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A Lesson For Greensboro

Seth Feinberg

Staff Writer

Award-winning author Ernest J. Gaines visited Guilford and gave two presentations on Nov. 14 as part of the "One Book" reading program that is being held throughout the United States. The Greensboro program, "One City, One Book," is sponsored by the Friends of the Greensboro Public Library.

The Washington Center for the Book initiated the "One Book" program in 1998, and it has since been introduced in all 50 states and throughout Canada.

The program is part of the library's centennial celebration, during which 10,000 local residents read *A Lesson Before Dying*.

ing, Gaines' award-winning novel, published in 1993.

The novel depicts a young black man wrongly condemned to die in the electric chair, and the teacher who attempts to help him meet death with dignity.

A Lesson Before Dying was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize and has been adapted for theatre and television. Other cities that have read it include Buffalo, Rochester, Grand Rapids, Houston, Waco, and Seattle.

At the age of 15, Gaines moved from his birthplace of Louisiana to California since he had no access to high school education in the segregated South. After entering a public library for the first time



Ernest Gaines spoke about his novel *A Lesson Before Dying*.

at age 16, Gaines decided to become a writer and later graduated from San Francisco State College. Since 1983, he has served as a

writer-in-residence at the University of Louisiana-Lafayette.

Gaines' first presentation focused on growing up in Louisiana and stories about how he began writing. His evening presentation focused on *A Lesson Before Dying* and how it came to be.

"I'm hoping that the One City, One Book Program will get people talking about the different themes in the book, such as race, education, and inequalities within the death penalty," said

Gaines

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Undoing Racism at Guilford

Kara Price

News Editor

One weekend. Twenty intense hours. Thirty Guilford students. Ten community members.

These are the factors three women worked with as they led the training session Undoing Racism as a retreat at Guilford College Nov. 15-17.

Representing the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, trainers Monica Walker, Angela Winfrey and Suzanne Plihcik engaged participants in a variety of discussions and activities that seek to understand and finally dismantle institutionalized racism.

"I have never seen a group

struggle to understand an issue this deep," said senior Naz Urooj.

The training focused on racism within the U.S., primarily between blacks and whites, as a system rooted in history, society and institutions of this country.

The definition of racism accounted for the combined dynamic of race, power, and prejudice.

"At times it was hard to swallow," said junior Elizabeth Appenzeller, "but it's important to understand the racist system that we all take part in."

The trainers brought in a blend of historical facts and personal experiences to provide participants with a context in which to

discuss racism. Participants also had the opportunity to share and reflect on their own experiences and perceptions within the context of the discussion.

First-year Tanya Madenyika reflected on an activity in which the trainers asked everyone to say something they enjoyed about being their race.

"I think for all of us in the

room it was a difficult question," she said, "because most of us don't sit down and think about it."

Another activity favored by many participants was the Saturday evening culture-sharing. Those who felt so inclined shared

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