HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR. TO BE FEATURED SPEAKER FOR THE 26TH ANNUAL GOVERNOR’S LECTURE

PG 2

SEE PHOTOS FROM “THE FIFTIES IN FOCUS” ASHLAND

PG 5

“CROSSROADS: CHANGE IN RURAL AMERICAL” OPENS SEPT. 11

PG 12
TONY SHALHOUB MARVELS AT WHAT ‘FINDING YOUR ROOTS’ TURNS UP ABOUT HIS LIFE

EMMY- AND TONY-WINNING ACTOR TONY SHALHOUB CALLED AS MANY OF HIS SIBLINGS AS HE COULD AFTER DR. HENRY LOUIS GATES JR. TOLD HIM THE STORY OF THEIR ANCESTORS ON THE PBS SHOW, “FINDING YOUR ROOTS.”

BY BRUCE MILLER
Reprinted with permission from the Sioux City Journal

“I was sort of stuck in a vortex because I had a lot of things and a lot of excitement I wanted to share,” Shalhoub says. “But, at the same time, I was kind of restraining myself because I didn’t want to spoil the surprise.”

Like others who have been on Gates’ PBS series, “Finding Your Roots,” Shalhoub was surprised how much he didn’t know about his ancestors.

“It is incredibly humbling,” he says. “It really brings into sharp focus this sort of idea of the randomness of how I and my siblings ended up in the lives that we are in. Certain things have to occur and some tragic things have to occur for me to get to where I am.”

Shalhoub’s story – part of the seventh season of “Finding Your Roots” – details those ancestors in Lebanon who made great sacrifices to get his father to the United States and, ultimately, to Green Bay, Wisconsin, where Tony was born.

Like so many subjects in the award-winning series, Shalhoub discovered details that were overwhelming.

“It was on another emotional level altogether,” he says during a Zoom conference.

Even though he was close to his father, the actor didn’t have many details of his father’s life, “partly because he was so very young when it all happened.” In the episode – which aired February 9 – Shalhoub gets specifics.

“Had my paternal grandfather not died and had my paternal grandmother survived that difficult time, that family would have stayed there,” he says.

“Those kids would not have come over to meet relatives here. My father would not have met my mother. There’s a kind of bittersweet randomness to it all that ultimately becomes incredibly humbling.”

Gates says he saw Shalhoub, the star of “Monk” and “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel,” at a cocktail party and urged him to “come spit in the test tube.”

He did and Gates’ team went to work. Because DNA testing has helped speed the process, the “Finding Your Roots” team is able to uncover information more quickly than ever.

“Every day, more and more records are being digitized,” Gates says. “I have even contributed personally to the digitization of records in Lithuania and in Eastern Europe to help that process along.”

Gates says the search – and ultimate story – is a great gift.
“People break down and cry. They go home and have their (family tree) framed. We call it ‘ancestral immortality.’”

What the research ultimately proves is that “we are all the same,” Gates says. “We are brothers and sisters and we were all victims. When people came here on those boats, they weren’t in first class. They were in the bottom of the boat and getting seasick with no windows and horrible sanitation facilities. They were all metaphorically in the same boat. And our great country came out of that turmoil and chaos.”

Gates started the ancestry quest after a Black geneticist, Dr. Rick Kittles, told him they could do in a test tube what it took “Roots” author Alex Haley years to do.

Kittles tested Gates, gave him the results and, shortly after that, the Harvard professor had an epiphany.

“It was a gift from God,” he says. “I was standing in the bathroom and tears ran down my face. We could trace people’s genealogy until a paper trail ran out and, when it did, we could do the DNA to reveal their more distant ancestry. And 15 years later, here we are.”

Initially, “Finding Your Roots” focused on Black subjects because those paper trails were very difficult to find.

Gates expanded the searches and, since, has tracked families for celebrities in a host of careers.

Many, he says, have those “a-ha” moments when they hear the “Roots” stories.

