote that she hoped I would be pleased when I learned about it. And, indeed, I was: early on, because I understood that it was a name of grand associations; and, later, even more so if possible, when I read and admired her work.

Over the years, Porter wrote to Powers offering to use her influence with publishers and magazine editors to get his work into more profitable venues. She found, though, that she was dealing with a man whose problem was not so much getting published as it was getting his work done. Powers wrote to her, as he wrote to no one else that I know of, describing his difficulties with writing. Even the freedom given him by getting the Guggenheim and a National Institute of Arts and Letters grant (in which Porter also had a hand) was not enough. "[I]t's rather frightening," he told her, "the year ahead with no excuses, especially since I've not been able to find a way of writing, an organized way such as I'm always hearing about. . . . [I]t would be best to write a rough draft and improve on it," he says, "but how put up with a rough draft, seeing some of the things I've written in the name of a rough draft? They only convince me I'm not a writer at all, or how could I? So I write a paragraph at a time that I'm not ashamed of, but I won't get many books written that way if I live forever" [4-7-48]. Later, Powers took grim solace in Porter's own



slow pace: "I hope your own wonderful work is going ahead," he wrote. "Your delay in bringing out the novel is an encouragement to me—I hope you see what I mean—but, I know, from the excerpts I've read, that it'll be so good, when you do publish it all, that it'll be a mortal blow to the rest of us" [1-4-52].

In Porter, Powers also found a person who shared his unsentimental view of the incompatibility of family life with a writer's calling. "I am here in St. Cloud, known rightly as the Granite City," Powers wrote to her a little over a year after I was born, "awaiting the birth of another baby. I hope it doesn't come as the blow to you as it did to us (I might lift that line for my headstone, containing as it does much of my 'thought' and more of my 'style')" [11-29-48]. Three more "blows," in the shape of children, rained down on my parents' heads before the family was complete with its five children—matched, at a far slower rate of production, by my father's five books.

But Porter's real contribution to Powers's work lay in her writing to him as one artist to another, assuring him that he was really a writer. This was a gift that no money could grant and a sign of her true goodness and generosity. She urged him on with accounts of her own terrible struggles to find time and a place for writing, and insisted that he must retreat to a room of inviolable privacy and then *work*, "even if you only sit holding your head and now and then putting down a line which instantly goes in the wastebasket, as if you were an insurance salesman or a writer of advertisements . . . . How you will do



*Katherine Anne Porter in her Spring Valley home, Washington, D.C., 1965. Photograph by Paul Porter. Papers of Katherine Anne Porter, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.*

this is of course what I can't tell you. This is what is the matter with all advice, however good" [4-12-48].

More helpful than such advice—for Powers was a "hard case"—was her praise, words that lifted him out of the doldrums in which he spent so much time drifting. In December, 1955, she wrote to him about a couple of his stories that had recently appeared in *Accent*: "The grain of your mind and the set of your temperament have a long time ago declared themselves—You have a thought print as clear and unmistakable as Mozart's let's say—I believe I could pick a sentence by you out of a grab-bag! Easy and firm, tough and fine grained. . . ." And on she went in this vein, taking the trouble to quote phrases that had particularly struck her. To this "soul-saving" letter, as he called it, Powers immediately replied: "Your letter rec'd the day before Christmas, and I must say that it was the best thing that happened to me in a long time; to find out, I mean, that you liked 'Blue Island' and 'The Presence of Grace' as much as you say. There is no one from whom I'd rather have praise. . . . you made me very happy and I don't know of anything else that could have bucked me up" [12-26-55].

Porter asked about me in many of the thirty-seven extant letters and cards she wrote to my father from 1947 to 1963, but we never met. Her scrutiny of my photograph and the questions she asked my father suggest that she looked for something of herself in me. How she could have found it, I don't know; but if she did, maybe there is truly something in a name. We never corresponded, until 1966, when out of the blue, she wrote to me and sent me a baroque pearl necklace with an emerald quartz clasp. My parents, especially my father, took a proprietary position towards this development, and demanded to officiate over the writing of the Letter to Katherine Anne Porter. I didn't see it that way. I secretly wrote to her twice on my own—as I am quite sure she would have wished. "I am glad she is beautiful," wrote Porter about me to my father in 1948, "and she is going to need to be very brave, too" [4-12-48]. Though my two letters were painfully arch, and I blush to read them now, I did get one thing right. My most-prized possession as a child (and, really, I think to that point) was my name.

## 2003 Conference on American Literature in Cambridge

The Katherine Anne Porter Session at the forthcoming American Literature Association conference will be chaired by Darlene Unrue of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The topic for the session will be "Parallels and Influence: Katherine Anne Porter and Other Writers." Anyone interested in submitting a proposal should send a 150-word abstract to Darlene Unrue, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Department of English, 4504 Maryland Parkway, Box 455011, Las Vegas, NV 89154. Her e-mail address is unrue@nevada.edu; the departmental FAX is 702-895-4801. The deadline for submissions is December 15, 2002.

The conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency in Cambridge, Massachusetts, May 22-25, 2003. Details of the conference and information about hotel reservations will appear on the home page of the American Literature Association (<http://www.americanliterature.org>).



