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# small TALK

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## Writer's Symposium Brings Inspiration from the South



Author Awiakta reads from one of her many selections on Appalachian literature.



Virgil Suarez reads from his books of poetry at the symposium this weekend.



Photos by Lindsay Tederman

Right: The Chapel gives poignancy to Suarez's message.



LAURA PHILLIPS  
Staff Writer

Last weekend, scholars and a variety of literary enthusiasts from around the country, were introduced to the Methodist College community with the 18<sup>th</sup> annual Southern Writer's Symposium. This year's Symposium focused on the theme *History in/an/of Southern Literature*.

A variety of discussions that were based on this theme included: "The Multicultural South," "Region and Religion," "Remembering War, Riot, and Revolution in Southern Literature," and "Southern Women Writers and History."

Among the numerous scholars and writers that were invited

to speak were novelist, poet, and essayist, Virgil Suarez; editor, teacher, and publisher, Louis D. Rubin Jr.; professor and writer, Trudier Harris; author and Cherokee native, Loti Awiakta; poet, David Treadway Manning; North Carolina native, and story teller, Sheila Kay Adams; scholarly professor, and speaker, Leigh Ann Duck; academic journal writer, Sally Ann Ferguson; and singer songwriter, Marshall Chapman.

Each of these scholars and authors brought their own sense of style, intellect, and diversity to the Symposium. The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium also offered two luncheons with entertaining speakers that students and guest were allowed to attend.

There was also a book signing event in which guest were

allowed to meet and have one on one discussions with the numerous authors.

An entertaining addition to this year's Symposium, was a theatre production of "1918." This play focused on the patriotism of The Great War. The play was a perfect addition to focus on the Symposium's theme of *History and the South*. Another entertaining feature for all to enjoy, was a poetry reading hosted by Methodist College's own, Longleaf Press.

The Southern Writer's Symposium was started in 1982 by professor Sue Kimball. Head of the English Department, Dr. Emily Wright, took over the event in 2003 with the theme *Region*. Unfortunately, the 2003 Symposium had a low turnout due to

Hurricane Isabel, but it was still a scholarly success.

Until this year, the Southern Writer's Symposium was mostly known as a "scholarly event," which made it of less interest to the public. Dr. Wright had another goal in mind this year, which was to target more to the local community.

Wright was pleased with the turn-out of this year's Symposium and stated that "My goal of making the Symposium more entertaining, definitely paid off. I was hoping to get a good lineup of speakers to appeal to a larger audience and I think that is exactly what the speakers did." Wright definitely made up for 2003's low turnout and has left the community anticipating for next year's Symposium.