Shalhoub, for example, says his grandfather would often sing hymns in Arabic. “It didn’t register super fully when we were kids” but made sense when he learned his grandfather had been in the church choir when he was a boy.

Now, Shalhoub says, he’d like to explore more deeply the journey his ancestors took in 1920 when they left their village and came to the Midwest.

“That time period turned out to be a number of months,” he says. “How did this group of kids, who did not speak English or anything...make it all the way by various modes of transportation? It just seems...”

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Humanities Nebraska (HN) is seeking nominations for its Council board by Friday, October 16. Board members are selected statewide from those who show a passion for the humanities and the cultural life of Nebraska HN makes every effort to find community members from the state’s diverse geographic, occupational and ethnic constituencies. The selection committee also seeks those who have balance between involvement in the humanities and other professional, business or community pursuits.

Nominations for the Council board must be postmarked on or before October 15. Find nomination forms and a complete list of basic board responsibilities online or, e-mail your request to info@humanitiesnebraska.org.

For more information, visit HumanitiesNebraska.org and select “Board” under the “About Us” menu.
Humanities Nebraska is pleased to announce that author and historian of the American West John R. Wunder will be the recipient of the 2021 Sower Award in the Humanities. He will be honored on October 12, 2021 immediately preceding the 26th Annual Governor’s Lecture at the Holland Center for Performing Arts in Omaha.

A long-time University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) history professor and former director of the Center for Great Plains Studies, Wunder has written about the Great Plains, Plains Indians, the Civil War and American legal history. He has published or edited 19 books and numerous essays and professional articles. His book “Retained by the People: A History of American Indians and the Bill of Rights” (1995) won Phi Alpha Theta national history honorary society’s award for the best history book that year. He has also won many other awards and fellowships, including the Lifetime Achievement Award from Native American Scholars.

In his nomination letter, Ron Hull wrote, “Dr. Under is an inspired teacher who understands, in the Land Grant tradition, the necessity to share education, our history, the humanities, with people throughout the state and beyond. This he has done tirelessly.”

All are welcome to attend the 26th Annual Governor’s Lecture in the Humanities to see Dr. Wunder honored with the Sower Award. The event, featuring Henry Louis Gates, Jr., will take place Tuesday, October 12 at 7 p.m. at Omaha’s Holland Center for performing Arts. Live-streaming will be available as well.

When participants of Nebraska Warrior Writers (NWW) published their first anthology last year, the pandemic prevented any sort of public reading or book signing. To remedy this, the NWW is hosting a celebration on Wednesday, November 17 at 6 p.m. in the Great Plains Room at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s East Campus student union building.

The celebration is open to the public and will include readings from contributors, book sales, a signing table, and refreshments.

Humanities Nebraska launched NWW in 2014 in partnership with the Nebraska Writing Project and the Veterans Administration. The goal is to help veterans and active duty military personnel express their thoughts and feelings in words during six to eight biweekly sessions facilitated by professional writing instructors. NWW participants have produced essays, fiction, non-fiction historic accounts, poetry and song lyrics according to their personal interests.

Fall NWW sessions will be hosted in Lincoln beginning August 28 and in Omaha beginning September 18. Interested veterans, active duty military and their support persons may attend either in person or online via Zoom. No writing experience is necessary. Anyone interested in participating in the workshops may send email to Jen Stastny at jenstastny2029@gmail.com.

To purchase an anthology or to sign up for Nebraska Warrior Writers workshops, please visit: NEWarriorWriters.org
On August 6 and 7, hundreds of Nebraskans attended “The Fifties in Focus” Nebraska Chautauqua in Ashland.

Friday evening, guests saw a 1950s fashion show with Sue McLain of the HN Speakers Bureau and Eisenhower biographer Jim Newton, who talked about the president’s “Middle Way” strategies for the various polarizing controversies during his presidency. Dr. Danielle Battisti of the University of Nebraska at Omaha moderated.