## Lynn Freed Awarded First KAP Prize

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appeared in *New Yorker*, *Harper's*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Southwest Review*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *Santa Monica Review*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Newsday*, *Mirabella*, *Elle*, *House Beautiful*, *House & Garden*, and *Vogue*. Her work is widely translated and is included in a number of anthologies.

In 1986, Ms. Freed won the Bay Area Book Reviewers' Award for Fiction for *Home Ground*. In 1993, *The Bungalow* was nominated for the award, and so, in 1997, was *The Mirror*. Her short fiction has appeared in *Best American Short Stories* and reprinted in a number of anthologies. *Home Ground*, *The Bungalow*, and *The Mirror* have all appeared in the "Notable Books of the Year" of the *New York Times*. Ms. Freed has received fellowships, grants, and support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Guggenheim Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Camargo Foundation, the Lannan Foundation, the Bogliasco Foundation, the Corporation of Yaddo, and the MacDowell Colony.

She is Professor of English at University of California, Davis, and is part of the Core Faculty in the MFA Program at Bennington College, Bennington, Vermont. She has taught in a wide variety of institutions and at summer conferences. These include the City College of San Francisco; St. Mary's College, Moraga, California; the University of California, Berkeley; the University of Montana; the University of Oregon; the University of Texas at Austin; Bennington Writing Workshops; Bread Loaf Writers' Conference; Napa Valley Writers' Conference; and Squaw Valley Community of Writers.

The award ceremony took place at 633 West 155th Street, New York City, in the Academy's neoclassical buildings, built in the 1920s at Audubon Terrace, site of the former estate of American artist John James Audubon. A New York City Landmark also on the National Register of Historic Places, the Academy shares its site with the Hispanic Society, the American Numismatic Society, and Boricua College. The Academy was founded in 1904 by the National Institute of Arts and Letters to recognize achievement in the arts. The purpose of the National Institute of Arts and Letters, founded in 1898, is to further literature and the fine arts in the United States. The two organizations were amalgamated in 1976. Limited to a membership of 250, the Institute presents medals and other awards for distinguished achievement, makes grants to further creative work of outstanding merit, and maintains a revolving loan fund to aid artists, musicians, and writers who are unable to continue their work without financial help. The membership of the Academy is limited to fifty persons chosen for special honor from those who at any time have been members of the Institute. The stated purpose of the Academy is to foster, assist, and

sustain an interest in the arts by singling out and encouraging individual artists and their work. Incorporated by Act of Congress in 1916, the Academy participates with the Institute in the award of grants and loans, including the Brunner Memorial Award in Architecture and the Gold Medal for excellence in the arts. The members of the Academy confer the Howells Medal, given every five years for a work of American fiction, and the Award of Merit Medal, given in five categories of the arts to a person not affiliated with the Academy. Current members of the Academy include Christo, Jasper Johns, Philip Johnson, Toni Morrison, Stephen Sondheim, and Susan Sontag. The Academy's galleries mount two exhibitions a year on the arts and literature, drawing on the works and experiences of its members and award recipients, some of America's greatest composers, painters, architects, and writers. The Academy's permanent collection includes 25,000 books and 2,000 original manuscripts, paintings, and photographs illuminating the lives and work of members.

It is extremely fitting that the Katherine Anne Porter Award has been established at the Academy, because of her long association with it and its parent organization, the Institute. Katherine Anne Porter was elected a member in the Department of Literature at the annual meeting of the Institute in December 1942 and inducted at the Annual Ceremonial on May 8, 1942. By 1950, she was serving a three-year term on the Council of the Institute with such luminaries as Virgil Thompson, Glenway Wescott, William Rose Benét, and Marc Connelly. She was elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters in November 1966 and was inducted at the Ceremonial on May 24, 1967, with Kenneth Burke, Henry Steele Commager, John Crowe Ransom, and John Hall Wheelock. On that same occasion, she also was awarded the Gold Medal for Fiction; her friend Glenway Wescott made the presentation. She had the pleasure of making the presentation of the Gold Medal for the Novel to Eudora Welty on May 17, 1972, the date on which Miss Welty was also inducted into the Academy as well.

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## KAP Fiction Prize at University of Maryland

The winners of the annual graduate student poetry and fiction competitions sponsored by the Creative Writing Program in the English Department of the University of Maryland read from their works on April 24 in the McKeldin Library Special Events Room. The Katherine Anne Porter Fiction Prize went to Alison Stine for "The Animal Heart." Patchen Mortimer's "Hollow" received second prize, and, third, Bo Schwerin for "Snow Monkey Madness." The Porter Prize was established with an endowment from the Literary Trust of the Estate of Katherine Anne Porter, during the tenure of the late Isabel Bayley.



## Play Based on Porter Performed in Austin

On April 16, 2002, in the Brockett Theatre in the Winship Building on the University of Texas at Austin campus, Mary Frances HopKins, Professor Emerita at Louisiana State University, performed a recital performance of a one-woman play by Laura Furman and Lynn C. Miller, *Passenger on the Ship of Fools*, based on the life and work of Katherine Anne Porter.

The action of the play takes place on June 15, 1961, at the Yankee Clipper Inn, Cape Ann, Massachusetts, as Miss Porter is completing the manuscript of her novel, *Ship of Fools*. The play makes use of excerpts from



Mary Francis HopKins is congratulated by Lynda Miller after the April 16, 2002, performance of *Passenger on the Ship of Fools* at the University of Texas, Austin.

