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Ellis to be part of panel discussing role of journalism in democracy

SUBMITTED 18 hrs ago

Ronnie Ellis, CNHI Kentucky



Kentucky Humanities will present Democracy & the Informed Citizen, the fifth and final in a series of statewide community discussions on the importance of journalism in maintaining democracy, on Oct. 23 at 6:30 p.m. in the auditorium at Jody Richards Hall on the campus of WKU.

This community event is sponsored by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Center for Robert Penn Warren Studies at WKU. This event is free and open to the public, but seating is limited. Democracy & the Informed Citizen is part of Kentucky Humanities' Kentucky Reads: All the King's Men, an initiative using Robert Penn Warren's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel to guide a statewide conversation on contemporary populism and political discourse, and their relationship to journalism.

Panelists for the discussion are Jonathan Jeffrey, department head for the Department of Library Special Collections and the Manuscripts & Folklife Archives Coordinator at Western Kentucky University; Ronnie Ellis, Statehouse reporter/columnist for CNHI newspapers; and Jody Richards, 20th district representative in the Kentucky House of Representatives. Barbara Deeb, broadcast journalist, anchor, and producer with WKU-PBS and WKU-NPR, will moderate the discussion. The panelists will engage the audience in a discussion about the critical role of journalism in maintaining democracy and an informed citizenry, using All the King's Men as a jumping-off point.

“From the earliest days of our country, citizens have relied on a free press to stay aware and informed,” says Bill Goodman, executive director of Kentucky Humanities. “Though the media has changed drastically over two centuries, the need has not. From the smallest rural newspaper to the largest cable news network, journalism is one of the keys to an engaged and informed populace. This discussion will be a great reminder of the influence journalism has on our communities and nation.”

“Robert Penn Warren’s *All the Kings Men* provides a timeless window into the human spirit, social consciousness, and political rhetoric,” says Barbara Deeb. “It is a privilege to have the freedom to discuss relevant political and social issues in a public forum. Here’s to a lively exchange of ideas in Bowling Green.”

Jonathan Jeffrey says, “What news source do you trust? Why has this become one of the most polarizing questions of our era? If an informed citizenry is paramount to an effective democracy, then our news sources are important.” He adds, “I look forward to discussing this and other relevant issues and themes that emerge from Robert Penn Warren’s *All the King’s Men*, undoubtedly America’s greatest political novel.”

Democracy & the Informed Citizen is part of Kentucky Humanities’ *Kentucky Reads: All the King’s Men*, an initiative using Robert Penn Warren’s Pulitzer Prize-winning novel to guide a statewide conversation on contemporary populism and political discourse, and their relationship to journalism. *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. We thank the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for their generous support of this initiative and the Pulitzer Prizes for their partnership.





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