Saturday was a full day of breakout sessions at the Ashland Public Library by various scholars on topics ranging from rock & roll and the idyllic “nuclear family” to the Korean War and civil rights.

Though volatile weather forced evening presentations indoors, Chautauquans Becky Stone as Rosa Parks and Dr. Lenneal Henderson as Justice Thurgood Marshall had the audience transfixed as they shared first-person accounts of history. The audience asked many thoughtful questions, moderated by Dr. Catherine Biba of Hastings College.

The Ashland community enhanced “The Fifties in Focus” with their own contributions, including a 1950s car show, children’s activities, a large display of memorabilia, and a warm sense of hospitality. Alas, a sock hop planned for the big finale had to be cancelled due to a city-wide power outage.

Humanities Nebraska would like to thank the City of Ashland and event chair Laura Capp, an HN board member, for all the work and many contributions of time and effort that made “The Fifties in Focus” a success.

Thanks also go to the many sponsors who made Nebraska Chautauqua possible this year: The Johnny Carson Fund at Nebraska Cultural Endowment, The State of Nebraska, Ashland Public Library, Postscript, Ashland Chamber of Commerce, Farmers and Merchants Bank of Ashland, i3 Bank, Helen Raikes, Chuck & Shirley Niemeyer, In

HUNDREDS EXPERIENCE “THE FIFTIES IN FOCUS” IN ASHLAND
THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Join these generous contributors and help to cultivate an understanding of our history and culture.

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William Workman

*Deceased

Gifts received between March 1 and July 31, 2021 | Many donors make multiple gifts throughout the year. Cumulative giving for the year is listed in our annual report.
We thank these generous individuals who helped ensure a vibrant cultural life in Nebraska.

Contact Heather Thomas at heather@HumanitiesNebraska.org to learn more.

NEW NAME, SAME MISSION

After 30 years as Community Services Fund of Nebraska, the nonprofit federation announced that it is rebranding as Give Nebraska. The new brand more accurately conveys the organization’s mission — to make it easy for Nebraskans to support local charities through payroll deduction and workplace giving campaigns.

“We wanted to better capture the work we do in our communities,” says Melissa Filipi, executive director for Give Nebraska. Humanities Nebraska is a proud member of the coalition of 74 diverse nonprofits. HN greatly appreciates donors who designate gifts to us through Give Nebraska workplace giving campaigns.

To learn more, please visit: communityservicesfund.org

FOR THE LOVE OF FAMILY READING,

In May, 110 donors gave $37,769 to Humanities Nebraska through the tenth annual Give to Lincoln Day, exceeding last year’s total of $29,651. Sponsored by Lincoln Community Foundation, nearly $8 million was raised for more than 450 Lincoln nonprofits.

Most gifts to HN were designated for Prime Time Family Reading “First Aid Kits,” which Humanities Nebraska began assembling to encourage families to read together at home. The kits include a selection of award-winning children’s book in English and Spanish, activities, toys and a discussion guide.

HN thanks the many new and returning donors, match fund sponsors, media sponsors, and the Lincoln Community Foundation for helping HN serve families through reading.

Thank you!
IN MEMORY

STEVE ACHELPOHL | 1950-2021
Steven E. Achelpohl died on April 17. Born in Wichita, he attended the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, playing shortstop for the baseball team. After getting his J.D. in 1975, he began his career as clerk for the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals, then served as a defense attorney in Omaha defense. In 2001, he became chair of the Nebraska Democratic Party, a position he held for nearly eight years. He served on the Humanities Nebraska council board 2006-2015 and on the HN foundation board in 2010. He is fondly remembered as “a dedicated family man.”