Porter's published prose and correspondence, Barbara Thompson Davis's *Paris Review* interview, Joan Givner's biography, and Glenway Wescott's *Continual Lessons* to scrutinize her shifting sense of self and journey from impoverished circumstances in childhood to life as a celebrated writer and woman of the world. The play moves to and from the day in June 1961 in flashbacks to 1931, 1945, the 1953-1954 academic year, and 1959, as Porter recalls experiences from 1901, 1914, 1918, 1924, 1926, 1929, and her time in Paris (1933-1936). The play depicts Porter's psychological struggle to complete her novel. The "Character Description" appended to the February 2002 draft of the play summarizes the playwrights' intention:

Porter has come to this isolated spot to finish her long-awaited novel, *Ship of Fools*. A writer who made her reputation as one of the finest short story writers of her generation has long been promising her publishers and her public a novel. After working on it for more than twenty-five years, and accepting advances on the book for twenty years, Porter has no choice but to finish it. Everything is at stake: she's 71 years old, broke, and her reputation rests on the book. In June of 1961, the novel is her albatross, and her last-ditch chance to establish herself as a writer of the first rank.

Actress Mary Frances HopKins has directed and performed

the work of many modern and contemporary writers, including Flannery O'Connor, Eudora Welty, and Lee Smith. The author of many essays on narrative, performance, and Southern fiction, HopKins is recognized nationally as a pioneering scholar in the field of Performance Studies. She stepped into the role virtually at the last moment, as distinguished actress Irene Worth, who had contracted to perform the work, died unexpectedly on March 10. On May 2, 2001, Worth performed a short excerpt from the play for the Yaddo benefit at a dinner party hosted by Peter Gould at the Water Club in New York City. Another slightly truncated performance of the work will be featured at this year's Yaddo Summer Benefit to be held on the 400-acre Saratoga Springs, New York, estate of this artists' community. Actress Kathleen Chalfant, who garnered both respect and accolades from her Broadway performances in *Angels in America* and *Wit*, will portray Porter in this benefit.

*Passenger on the Ship of Fools* is the first collaborative work of Laura Furman and Lynn C. Miller. Furman is an award-winning novelist, short-story writer, and essayist whose work has appeared in *New Yorker*, *Mirabella*, *Vanity Fair*, *Ploughshares*, *Yale Review*, *Southwest Review*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *House and Garden*. *American Short Fiction*, which she founded, was a three-time finalist for the National Magazine Award. She has published five books of fiction, including the recent *Drinking with the Cook*, and a



Mary Frances HopKins and playwright Laura Furman discuss *Passenger on the Ship of Fools* with a member of the audience at the University of Texas.

memoir, *Ordinary Paradise*. A past president of the Institute of Texas Letters and recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, she's currently Associate Professor of English at the University of Texas at Austin. Born in New York City with a B.A. from Bennington College in Vermont, Furman has lived in Texas since 1978.

Lynn C. Miller has adapted the work of many modern and contemporary writers, including Richard Howard, Alice Adams, and Barbara Pym for stage performance. Six of her plays have been produced on stages across the United States, and she currently tours performances of Gertrude Stein and Edith Wharton. Her novel, *The Fools' Journey*, is forthcoming in Fall 2002. Holding graduate degrees from Northwestern University

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## Katherine Anne Porter School

By Yana Bland, Ph.D., Superintendent

The steady improvement and overall success of the Katherine Anne Porter School is remarkable. We earned "acceptable" and then "recognized" accountability ratings for the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 academic years, with a definite trend toward higher student achievement. Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) passing rates have improved, attendance rates have improved, and drop-out rates have fallen. Meanwhile the KAPS has done more with less, providing quality education in classes with a high staff to student ratio averaging one teacher to ten students.

The number of students taking SAT or ACT tests has increased, and the number of students graduating has risen from 13 to 49, while the number of students going on to college has also increased. The number of certified teachers on staff has risen. The number of teachers qualified in specialized areas, such as special education, gifted and talented, diversified teaching, and English as a Second Language, has increased.

The KAPS is financially viable and was approved by the Texas State Board of Education to expand its enrollment and open a Middle/Primary Campus in Blanco in August 2002. The management of school finances has been audited each year and found in excellent condition. The KAPS was evaluated by the Texas Education Agency in November 2000 and was found to have no risk factors.

The KAPS admits students on the basis of a lottery if more students apply than can be accommodated. The KAPS does not discriminate on grounds of ethnicity, race, gender, class, academic, artistic, or athletic ability.

The reading level of KAPS students has improved remarkably over the past three years: from a 10th Grade Exit Level Reading TAAS passing rate of 88% in February 2000 to 100% in February 2002. The 11th Grade Exit Level Reading TAAS passing rate improved from 40%, to 50%, and up to 100% in February 2002. The 12th Grade Exit Level Reading TAAS passing rate improved to 100% in February 2002. The improvements in Math performance have also been remarkable. From a 10th Grade Exit Level Math TAAS passing rate of 59% in February 2000, to 75% in February 2001, to 78% in February 2002, and 100% passing rate for 12th Grades Exit Level Math TAAS takers.

