2012 Mayborn Biography Contest expands

DENTON (UNT), Texas Now in its second year, the Mayborn National Biography Writing Contest for young storytellers is expanding to include more educational sessions for high school and community college students on the art of narrative writing and literary biography.

The Contest aims to nurture the next generation of storytellers and journalists, and is part of the University of North Texas’ Mayborn Literary Nonfiction Conference. The Education Department at the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum Education Department, Big Thought and Biographers International partner with UNT’s Frank W. and Sue Mayborn School of Journalism to host the competition.

“Kids are fascinating storytellers,” said Vice President for Programs at Big Thought Margie Reese. “The world that they see is full of hope, aspirations and ideals, and we are pleased that our young people will have an opportunity to gain skills to raise their storytelling to a new level of professionalism.”

On March 8 (Thursday) and 9 (Friday) high school and community college students from Texas and the entire nation will be able to participate in a distance learning program on literary nonfiction writing at the presidential library. Author and executive director of Biographers International James McGrath Morris will lead sessions on the art of narrative writing before a live audience at the presidential library, and students and teachers from across the nation will have access to a live videoconference of the sessions as well as archived and video streaming recordings for later viewing.

“The competition is a remarkable opportunity for young aspiring writers in that it rewards the winners with a chance to sharpen their skills working with some of the nation’s best writers,” Morris said. “In connecting the new young writers with the seasoned older pros, this competition plays an instrumental role in creating the next generation of storytellers.”
To register a school for the March 8 or 9 programs, visit the [ESC Region VI Distance Learning website](https://www.esc6.net). Contact Kimberly Taylor at ktaylor@esc6.net for additional information. Schools also can register to view the archived recording.

An application and contest rules for the 2012 Mayborn Biography Competition can be found [online](https://www.esc6.net), and biographies should be submitted by May 7 (Monday) now Friday, June 8. Ten winners will be selected by a jury pool of prominent biographers and narrative nonfiction writers.

To participate in the Mayborn Biography Competition applicants must register for either the March 8 or 9 program, or view the recording afterward.

Each winner and a teacher or mentor of his or her choice will be awarded scholarships to the 2012 Mayborn Literary Nonfiction Conference, which will be held July 20 – 22 (Friday – Sunday) at the Hilton DFW Lakes Executive Conference Center in Grapevine, Texas. Winners will be recognized during the conference’s Literary Lights dinner on July 21 (Saturday), and the winning biographies will be published in The Dallas Morning News.

“We are pleased to present ‘The Biography’ distance learning program by James McGrath Morris, who explains non-fiction research methods,” said Shirley Hammond, George Bush Presidential Library and Museum director of education. “This program enhances student writing skills. We look forward to reading the winning essays in The Dallas Morning News and at the Mayborn Literary Nonfiction Conference.”

Regular conference attendee Lee Hancock conceived the initial idea to involve young people in the conference, and looks forward to the Biography Competition’s continued success.

“Last year it was tremendously exciting to see a group of kids so engaged and so changed by their experience at the Mayborn Conference, and we’re hopeful that will continue this year with more submissions and more interest,” Hancock said. “We’ve known for a long time how successful the Mayborn is at inspiring and encouraging all ages of writers, and we’re looking forward to seeing what this year’s group will do.”

For additional information about the biography competition or the Mayborn Literary Nonfiction Conference, contact Jo Ann Ballantine, conference manager, at 940-565-4778 or Joann.ballantine@unt.edu.
Follow UNT on Twitter at http://twitter.com/UNTnews
For more information on UNT: www.unt.edu/news
Become a fan of UNT on Facebook at www.facebook.com/northtexas

**UNT**

With about 36,000 students, UNT is the nation’s 26th largest university. As the largest, most comprehensive university in Dallas-Fort Worth, UNT drives the North Texas region. UNT offers 97 bachelor’s, 82 master’s and 35 doctoral degree programs, many nationally and internationally recognized. A student-focused public research university with an emphasis on sustainability, UNT is the flagship of the UNT System.