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The Official Newsletter of the Friends of the Houston Cole Library

Spring 2009

Friends of Houston Cole Library Presents

Alabama's Own Nat King Cole



By Daphne Simpkins, M.A.
Writer and Instructor
Auburn University Montgomery

Thursday, April 2, 2009 - 2:00 p.m.
Houston Cole Library - Room 1103 B

Born in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1919, Nathaniel Adams Coles established himself irrevocably as a voice of an American era and as part of the group of musicians who helped to create jazz when it was in its infancy.

“Alabama’s Own Nat King Cole” will offer Nat King Cole’s life story and introduce the music he made famous. Daphne Simpkins’ presentation will look at Cole’s story and how it tells not only his history; but in many ways, records sociological changes happening inside American culture and American homes.

Ms. Simpkins has published hundreds of essays and short stories in a variety of periodicals nationwide and in Canada. She has also written two books: *The Long Good Night* and *Nat King Cole: An Unforgettable Life of Music*.

**** THIS EVENT IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. ****
Refreshments will be served.



Daphne Simpkins (courtesy photo)



An Alabama Humanities Foundation sponsored Road Scholars Presentation

Greetings from the Dean of Library Services

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and to thank you for your support of the Friends of the Houston Cole Library. My name is John-Bauer Graham, and I was honored to be selected as the new Dean of Library Services for Jacksonville State University upon the retirement of University Librarian William Hubbard. While I am relatively new to this position, I have been with the Houston Cole Library for nearly fifteen years. I began as an evening circulation assistant, and subsequently moved to serials and acquisitions, located in the Library's technical services department. While employed in this capacity, I began pursuing a master's degree in Library and Information Studies (MLIS) and received my MLIS from The University of Alabama in 2000. I have an undergraduate degree in History from Auburn University, as well as an additional master's degree in History, and I am currently all but dissertation with a doctorate in Higher Education Administration from The University of Alabama.

After completing my MLIS, I began work as an assistant professor and General Reference and Instruction Librarian for JSU. Two of my passions in the profession are reference and user services, and my position on the second floor allowed me the opportunity to teach and serve our patrons at the reference desk. When the Library was divided into two separate departments, I was chosen as the Department Head of Public Services. I was later awarded tenure and promoted to associate professor, and I continued to serve as Head of Public Services until I was hired in March of 2008 as Dean of Library Services.

I have a deep appreciation and respect for the profession of librarianship, and the services and resources we offer our patrons are of paramount importance. My primary concern is the role this Library plays for its University and the students it serves; it is my mission to make sure this Library supports the curriculum of the University, and secondly that it provides information services and resources to support the scholarly and informational needs of the entire community. Having a support organization such as the Friends is integral to success in both these endeavors.

For this reason, an initiative of mine is to make the Friends group even more active in its support of the Library. This can be achieved by increasing the group's membership and, most importantly, by advancing the group's active involvement in Library improvement projects. The money raised by the Friends is essential to the enrichment of our Library. These improvements can include donations used to build specific collections, improvements to public services (such as soft seating, signage, additional shelving units, or outside seating), improvements to technical services (in the form of equipment and resources), as well as general exterior and interior building projects.

With your help, I look forward to making this, your Library, the preeminent academic library in the Southeast. We have made significant steps toward that distinction, and with the support of an organization such as the Friends as a cornerstone, I am confident that this goal will be achieved. If you have any questions about our Library, the resources and services we provide, or perhaps how you can help, please do not hesitate to call, email, or stop by. Thank you again for your support.

Sincerely,

John-Bauer Graham
Dean of Library Services

“ I have a deep appreciation and respect for the profession of librarianship, and the services and resources we offer our patrons are of paramount importance. ”

Friends of the Library Board Membership

Members serve for three year terms and may be invited to run for a subsequent term. Ballots go out in January and if you wish to be nominated, please contact Mr. John-Bauer Graham. Contact a Board Member if you have suggestions for next year's speaker.

Joanne Gates, chair, expiring 2012
Karen Gregg, expiring 2011
Hervey Folsom, expiring 2010

Mary MacArgel, expiring 2012
Ralph Brannen, expiring 2011
George Whitesel, expiring 2010

Recent Friends-Sponsored Programs

Tom Franklin

Author Tom Franklin, an instructor in the MFA program at the University of Mississippi, spoke and read at the Friends of the Houston Cole Library's fall event on October 30, 2007.

Franklin's novel, *Hell at the Breech* (2003), draws inspiration from the non-fiction account, *The Mitcham War of Clark County, Alabama*, co-authored by JSU Eminent Scholar in History Harvey Jackson III, Joyce White Burrage, and James A. Cox.