The improvements in writing skills have also been salutary. The 10th Grade Exit Level Writing TAAS passing rate was 56% in February 2000, 72% in February 2001 and 87% in February 2002. The 11th Grade Exit Level Writing TAAS passing rate was 43% in February 2001 and 100% in February 2002. In conclusion, during the past three years, KAPS writing pass rates rose 55%, math pass rates rose 32% and reading pass rates rose 14%.

The open and friendly environment at the KAP Schools encourages a great deal of participation and ownership. Twice a

year, the KAPS surveys students, staff, and parents to assess areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction and plans ways to improve our educational services. The Student Achievement Committee, an important group of student leaders, staff, and parents, meets bi-weekly to discuss student achievement and conduct the surveys. The survey results are reported to an Open House and plans are discussed in a wider forum at the beginning of each academic year.

Parent involvement includes speaking to classes, aiding teachers, cooking a lunch for all students once a week, fundraising, membership on the Board of Trustees and participation in Board meetings, and membership on the Student Achievement Committee.

The learning environment and quality of teaching have improved tremendously at the KAPS. Student academic, artistic, and athletic achievement has reached new heights. This overall success can be attributed to the deep commitment, professionalism, flexibility, dialogue, and cooperation of an excellent staff, working closely with parents and community partners, and guided by an ethical and united Board of Trustees.

Curricular choices and technology integration in education have advanced. Student leadership is apparent on a daily basis through peer leadership, mentoring, and involvement in the Student Achievement Committee, Student Council, Peer Mediation and Conflict Resolution, and Student Justice Board.

The Katherine Anne Porter School receives only about 50% as much funding as a traditional public school. We offer all our services free because we believe what Katherine Anne Porter herself said many years ago: "Knowledge of great thought and great art is a good in itself, not to be missed for anything."

The support of people who agree with our mission to serve the under-served and promote an educated and responsible citizenship has been the life-blood to our school. We would like to thank the Wimberley Lions Club, the Wimberley Community Civic Club, Wells Fargo Bank, Ozona Bank, Arts from the Heart, Wimberley Valley Watershed Association, ACE Hardware Store, Ruth Mince, and all the wonderful donors who have made KAPS's success possible and helped so many students further their education.

At present we have a large student demand for four hands-on vocational courses. If we can raise \$20,000 from donations, the KAP School will match this by \$8,000. This will enable us to start teaching:

- 1) Culinary Crafts
- 2) Organic Farming
- 3) Architectural Graphics
- 4) Industrial Arts

Donations are tax-deductible and will go a very long way to improving education and the local economy. The addresses and telephone numbers for the two KAPS locations are P.O. Box 2053, Wimberley, TX 78676, 512-847-6867; and PO Box 1480, Blanco, TX 78606, 830-833-0440.



## Katherine Anne Porter Society Activities at the 2002 American Literature Association Conference in Cambridge, Massachusetts

Professor Christine Hait of Columbia College chaired the Katherine Anne Porter Society's session held in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on Thursday, May 24, 2001. The session began with "Katherine Anne Porter and the Poetics of the Crazy Quilt" read by Elisabeth Lamothe, Université de Bordeaux, France. Gary Ciuba of Kent State University, Trumbull, presented "'Given Only Me for Model': Disciples of Desire in Porter's *The Old Order*." "Katherine Anne Porter and the Southern Circus Intertext" was the subject of the paper of Patricia L. Bradley of Northern Kentucky University. North Georgia College and State University Professor Thomas Austenfeld's paper was "Ethical Criticism and Porter's Voice."

The society's business meeting also took place on May 24. President Beth Alvarez reported that the balance in the Society's account in the UNLV Foundation in 2000 was \$1,096.00. In fiscal year 2000-2001, the society had no expenses and had revenue of \$148.46. The balance in the society's account in May 2001 was \$1,244.46. The English Department at UNLV underwrites all mailing costs, and the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts funds the costs of printing the newsletter. The University of Maryland Libraries provides institutional support for the president/newsletter editor as well as hosting the society's Web site.

Alvarez reported that although the society's revised by-laws were passed by a vote of the members, elections have yet to be held. The by-laws call for the election of president; the executive committee must conduct nominations. The active members of the executive committee are Darlene Unrue, Janis Stout, Thomas Austenfeld, Christine Hait, and Beth Alvarez. Other duties of the executive committee include chairing sessions at

scholarly conferences and handling the society's routine business. Members were urged to submit articles, news items, and announcements for the newsletter. Future meetings of the Society will be held at forthcoming American Literature Association conferences. Beth Alvarez will chair the session to be held in Long Beach, California, in May 2002. The title of the session will be

"Katherine Anne Porter's Non-Fiction," and those present were urged to submit paper proposals for the session.

Darlene Unrue will chair the May 2003

session in

Cambridge, Massachusetts. Members were urged to organize a Porter session for the March 2002 Society for the Study of Southern Literature conference to be held in Lafayette, Louisiana.

The meeting concluded with Beth Alvarez's account of the move of the Porter papers and Porter Room from McKeldin Library to Hornbake Library at the University of Maryland between January and April 2001. Members in attendance at the meeting included Barbara Thompson Davis, Trustee for the Literary Estate of Katherine Anne Porter, and Jan Bloemendaal of Leiden University in the Netherlands.



