



The nonprofit Pat Conroy Literary Center will host two free public events featuring visiting southern writers George Singleton and Roberts Hicks on Tuesday, May 28, and Thursday, May 30, respectively. The author events will begin at 5:30 pm and be held in the Conroy Center at 905 Port Republic Street, Beaufort. Books will be available for sale and signing.

Tuesday, May 28, 5:30 pm

George Singleton has published seven collections of stories (most recently *Staff Picks*), two novels, and a book of writing advice. Over 200 of his stories have appeared in magazines such as the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, *Playboy*,
the *Georgia Review*,
the *Southern Review*,
the *Cincinnati Review*,
and elsewhere. A 2010 Inductee to the South Carolina Academy of Authors, he is also the recipient of a Pushcart Prize, a Guggenheim fellowship, the Hillsdale Award from the Fellowship of Southern Writers, and the Corrington Award for Literary Excellence. Singleton lives in Spartanburg, where he holds the John C. Cobb Chair in Humanities at Wofford College.

Staff Picks provides a loosely linked baker's dozen of stories set in small, often-floundering towns such as Steepleburg, which once boasted more congregations per capita than anywhere in the southeastern U.S., and Poke, home to a dedicated chapter of Optimists International. A woman tries to win an RV in a radio station's contest, so she can drive the vehicle through the plate glass window of a business that cheated her; a father vacillates on telling his teenage son the truth about the boy's mother; a character discovers an uncle's infidelities; a father parades his young son around, meeting women who could've been the boy's mother; a husband and wife confront adult trick-or-treaters dressed as Jesus and the two thieves, while still grieving the accidental death of their son. In turns both comic and tragic, Singleton shows characters trying to make sense out of the Old South, the New South, and the New New South in all their ragged glory.

Thursday, May 30, 5:30 pm

Robert Hicks is the *New York Times* best-selling author of the historical novels *The Widow of the South*, *The Orphan Mother*,

and

A Separate Country.

Blues legend B.B. King gave Hicks his favorite title: "Curator of Vibe." Named #2 in the most recent listing of the top 100 Reasons to

Love Nashville by *Nashville Lifestyles* magazine, Hicks was described as Nashville's "Master of Ceremonies." A lifelong collector, Hicks was the first Tennessean to be listed among *Arts & Antiques'*

Top 100 Collectors in America—his collection focuses on outsider art and southern material culture. He served as curator on the exhibition,

Art of Tennessee,

at the Frist Center for the Visual Arts in Nashville. Hicks is founding chairman of Franklin's Charge: A Vision and Campaign for the Preservation of Historic Open Space in the fight to

secure and preserve the historic battlefield in Williamson County. In December 2005, the Nashville

Tennessean□

named him Tennessean of the Year for the impact his best-selling novel *The Widow of the South* has had on Tennessee heritage tourism and preservation. In the October 2014, he introduced his Battlefield Bourbon, a very small batch, Tennessee-made, aged and hand-bottled bourbon whiskey. With this, the

Tennessean

gave Hicks his other favorite title: "Whiskey Preservationist." He is also the host of the annual Seriously Seersucker, the largest seersucker party in the world. About

The Widow of the South

: "Carrie McGavock witnessed the Battle of Franklin in Tennessee, on a day in 1864 when 9,000 soldiers were slaughtered, the vast majority of them Confederate. Carrie, the central character in this mesmerizing novel, was an actual historical figure. Her farm was close by the scene of the battle, and her house was commandeered as a makeshift hospital. And what Carrie the fictional character does after the battle, the actual Carrie did in real life. When more than 1,000 Confederate bodies buried in a neighboring field were threatened with desecration, she and her husband moved them to their own land and organized the only private Confederate cemetery. The brewing of the battle, its events, and the wound-healing time afterward are told by Hicks not only from Carrie's perspective but also from the points of view of Mariah, Carrie's slave-turned-friend; Carrie's plantation-owning husband; Union and Confederate soldiers and officers; and Carrie's neighbors. The author gracefully yet forcefully enters the psychology of these various individuals, each one representing a certain side in not only the battle at hand but also in the overarching context of nation rending. And, almost strangely yet certainly beautifully, from all this carnage emerges a love story that transcends time."—

Booklist,□

STARRED REVIEW George Singleton and Robert Hicks will each appear on season two of SCETV's

By the River□

author interview program, which films in Beaufort.

Voted Beaufort's favorite museum in the 2019 ESPB Best of Beaufort contest, the nonprofit Pat Conroy Literary Center is South Carolina's first affiliate of the American Writers Museum and second American Library Association Literary Landmark. Through its interpretive center, year-round educational programs, and annual literary festival, the Conroy Center preserves and continues the literary legacy of Pat Conroy (1945–2016) as a teacher, mentor, advocate, and friend to readers and writers alike. TripAdvisor's top-ranked destination in Beaufort, the Conroy Center is located at 905 Port Republic Street in Beaufort, open to the public from noon to 4:00 p.m. Thursdays through Sundays. To learn more about the educational programs offered through the Conroy Center, please visit www.patconroyliterarycenter.org.