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RIPLEY MAIN STREET ASSOCIATION

PRESS RELEASE

Ripley Main Street Association hosts:

Faulkner Heritage Festival, November 4-5, 2011

An exploration of William Faulkner's Tippah County connection

Nobel Prize winning author William Faulkner has deep roots in Tippah County. Two of his great-grandfathers lived and died in Tippah County and both had a profound effect on Faulkner as a man and as a writer. The more infamous of the two grandfathers was Colonel W.C. Falkner, who was fatally wounded on the Ripley courthouse square on November 5, 1889 by his former business partner R.J. Thurmond. The Colonel's story is retold by William Faulkner in Flags in the Dust and The Unvanquished with the Colonel appearing as the character Colonel John Sartoris. The Faulkner Heritage Festival seeks to explain to Ripley natives and visitors alike the importance of the Colonel's story on William Faulkner's writing.

The 2011 Faulkner Heritage Festival will begin on Friday, November 4th with a writer's workshop lead by Dr. Ben McClelland of the University of Mississippi. The workshop is open to adults and high school students who are interested in improving their writing skills. On Friday evening, the festival will begin with a reception at the Dixie Theatre followed by the movie, The Sound and the Fury. The festival will continue Saturday morning with an orientation class and a presentation by historian Jack Elliott. Mr. Elliott has researched old land records from the Tippah County Courthouse to index properties in Ripley prior to 1910. His research has uncovered some mis-located sites in Falkner lore and has brought to light some previously unknown facts that will enhance the Festival's historic walking tour. The festival luncheon will feature Emory University Professor, Dr. Sally Wolff-King. Dr. Wolff-King will discuss her recent publication, Ledgers of History, a book that reveals startling sources of inspiration for Faulkner's most famous works. The afternoon will be spent with Falkner historian, Bruce Smith. Smith leads a fascinating two hour walking tour of the homes and buildings in historic downtown Ripley that figure into the Colonel Falkner saga. The tour continues at the Ripley Cemetery with Ripley High School Honor students in period costume telling the story from the point of view of the "Spirits of Falkner." The focal point of the cemetery tour is of course the forty foot tall Italian marble statue of Colonel Falkner that stands majestically in the cemetery. The festival will end with a formal dinner and coffee and dessert reception. The reception will be held at the Harrison Law Office which has recently been decorated to feature pictures of homes and people found in the Falkner story.

Writers and artists are encouraged to get involved with the festival early by entering the fiction contest or art exhibition.

If you are interested in attending the writer's workshop, entering the fiction contest, art exhibition or festival visit Ripley Main Street on the web at www.mainstreet.ripley.ms or e-mail event coordinator, Melinda Marsalis, at msmelmar@dixie-net.com.