*Participants in the Porter session at the May 2001 American Literature Association Conference in Cambridge, Massachusetts: Christine Hait, Patricia L. Bradley, Elisabeth Lamothe, Gary Ciuba, and Thomas Austenfeld.*

## Play Based on Porter Performed in Austin

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and the University of Southern California, she taught at USC and Pennsylvania State University before coming to the University of Texas at Austin in 1980. She has published numerous essays about women's performance art, autobiography in performance, and the adaptation and direction of feminist modernist writers. Miller is an Associate Professor of performance studies and the graduate advisor for the Women and Gender Studies Program.

After the performance, a brief talkback followed with Darlene Unrue and Beth Alvarez. Members of the capacity audience included Paul Porter, Porter Literary Trustee Barbara Thompson Davis, Southwest Texas State University professor

Tom Grimes, Superintendent Yana Bland and students from the Katherine Anne Porter School, and benefactor of the Kyle, Texas, Katherine Anne Porter Literary Center Bill Johnson. The next afternoon in the auditorium of the Harry Ransom Center, Paul Porter, Barbara Thompson Davis, Mary Frances HopKins, Laura Furman, and Lynn Miller participated in a panel discussion on Katherine Anne Porter and biographical drama. The play and panel discussion were sponsored by the following administrative units at the University of Texas at Austin: the College of Liberal Arts, the English Department, the Harry Ransom Center Ransom Chair, the Department of Theatre and Dance (including the Z. T. Scott Family Chair in Drama and the Theatre for Youth Chair), Plan II Honors Program, the Center for Women's Studies, and the Michener Center for Writers.



## Jiménez-Porter Writers' House at University of Maryland

Partially adapted from Dawn Herrschaft's March 15, 2002, article in the *Diamondback*, the University of Maryland student newspaper

The Jiménez-Porter Writer's House, opening Fall 2002 in Dorchester Hall on the University of Maryland campus in College Park, is a unique living-learning program that will create a campus-wide literary center to study creative writing in its international, cross-cultural, and multilingual dimensions. Participants will live and work within a close community of students who share an interest in creating stories, poems, plays, and essays in all fields. Writing in English, Spanish, or other approved languages, students hone their craft in literary and communication arts through colloquia and workshops, work with visiting writers, outreach activities, a student literary journal, and special seminars. Connecting the act of writing to a larger cultural sphere, the Writer's House will share Dorchester Hall with the new Global Communities Living-Learning Program. Residents from both programs will participate in joint activities such as special seminars and international film series.

The Jiménez-Porter Writers' House, to be overseen by of the departments of English and Spanish and Portuguese, was proposed about four years ago by several undergraduate students to Michael Collier, state poet laureate and co-director of the University of Maryland's Creative Writing Program. With the help of Roberta Lavine, acting associate director of academic affairs and associate professor of Spanish, the program unites students who love creative writing and gives them a space to live together and write. "The goal for the first couple of years is to get the word out and let everyone know the possibilities of the program," Collier said. "Down the road, we hope it will be the center of all literary activities on campus."

The coordinator of the Jiménez-Porter Writers' House is Laura Lauth, a graduate assistant in the College of Arts and Humanities who has been involved in the program's development for about a year and was brought in this past January to help coordinate. "This program is really unusual," Lauth said. "Not that there aren't other kinds of writing programs or writing houses at the undergraduate level, but there aren't that many of them and none that we can find that are putting together writing and writing across languages and cultures. We have very sophisticated students that can write in both languages and who are interested in bridging those differences and gaps."

The Jiménez-Porter Writers' House is named after two well-known authors closely connected to the University of Maryland. Juan Ramon Jiménez was a professor in the department of Spanish and Portuguese, a recipient of the Nobel Prize for literature, and the namesake of Jiménez Hall. Katherine Anne Porter is a preeminent American fiction writer who left her library and papers to the university. Activities planned for the



*Dorchester Hall at the University of Maryland where the Jiménez-Porter Writers' program will be housed in Fall 2002.*

Writers' House include an undergraduate literary journal, a Spring Literary Festival organized by student residents, special seminars led by Jiménez-Porter visiting writers, on-campus readings like the Writers Here and Now series, field trips to such venues as the Folger Library, Library of Congress, and cultural institutes and embassies to participate in literary seminars and readings, workshops and colloquia, and outreach activities to local community.

Writer's House requirements are a one-credit colloquium in both Fall and Spring semesters, one three-credit course in Spanish or English writing per year selected from an approved list, completion of a writing portfolio to be presented at an annual Spring Literary Festival organized by student residents, attendance at literary events, both on and off campus, and participation in House Governance. Applications to the program were due in Spring 2001 and accepted on a rolling basis as long as space was available. For further information, contact Laura Lauth. Her e-mail address is [ll105@umail.umd.edu](mailto:ll105@umail.umd.edu).



