

[All Kentucky's Citizens Reading *All the King's Men*](#)

Announcement published by Randolph Hollingsworth on Monday, August 13, 2018

Type:

Event

Date:

August 14, 2018 to November 17, 2018

Location:

Kentucky, United States

Subject Fields:

American History / Studies, Humanities, Literature, Political History / Studies

The [University Press of Kentucky](#) has partnered with [Kentucky Humanities](#) on its new statewide literacy project, [Kentucky Reads: All the King's Men](#). The program will use Robert Penn Warren's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel to guide a statewide conversation on contemporary populism and political discourse and their relationship to journalism. With funding from the [Andrew W. Mellon Foundation](#) and the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#), Kentucky Humanities will host a series of community discussions and events centered on Warren's celebrated work and what it can teach us today.

As part of Kentucky Reads: All the King's Men, University Press of Kentucky has released [Robert Penn Warren's All the King's Men: A Reader's Companion](#) by Warren scholar and [Northern Kentucky University](#) professor Jonathan S. Cullick. He examines Warren's political masterpiece with an eye toward how contemporary readers can apply the lessons of his narrative to our current political climate. Writing to be broadly accessible, Cullick provides the background, context, and analysis needed to create a framework for readers to think about this complex narrative and its current political implications. He also includes a number of questions for discussion to facilitate a broad conversation.

Other partners for the literacy project include [Kentucky Educational Television](#), which will air the documentary Robert Penn Warren: A Vision this fall that was produced by filmmaker Tom Thurman, and the [Gaines Center for the Humanities](#) at the University of Kentucky, which will host bestselling author Jon Meacham at the Bale Boone Symposium. Meacham will talk about Warren's impact on American literature and culture. Events include:

August 14, 7:00 pm: Kentucky Reads Online Book Club

Bill Goodman and Jonathan S. Cullick, author of Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men: A Reader's Companion*, will participate in a [Facebook Live](#) discussion of *All the King's Men*.

September 5, 7:15 pm: [Kentucky Theater Summer Classics presents All the King's Men \(1949\)](#)

Kentucky Theater, 214 E. Main St., Lexington

A screening of *All the King's Men* (1949), Academy Award winner for Best Picture, Best Actor (Broderick Crawford) and Best Supporting Actress (Mercedes McCambridge).

September 9, 2:00 pm: Robert Penn Warren: A Vision Sneak Preview

Farish Theater, [Lexington Public Library](#), 140 E. Main St., Lexington

A preview of an excerpt from the documentary Robert Penn Warren: A Vision and discussion with award-winning filmmaker Tom Thurman.

September 13, 6:30 pm: Democracy & the Informed Citizen Community Forum at NKU
Otto M. Budig Theater, Northern Kentucky University Student Center, Highland Heights
The Scripps Howard Center for Civic Engagement at Northern Kentucky University hosts a keynote address by Jonathan S. Cullick and a community forum on journalism and politics.

September 17, 7:00 pm: Bale Boone Symposium
Worsham Theater, [University of Kentucky](#) Student Center, Lexington
The Gaines Center for the Humanities at the University of Kentucky presents the Bale Boone Symposium, featuring New York Times bestselling author and historian Jon Meacham, speaking on the relevance of Warren's work, from politics to race to regional culture.

September 18, 6:30 pm CST: Democracy & the Informed Citizen Community Forum in Paducah
Market House Theatre, 132 Market House Square, Paducah
A live reading of scenes from the stage adaptation of *All the King's Men* and a community forum on journalism and politics.

October 15, 6:30 pm: Democracy & the Informed Citizen Community Forum at [Actors Theatre of Louisville](#)
Actors Theatre of Louisville, 316 W. Main St., Louisville
A live reading of scenes from the stage adaptation of *All the King's Men* and a community forum on journalism and politics.

October 16, 6:30 pm: Democracy & the Informed Citizen Community Forum at [Transylvania University](#)
Carrick Theatre, Mitchell Fine Arts Center, Transylvania University, Lexington
A community forum on journalism and politics.

October 22: The premiere of Robert Penn Warren: A Vision
Van Meter Auditorium, [Western Kentucky University](#), Hilltop Dr., Bowling Green
The official KET premiere of Robert Penn Warren: A Vision, followed by a question and answer session with Rosanna Warren, poet and daughter of Robert Penn Warren, and filmmaker Tom Thurman.

October 23, 6:30 pm CST: Democracy & the Informed Citizen Community Forum at Western Kentucky University
Center for Robert Penn Warren Studies, Western Kentucky University, Jody Richards Hall, Bowling Green
A community forum on journalism and politics.

November 16-17: Kentucky Book Fair
Alltech Arena, the Kentucky Horse Park, 4089 Iron Works Pkwy., Lexington
Jonathan S. Cullick teaches the KBF Master Class for high school students on November 16 and gives a main stage presentation at the Kentucky Book Fair on November 17.

Kentucky Reads: *All the King's Men* is part of the "Democracy and the Informed Citizen" Initiative, administered by the Federation of State Humanities Councils. The initiative seeks to deepen the public's knowledge and appreciation of the vital connections between democracy, the humanities, journalism, and an informed citizenry. The events will encourage more readers to engage with *All the King's Men* and provide an environment for open and respectful discussion of the complicated but important political issues raised in the novel that could help foster understanding in today's divisive political climate.

All the King's Men is as timely today as it was when Warren originally wrote it. Willie Stark was based on real-life politician Huey Long, but he is not merely Huey Long. He is any political player who compromises means and ends. He is every demagogue who manipulates language and manufactures an image of himself to seduce supporters. Though Huey Long has been dead since 1935, his political tactics as embodied by Stark are still with us, and Robert Penn Warren's *All the*

King's Men provides the tools for engaged citizens to hold not only their leaders accountable for their actions, but also themselves.

Jonathan S. Cullick is professor of English and former chair of the English Department at Northern Kentucky University. He is the author of several books including *Religion in the Twenty-First Century: A Longman Topics Reader* and *Making History: The Biographical Narratives of Robert Penn Warren*, as well as many articles on William Faulkner, Walker Percy, Robert Penn Warren, and other southern and American writers and topics.

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