LEO FETTMAN | 1926-2021
Leo Fettman died on April 22. After immigrating to the U.S. in 1960, he worked as a cantor and educator in Wisconsin and Omaha. From 2002-2005, he was a member of the Humanities Nebraska Speakers Bureau. He willingly shared his experiences as a Jewish person in Europe during the Holocaust, which he also recounted in his book, “Shoah, Journey from the Ashes.” With his wife Annette always at his side, he spoke to countless audiences throughout the state. His goal was to “make certain that the personal accounts of the survivors live on.”

REV. DR. JOEL GAJARDO | 1933-2021
Joel Gajardon died on June 24. Much loved by Prime Time partners and families throughout the state, he served families as a bilingual storyteller and discussion leader for Humanities Nebraska’s Prime Time program since 2004. He was enthusiastically requested by all sites and, when he wasn’t able to work with a site, families asked about him. Joel was also a nationally recognized Prime Time trainer, training team members from across the nation in New Orleans, Grand Island, and Omaha.

VIRGINIA JONES | 1930-2021
Virginia Lea Jones died on July 29. A lifetime resident of the Nebraska Sandhills, she was a passionate teacher, 4H leader, and citizen. Crowned Goddess of Agriculture at the University of Nebraska School of Agriculture at Curtis, she was also the first Logan County Rodeo Queen and president of the Nebraska Cattlewomen. Among her many civic activities, she was founder and president of the Sandhills Association for Regional Progress, an involved member of the American Legion Auxiliary, and board member of Humanities Nebraska.

GRETCHEN LAISON | 1916-2021
Gretchen (Hollman) Lainson died on June 4. After graduating from Hastings College in 1937, she became very active in the civic and social organizations of Hastings. This included the Hastings Public Library Board, the Nebraska State Library Commission, United Way, and Governor Kerry’s statewide study to understand the needs of Higher Education among others. She received the Nebraska Outstanding Library Trustee award in 1972, and she was a founding board member of the Nebraska Committee for the Humanities, now Humanities Nebraska.

MORRIE TUTTLE | 1932-2021
Frederick Morris ("Morrie") Tuttle died on April 22. After graduating from Northwestern University, he served for two years in the Army near Lyons, France, soaking in architecture, art, music, and culture during his free time. Upon retirement from a notable career in insurance, he served many cultural organizations, including the Nebraska Literary Heritage Association, the Heritage Room for Nebraska Authors, the Nebraska Center for the Book, and Friends of the State Museum. He received the Sower Award in the Humanities in 1998.
Recently, HN provided a grant to Creighton University College of Arts and Sciences for a website created in conjunction with Joslyn Art Museum about the Maximilian-Bodmer Expedition. Between 1832-34, explorer and naturalist Prince Alexander Philipp Maximilian of Germany embarked on a voyage into the western most portion of the American Interior, along with Swiss artist Karl Bodmer. The 2,500-mile journey by steamship and keelboat started in St. Louis in April 1833, heading up the Missouri River. The team traveled as far as Fort McKenzie, Montana, spending about a year with Native American tribes of the Upper Missouri and wintering at the Mandan village near Fort Clark in North Dakota. While Maximilian eloquently documented scientific and anthropological observations, Bodmer painted what he saw. His watercolors remain one of the most perceptive visual accounts of the West ever created, and Maximilian’s journals are a priceless historic record of Native Americans of the region and the burgeoning High Plains fur trade.

The website includes a number of journal excerpts, paintings, and pencil drawings from the extensive Joslyn collection, as well as interactive maps to help viewers place where each was created. You can find it at max-bod.omahahistories.net. The Joslyn Art Museum will use items from this collection for its upcoming exhibition, “Faces from the Interior: The North American Portraits of Karl Bodmer.” It will open on October 2 and run through April 17, 2022.