## Porter House in Kyle To Be Dedicated a Literary Landmark

The house at 508 Center Street, in Kyle, Texas, where Katherine Anne Porter lived with her paternal grandmother, father, and siblings will be dedicated as a Literary Landmark in June 2002. The recognition comes as a result of an application to the Friends of the Libraries U.S.A. by the Texas Center for the Book in Dallas. The Literary Landmarks Association was founded in 1986 by Frederick G. Ruffner, a former president of the Friends of Libraries U.S.A. (FOLUSA). The association encourages groups or individuals to select landmarks tied to a literary figure or work of an author, to plan dedication ceremonies, and to apply to FOLUSA for official recognition. The first of these dedications was at Slip F18 in Bahia Mar, Florida, the anchorage of the *Busted Flush*, the houseboat home of novelist John D. MacDonald's protagonist Travis McGee. Dedications have included homes of famous writers (Tennessee Williams, Majorie Kinnan Rawlings, William Faulkner), libraries and museum collections, literary scenes (such as John's Grill in San Francisco, immortalized by Dashiell Hammett, and Willa Cather's Prairie near Red Cloud, Nebraska), and even "Grip" the Raven, formerly the pet of Charles Dickens and inspiration to Edgar Allen Poe, now presiding at the Rare Books Department of the Free Library of Pennsylvania. For more information about the Literary Landmarks program including a list of Literary Landmarks, visit the the Web site of the FOLUSA at [www.folus.org](http://www.folus.org). The next issue of the newsletter will include complete coverage of this event.

The Porter House is part of the Katherine Anne Porter Literary Center, operated by Southwest Texas State University in cooperation with the Hays County Preservation Associates. Melissa Falcon served as the Writer-in-Residence for the first two years of this program, living in the Porter House and acting as curator of the museum. A grant from Curt Englehorn's "Angel" Foundation funded the Writer-in-Residence program; Matt Oates has been selected as the second recipient of this honor. An initial grant from the Burdine Johnson Foundation made possible the restoration of the house and construction of the Center. This has been generously followed by a new grant for the KAP Young Writers Program. Beginning in June 2002, SWT MFA students in Creative Writing will teach creative writing to local, Kyle, Texas, school-children. The impact that the restoration of the house has had

on the small town of 5000 has been so significant that the City Council has declared a downtown historic district and has begun efforts to preserve the rest of the town center, alongside the Porter house.

Events held at the seminar house of the Katherine Anne Porter Literary Center during the 2001-2002 academic year included readings and book signings by Robert Haas, Chris Offutt, Jean Valentine, Mark Doty, and Kate Wheeler. Former U. S. Poet Laureate Robert Hass, author of *20th Century Pleasures*, for which he won the National Book Critics Circle Award, and the poetry collections that include *Field Guide*, *Praise*, and *Human Wishes*. He has translated the work of Nobel Laureate Czeslaw Milosz into English and was awarded a MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship. Offutt is the author of *The Good Brother*, a novel, and two short story collections, *Kentucky Straight* and *Out of the Woods*. He has also published a memoir called *The Same River Twice*. Named Best Young American Writer by *Granta*, Offutt has also been the recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship and the N.E.A. Fellowship. Jean Valentine is the author of eight books of poetry, including *The Messenger*, *Dream Barker and Other Poems*, *Home Deep Blue*, *The River at Wolf*, and *The Cradle of the Real Life*. Valentine has won countless honors, among them the Yale Younger Poet Award, the Guggenheim Fellowship, the National Endowment for the Arts grant, and the Maurice English Poetry Award. Mark Doty is the author of four poetry collections, including *Turtle Swan*, *Bethlehem in Broad Daylight*, *My Alexandria*, *Atlantis*, and *Sweet Machine*. He is also the author of two nonfiction works including *Heaven's Coast: A Memoir* and *Firebird*. Doty has received numerous awards, among them the PEN/Martha Albrand Award for First Nonfiction, the Witter Bynner Prize for Poetry, the National Book Critics Circle Award, the Los Angeles Times Book Award, and the T. S. Eliot Prize. Kate Wheeler is the author of *When Mountains Walked*, a novel, and *Not Where I Started From*, a short story collection. Wheeler has been the recipient of the Pushcart Prize, two O. Henry Awards, a Best American Story of the Year, and was named by *Granta* as one of America's "Best Young Novelists."

For information about the MFA program or the literary series, please contact Matt Oates, Katherine Anne Porter Literary Center Coordinator at (512) 268-6637, or visit the Lindsey Literary Series Web site at <http://www.English.swt.edu/TKL>.



## Porter Activities at the University of Maryland Libraries

By Beth Alvarez, University of Maryland

This report on the activities related to the Papers of Katherine Anne Porter and other Porter-related collections at the University of Maryland Libraries covers the period between May 2001 and April 2002. Ten on-site researchers consulted Porter or Porter-related collections in the year covered by this report. Those from out-of-state came from Michigan, Virginia, and West Virginia. Foreign researchers included two from Japan and one from France. Telephone, mail, and e-mail inquiries have also been received from Alabama, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and the District of Columbia. I also communicated with individuals from Australia, Austria, Canada, France, Great Britain, India, Japan, Mexico, The Netherlands, and Spain. During this period, the Libraries supplied 2,200 photocopies to meet researcher demand, provided twenty-five reproductions of photographs, and loaned twenty-seven reels of the microfilm edition of the Porter papers.

