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Richard Ford, Jim Harrison, and Thomas McGuane return to Michigan for July 10 event

Michigan Author Homecoming to commemorate The Great Michigan Read, free to the public

- WHAT:** Michigan Author Homecoming.
WHO: Richard Ford, Jim Harrison, Thomas McGuane: A Conversation.
WHEN: 7:30 p.m., Thursday, July 10, 2008. Book signing follows discussion.
Doors open at 6:45 p.m.
WHERE: Pasant Theatre, Wharton Center at Michigan State University, East Lansing.
COST: Free to the public. Limited seating on a first-come, first-served basis.

(LANSING)-----On July 10, 2008, the Michigan Humanities Council will host a Michigan Author Homecoming with critically acclaimed authors Richard Ford, Jim Harrison, and Thomas McGuane at the Wharton Center at Michigan State University (MSU). The three authors, icons of contemporary American literature, are also MSU alumni and will meet together in public for the first time. The event will be a moderated discussion among the literary giants. It will commemorate the conclusion of the 2007-08 Great Michigan Read. It is free and open to the public. The discussion will begin at 7:30 p.m., followed by a book signing. Doors will open at 6:45 p.m.

Both Harrison and McGuane grew up in Michigan and became acquainted while attending MSU, where they earned degrees in the 1960s. Ford was raised in Jackson, Miss. and also graduated from MSU in the 1960s, but never crossed paths with the other authors while on campus. Ford met Harrison in 1977 and McGuane in 1983. Biographies that list their works and accomplishments are below.

“There’s a way in which I – and probably any of us – carry those formative experiences around with us every minute, think about them all the time, are never really away from them,” Ford said. “For me, that’s how I ‘commune’ with Michigan – in my imagination. All of it entirely in the present tense.”

“This is an historic event,” said Jan Fedewa, executive director of the Michigan Humanities Council. “It’s the first time all three will appear on stage together, in public. It’s a remarkable opportunity to celebrate and explore their Michigan connections.”

(more)

Bill Castanier, who reviews books for the *Lansing City Pulse* and served on The Great Michigan Read selection committee, will moderate the discussion. He is a 1973 MSU alumnus.

The Michigan Author Homecoming is a Great Michigan Read program presented by the Michigan Humanities Council and sponsored in part by the MSU Alumni Association, MSU College of Arts and Letters, MSU Libraries, MSU Press, and the Residential College in the Arts and Humanities at MSU. Schuler Books & Music will provide on-site book sales.

Richard Ford

Ford broke into the literary world in 1976, with *A Piece of My Heart*. He is best known for his three novels featuring Frank Bascombe: *The Sportswriter* (1986), *Independence Day* (1995), and *The Lay of the Land* (2006). For many, Ford has captured the essence of Baby Boomer masculinity in his Bascombe character. The second Bascombe novel received the Pulitzer Prize and the PEN/Faulkner award. Ford's short stories, notably the *Rock Springs* collection, have also received wide acclaim. He now resides in Maine.

Jim Harrison

Harrison published poetry before his first novel, *Wolf*, appeared in 1971. Soon after, his relationship with McGuane brought him to Hollywood, where Jack Nicholson would become a friend and patron. Nicholson's financial support allowed him to write his best-known work, the novella *Legends of the Fall*, published in 1979 (leading to a movie adaptation). After dabbling in screenplays, he returned to fiction and poetry. Much of his writing is set in Michigan. His next novel, *The English Major*, will reach shelves this October. Harrison spends most of his time in Montana.

Thomas McGuane

With Harrison's assistance, McGuane published his first novel, *The Sporting Club* (set in Michigan), in 1969. After selling the film rights, he joined the Hollywood orbit, with original screenplays (*The Missouri Breaks*, *Rancho Deluxe*) and a directorial effort (*92 in the Shade*). He continued to write short stories and novels, eventually focusing on the American West (in particular, Montana) as his primary setting. His 2006 collection of short stories, *Gallatin Canyon*, received wide critical acclaim. McGuane currently lives in Montana.

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