

March Forth on March Fourth

Written by Editor

Tuesday, 23 January 2018 12:37 - Last Updated Wednesday, 24 January 2018 06:37



The Pat Conroy Literary Center will hold its second annual March Forth on March Fourth, commemorating the second anniversary of Pat's death, on Sunday, March 4th, at the Frissell Community House at Penn Center on St. Helena Island.

The Penn Center, a place of quiet dignity and rich history, is a perfect setting for the day-long embrace of nature, poetry, fiction, and fellowship among writers and readers in the heart of Conroy's beloved Lowcountry.

Founded in 1862 by Quaker missionaries and one of the first schools for freed slaves, the Center is nestled in the quiet majesty of the Lowcountry, surrounded by live oaks and loblolly pines. The Frissell Community House, located on a sloped embankment at the Center, served as an important interracial gathering place for leaders of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960's. It was a place familiar and dear to Pat, not only for what it embodied and protected, but also in a more intimate way from his days as a student at Beaufort High. Pat first visited the Center in October, 1960 with Gene Norris, his English teacher, and later met Martin Luther King Jr, Julian Bond, and other prominent civil rights leaders there. Pat, in a speech that he gave at Penn Center in 2010 said, "I watched my whole country change because of meetings that had taken place at Penn Center." And now Penn Center also serves as a gracious gatekeeper to the cemetery where Pat is buried.

March Forth on March Fourth will feature National Book Award-winning poet **Nikky Finney**, two-time Lillian Smith Award-winning novelist

Anthony Grooms

, master naturalist, poet and memoirist

J. Drew Lanham

, poet and retired teacher

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Tim Conroy

, and best-selling novelist

Cassandra King Conroy

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Registration is \$22 for all-day admission with an optional catered box lunch by Debbi Covington for \$18. There are three menu options available online. Lunch reservations need to be made by noon, Thursday, March 1st. Register online at patconroyliterarycenter.org.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

10:00–11:30 a.m.: Nature walk at Penn Center led by J. Drew Lanham

Noon–1:30 p.m.: Welcome by Cassandra King Conroy, Tim Conroy's presentation on Pat Conroy's Great Love of Poetry, optional catered box lunches

1:45–3:00 p.m.: Nikky Finney's keynote poetry reading

3:00–3:30 p.m.: break and book signing

3:30–4:30 p.m.: Anthony Grooms' discussion of his novel *The Vain Conversation*

4:30–5:00 p.m.: book signing, opportunity to visit Pat Conroy's gravesite

Presented in partnership with the Penn Center, this event is sponsored by a gift from Erin and Matt Devlin and by a grant from the South Carolina Arts Commission funded in part by a generous award from the John and Susan Bennett Memorial Arts Fund of the Coastal Community Foundation of South Carolina.

ABOUT THE PRESENTERS

Keynote speaker **Nikky Finney** was born in Conway, South Carolina, and raised in Sumter. She left South Carolina after high school with her eyes and heart set on becoming a writer. After living a

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March 4th is a day of celebration for the LGBTQ+ community, marking the anniversary of the Stonewall riots. It is a day to honor the resilience and courage of those who fought for equality and to celebrate the progress made since then. The 2011 National Book Awards for Poetry, Drama, and Nonfiction were also announced on this day.

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