Popular interest in Porter remains high. There were 437 visitors to the Katherine Anne Porter Room in the last year, during which the room was open on fifty-eight Monday and Thursday afternoons. The faithful volunteer docents, Freddy Baer, Shirley Bauer, Dorothy Galvin, Beverly Lewoc, Joan Phelan, and Betty Warner, all returned to service in September 2001. Maria Walsh, the widow of my mentor Thomas Walsh, joined them in January. About fifty individuals visited the Porter Room during our fourth all-campus open house on April 27, 2002. The number of requests for group tours of the Porter Room increased as word of the new location and enhancements has spread. The College Park chapter of the AAUW, staff from the Division of Preservation and Access of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Preservation Committee of the Chesapeake Information and Research Library Alliance, and members of the Society of American Archivists visited in the last year. Visitors from on-campus groups included staff members from University Relations, Resident Life, and the Maryland English Institute, as well as graduate students from the College of Information Studies and members of the Campus Club, the organization for women faculty and staff and wives of faculty or staff. The Libraries' Porter holdings also benefited from significant effort from volunteer Bill Wilkins once again this year. His tenure has continued for six years and has been indispensable in providing

all sorts of support.

The Libraries acquired two Porter-related holdings in the last year.

The Papers of

Janis P. Stout consist primarily of correspondence and research materials related to the publication of *Katherine Anne Porter: A Sense of the Times* (1995). A significant item is Cleanth Brooks's May 27, 1992, letter to Stout in which he discusses Porter's claim of membership in the Communist party in Mexico and her relationship with Tinkum Brooks. The Archives of the *Atlantic Monthly* came to the Libraries through the efforts of noted poet Peter Davison, who is currently Poetry Editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*. Concerned that the files of significant literary figures at the *Atlantic Monthly* be placed in appropriate repositories, Davidson offered the Porter files to the Libraries. His January 24, 2002, letter to me reads in part:

First, a note as to why this correspondence is surfacing at so late a date. In 1986 the then owner of *The Atlantic Monthly*, Mortimer Zuckerman, sold the book division of The Atlantic Monthly Company to Carl Navarre, in New York. The archives were sent along to Navarre, but after he in turn had sold the press to Morgan Entrekin, Mr. Entrekin tired of warehousing these archives and at our request returned them to us in Boston. For the last year or two I have been placing various archives (those of Alfred Kazin, Sean O'Faolain, Stanley Kunitz, et al.) with those libraries which house the major archives of the author involved.

From 1964 onward I was responsible for maintaining relations between Miss Porter and our Press, which had published *Ship of Fools*, even though Miss Porter's subsequent work was to have been published by Seymour Lawrence, who had championed her writings while directing the Press. I succeeded to the directorship when Lawrence departed, first for a berth at Alfred A. Knopf, and then at Delacorte Publishers. I had however been slightly acquainted with Miss Porter since my childhood, and had served a publishing apprenticeship



Docent Dorothy Galvin in the Katherine Anne Porter Room, Hornbake Library, April 2002.

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## The Year's Work on Katherine Anne Porter: 2000

By Christine H. Hait,  
Columbia College, Columbia, South Carolina

Very little scholarship on Katherine Anne Porter was published in the year 2000; however, looking ahead, I suspect next year's review of 2001 scholarship will make up in length for the shortness of this year's review. Including an essay published in 1999, three of the scholarly articles and essays discussed below focus on *Hacienda*, making 1999/2000 a banner period for scholarship on it. Interest in *Hacienda* comes from a variety of quarters, including film studies and textual studies, reminding us again of Porter's importance as a cultural observer and artistic innovator. Readers interested in Olivier Debroise's *Un Banquete en Tetlapayac*, mentioned below, can find more information at <http://primercuadro.com.mx/tetlapayac.html>. I begin with two book essays from 1999 that were not included in last year's newsletter.

### 1999

#### Articles and Essays

Joseph J. and John C. Waldmeir include William L. Nance's "Variations on a Dream: Katherine Anne Porter and Truman Capote" (originally published in *Southern Humanities Review* in 1969) in *The Critical Response to Truman Capote*, published by Greenwood Press. According to Nance, Truman Capote and Porter (both dreamers and, as Southerners, outsiders) in their fiction communicate a particularly American sensitivity to limitations and portray the "wandering dreamer pursued by death." Nance points to the fleeting vision of an unattainable paradise in Porter's "Pale Horse, Pale Rider" and argues that Porter's "short-circuited" sense of life's possibilities and resignation to the world's imperfections result in "something fixed and final" in her work. In contrast, Capote's career is marked by change. Nance surveys Capote's body of work, highlighting the ways the dreamer in Capote's fiction changes form, at times tirelessly pursuing the dream and at times "go[ing] about the business of accommodating to this imperfect world."

Susan Swartwout's "Revolution Has Not Yet Entered Their Souls: The Jilting of Katherine Anne Porter," in *Value and Vision in American Literature: Literary Essays in Honor of Ray Lewis White*, edited by Joseph Candido and published by Ohio University Press, takes its title from Porter's Mexican essay "Leaving the Petate," the "souls" in the title referring to the souls of the Mexican people. Porter's observation about the

revolution's failure to take hold is applied to a reading of the two versions of *Hacienda*, which Swartwout compares and contrasts, noting the characters' transformation in the second version. The changes in characters reflect Porter's experience of betrayal, or "jilting," as she witnessed "decay and corruption throughout Mexico." Particularly significant for Swartwout is the change in Porter's Mexican Indians in *Hacienda*, who are portrayed in the second version as complicit in their oppression.

