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Writers support NKU library

Friends group sponsors events

BY HOWARD MCEWEN | ENQUIRER CONTRIBUTOR

NKU's Friends of Steely Library celebrated Earth Day by hosting nature writer Rick Bass.

"Rick Bass is my literary hero, and I have the greatest respect for both his art and his environmental activism," said local nature author and the Friends president-elect Ron Ellis.

The visit from Bass was the third event in an inaugural literary series sponsored by the group.

"The library board believes the university should be a literary center in the region and that Steely Library is the heart of the campus and at the very center of the educational experience at NKU," Ellis said. "Central to our vision of establishing a literary series is the hope that we can provide opportunities for developing writers and enhance the cultural life of the community at large."

In March, the Friends brought Oprah Book Club selection author Gwyn Hyman Rubio, scribe of "Icy Sparks" to NKU.

In the fall, contributors to the compilation "Of Woods and Water" gave readings and signing.

They included former Kentucky Poet Laureate Richard Taylor, former CBS newsman David Dick and "Kentucky Life" host Dave Shuffett.

The Friends will have a board meeting May 11 to discuss future library activities and authors.

"In addition (to the literary series), the Friends wish to inaugurate a writing contest for the previously unpublished work of area students and writers and to connect students with the visiting writers. We are in additional discussions about connecting with some of NKU's established writing and literary initiatives," Ellis said.

The Friends are in negotiations with author Silas House for a fall event.

House has won the Appalachian Book of the Year Award and the Kentucky Novel of the Year award for his 2005 release "The Coal Tattoo."

The author is also a columnist for the Lexington Herald-Leader and a contributor to National Public Radio's "All Things Considered."

"The Rick Bass events on April 21 and 22 were successful and well-attended," Ellis said.

Built in 1975 and named after NKU's first president, the 120,000-square-foot W. Frank Steely Library went through a \$9.5 million expansion in 1995.

People can use any library card to check out materials.

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