JSU English professor Steven Whitton introduced Franklin. Dr. Whitton admires Tom Franklin's work and has praised his most recent novel in the book pages of the *Anniston Star*. The evening was informative and entertaining for the mixture of history students, creative writers, and community residents who attended.



Tom Franklin, author of *Hell at the Breech*.

demonstrate the rich visual depictions of ways to pass on legends and even commune with the spiritual world. Students from the Art Department and from the English Language Institute provided an informed audience for the afternoon event.

Robert Morgan

A near to overflowing audience attended the November 13, 2008 Library evening with Robert Morgan. Morgan is the noted author of *Gap Creek*, an Oprah Book Club selection in 2000. He spoke on his most recent publication, *Boone: A Biography*, which is the biography of Daniel Boone.

Dr. Joanne Gates' introduction touched on the marvelous growth of a writer whose first claim to fame was concise poetry. Morgan delved into his family's past to become a novelist whose first person narrators - often female - rang true because he was so absorbed by his family's roots in the South Carolina mountains. Morgan famously begins *Boone*, "Forget the coonskin cap," and provides clues to deciphering some of the competing myths of Boone the man.

Morgan remarked that in almost every audience he has spoken to, a descendant or relative of Daniel Boone has identified himself.

This was the case, too, at JSU. He was gracious in praising libraries, mentioning that his formative years were enriched with visits to the local bookmobile. His sister and a son are librarians. Currently a professor at Cornell University, Morgan has visited



Robert Morgan, left, author of *Gap Creek*, and John-Bauer Graham, JSU Dean of Library Services.

numerous colleges as a guest lecturer or writer in residence. Morgan capped the lively question and answer section with a detailed account of how Oprah Winfrey contacted him to invite him to appear on her show. At the time, *Gap Creek* had had moderately positive reviews and they were preparing a second printing of another ten thousand copies. Once the book was elevated to book club status, its sales catapulted to over a million. Morgan mentioned that people in Poland and scores of countries have written him to say the story depicts their own grandparents. He concludes that a vivid description of subsistence-level existence, whether it be centered in Appalachia (where it has faded more slowly) or elsewhere is the similar, worldwide.

Catherine Pagani

On April 9, 2008, the Friends of Houston Cole Library hosted Dr. Catherine Pagani in a program co-sponsored by the Alabama Humanities Foundation's Road Scholars program. The topic of Dr. Pagani's talk was "Luck, Wealth, Longevity and Happiness: Symbolism in Chinese Art." Dr. Pagani, professor and now department chair at The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, has a Ph.D. from the University of Toronto in East Asian Studies, and has worked in museums in Toronto and Taiwan. She was the first Westerner given access to specialized collections at the Palace Museum, Beijing. Her slides of exquisitely crafted palace garments and artifacts demonstrated ancient myths and symbols of good and bad fortune. Chinese numbers are associated with certain kinds of luck.

The visual tokens of good fortune, some originating in one-of-a-kind masterpieces, also decorate doorways and become transformed into popular icons. Textiles, jade, paper cuts and woodblock prints were used to



Catherine Pagani discusses Chinese art with an event attendee.

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Gene Howard, sitting, signs his book for Calhoun County District 5 Commissioner and former JSU Baseball Coach Rudy Abbott, as well as former U.S. Congressman and JSU Professor Emeritus Glen Browder (right).

Gene Howard

On the evening of January 27, 2009, Jacksonville resident Gene Howard gave an address on Human Rights Change in Alabama: 1954-1966. The basis for this topic was his latest book, *Patterson for Alabama: The Life and Career of John Patterson*. Patterson rose to state office because his father Albert was murdered in Phenix City. He became attorney general in 1955. He was determined to clean up the corruption primarily set up to take advantage of the cross-the-border population that came from the military base at Fort Benning, Georgia. This corruption included numbers games, honkytonks, and dives. In a heated and controversial primary, Patterson defeated the then up-start populist, George Wallace, in 1958, and served as governor from 1959-63. Patterson came out relatively early to endorse John Kennedy for President. For this he was shunned by most of the state's Baptist and Methodist Ministers. Mr. Howard made clear in his talk that it was the black churches that reformed Montgomery and the white churches that reformed Phenix City. Mr. Howard commended the information he acquired from his extensive interviews with principal characters, including E.D. Nixon. Nixon was responsible for inviting Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to lead the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Mr. Howard emphasized that his archival work included a study of the evidence against Albert Patterson's killers, including the bullet that killed him. Former U.S. Congressman and JSU Professor Emeritus Glen Browder, speaking from the audience, complimented Mr. Howard for the excellence of the book, stressing that it does not take sides but gives an accurate accounting of one of the most tumultuous periods in Alabama Civil Rights.



**Friends of the
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Jacksonville, AL 36265**

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