### 2000

#### Books

None

#### Articles and Essays

Elena Feder, in "A Banquet at Tetlapayac," *West Coast Line* 34.2 (2000): 28-42, studies Porter's *Hacienda* from the perspective of a film historian. She explores Porter's interest in filmmaking and cinematic technique and her influence on Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein and his film *Que Viva México!* She also discusses Olivier Debroise's recent experimental film *Un Banquete en Tetlapayac*, which tells the story of Eisenstein's movie and features a large cast of characters, including Porter (played by art historian Sally Stein).

Robert Mellin, in "Unreeled: A History of Katherine Anne Porter's Filmic Text, *Hacienda*," *Mosaic* 33.2 (2000): 47-66, studies the 1934 Harrison of Paris version of *Hacienda* and later mass-trade editions, arguing that the mass-trade editions deprive readers of the complete experience of the text as a filmic text. Porter and Monroe Wheeler, the Harrison of Paris typographer and co-owner, used pagination, choice of type, and space to communicate the filmic nature of the text, particularly suggesting, through bibliographical signifiers, the film technique of montage. According to this in-depth and interesting study, the timing of their fine press endeavor was poor: many critics in 1934 considered the Harrison of Paris edition elitist, and modern printing practices were quickly and decisively turning away from book craftsmanship and toward mass production.

A helpful new resource for teachers and scholars of modern American literature, *American Women Writers, 1900-1945: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook*, edited by Laurie Champion and published by Greenwood Press, includes, among its many essays on individual American women writers, Lou Halsell Rodenberger's "Katherine Anne Porter (1890-1980)." Rodenberger reviews Porter's biography, major works and themes, and critical reception. The essay's bibliography in-

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## Porter Activities at the University of MD Libraries

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with the firm of Harcourt, Brace, which had been Miss Porter's publishers for many years prior to her moving to the Atlantic Monthly Press in about 1955.

The donated correspondence files date from 1966 to 1980 and include items that are not duplicated in the Atlantic Monthly files in Porter's papers.

My colleagues and I in Special Collections have very happily settled into our new and spacious quarters in Hornbake Library. As I write this account, plans for celebrating our new facility are progressing. We are working with our new Development staff—Barbara Harr, Assistant Dean and Director of External Relations, and Michelle Wellens, Director of the Friends of the Libraries—and with an advisory committee to plan a schedule of events to begin in September 2002. At present, April or May 2003 is the likely date for an event focusing on Porter. When plans have been finalized, I will see that all members of the society receive invitations.

Anyone who has questions concerning the Porter Room or the Libraries' Porter holdings should not hesitate to contact me, Curator of Literary Manuscripts, Archives and Manuscripts, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742, 301-405-9298, ra60@umail.umd.edu. To locate the Katherine Anne Porter resources on the Libraries' Web site, begin at [www.lib.umd.edu/UMCP/ARCV/litmss.html](http://www.lib.umd.edu/UMCP/ARCV/litmss.html) and follow the appropriate links.

### Katherine Anne Porter Society Membership Application/Renewal

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Institutional Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (work) \_\_\_\_\_

(home) \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to the Katherine Anne Porter Society,  
UNLV Foundation; mail to Beth Alvarez, University of  
Maryland Libraries, College Park, MD 20742.

## The Year's Work on Katherine Anne Porter: 2000

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cludes a select list of studies of Porter.

### Dissertations

Porter's Miranda and other modernist protagonists of the South struggle to understand their fathers, writes Molly Boyd, in "Our Father's Footsteps: Family Myths and the Southern Heroic Tradition," *DAI* 61.04A (2000): AAI9969475, completed at University of South Carolina. Their freedom from the "old order" of their fathers comes at a heavy psychological cost, and Boyd reviews the manifestations of this cost in the characters' lives. Other protagonists discussed include Faulkner's Quentin Compson, Bayard Sartoris, and Isaac McCaslin; Walker Percy's Binx Bolling and Will Barrett; and Eudora Welty's Laurel Hand.

Porter's "The Circus" is far from an isolated example of Southern fiction that exploits the circus metaphor, one learns from Patricia Bradley's "The Three-Ring Self: Robert Penn Warren's Circus Aesthetic and Southern Intertextuality," *DAI* 61.11A (2000): AAI9996333, completed at University of Tennessee. Bradley's primary text is the 1947 novella *The Circus in the Attic*, by Robert Penn Warren. However, she places the novella in the context of works by Porter, Thomas Wolfe, and Eudora Welty, all of whom, like Warren, lived through the heyday of the American circus, the beginning of the twentieth century. Bradley's research on the American circus—its history, changing role in American life, and increasing conservatism—provides a useful background for readers of Porter's short story.

Henri Bergson's concept of time as pure duration and I. A. Richards's and Michel Foucault's explorations of rhetoric as a way of knowing inform Melinda McBee's "The Canon of Memory and Rhetoric as a Way of Knowing in Selected Miranda Stories of Katherine Anne Porter," *DAI* 61.09A (2000): AAI9988396, completed at Texas Woman's University. McBee encourages readers of the Miranda stories to recognize Porter's use of memory in the stories as a creative strategy and a rhetorical strategy. Silence, too, is a rhetorical strategy operating in the stories, McBee argues.

Please send information on any additions that need to be made to this essay to me at [chrishait@colacoll.edu](mailto:chrishait@colacoll.edu) so that I may include the information in next year's essay.