RECENTLY AWARDED GRANTS

- **Arts For All, Inc, Omaha, $2,000**, in support for “Arts For All & Step-Up Omaha Youth Enrichment Program”
- **Asian Community and Cultural Center, Lincoln, $1,200** to help fund “Camp Culture 2021”
- **Blixt Locally Grown (The Grumble Project), Lincoln, $940** supporting a fellowship program for emerging playwrights
- **Ethiopian Community Association, Omaha, $2,000** in support of its Family Restoration project
- **Flatwater Shakespeare Company, Lincoln, $1,375** to help fund its educational tour of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”
- **John G. Neihardt Foundation, Bancroft, $900** in support of the 56th Annual Neihardt Day celebration
- **Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, Lincoln, $2,000** to help fund the 2021 Pilster Lecture and Mari Sandoz Symposium titled “The Life & Places of Mari Sandoz”
- **Metropolitan Community College, Omaha, $1,000**, in support of “The Perfect Latino with Javier Avila”
- **Omaha Public Library Foundation, $2,000** to help fund the Omaha Lit Fest on September 3, 2021
- **Operation Christmas Card, North Platte, $1,300** in support of educational programming for the 2021 North Platte Pow-Wow in July
- **The Robert Henri Museum and Historical Walkway, Cozad, $2,000** to help fund “Robert Henri: A New Look,” a national conference scheduled for October 15-17, 2021
- **Sioux Lookout DAR Chapter, North Platte, $2,000** for an archival display case for artifacts related to Sitting Bull
- **Together We Achieve Miracles, Inc., Omaha, $1,600** in support of media and social planning
- **Tri-Faith Initiative, Omaha, $2,000** to help fund pre-production for a documentary film
- **University of Nebraska-Lincoln Board of Regents, $2,000** in support of the upcoming exhibition, “Celebrating the Legacy of Red Cloud”
- **White River Wacipi, Crawford, $1,800** to help fund educational events during their mid-August pow-wow.
MEET JOANNA HEJL

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— JOANNA HEJL

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Registration and brochure are available at HumanitiesNebraska.org.

“DEAR STRANGER” RETURNS NEXT WINTER

Humanities Nebraska will host another round of the letter exchange program “Dear Stranger” next winter.

“We want to continue to help Nebraskans connect with each other,” said Mary Yager, associate director. “Winter seems like the best time to encourage writing a letter, since Nebraska weather can be so unpredictable.”

The premise is simple: write a letter or postcard (there will be a prompt to help inspire you), include clippings, photos, recipes or anything else that will fit in an envelope, send it to HN, and be anonymously matched with a Nebraska resident from another part of the state. You’ll get their letter, and they will get yours. After the first exchange, some participants choose to continue to write to each other; others do not.

Participation information and a new prompt will be posted on the HN website before the end of the year. If you are interested in this program, please let us know by sending email to dearstranger@humanitiesnebraska.org and you will be added to the email notification list.

A CELEBRATION OF Nebraska Books

SAVE THE DATE
Oct. 23, 2021 • 2:30-6:30 pm
NEBRASKA HISTORY MUSEUM
131 Centennial Mall North • Lincoln, NE

JOIN US TO CELEBRATE:
2021 One Book One Nebraska Presentation
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Nebraska Book Award Winners
Mildred Bennett & Jane Geske Award Presentation
2022 One Book One Nebraska Announcement
Reception and Book Signings

More Info: centerforthebook.nebraska.gov
facebook.com/NebraskaCenterfortheBook
MAKING CULTURAL CONNECTIONS
WITH YOUR SUPPORT

Your support of Humanities Nebraska helps us rise to new challenges and create new pathways for Nebraskans to engage with history, literature, culture and one another. Staff has been planning a variety of programming for many forms of interests. Opportunities to engage with one another, in large and small ways, abound in the coming months!

Your gift now will allow HN to expand our crucial work and bring humanities programs to your community and online through the rest of 2021 and beyond. Your donation, of any size, will help:
- present Speakers Bureau programs in schools, libraries and senior centers
- bring families together for reading and fun through Prime Time Family Reading
- bring the new traveling Smithsonian Museum on Main Street exhibition “Crossroads: Change in Rural America” to seven Nebraska communities including Kimball, Tecumseh and Falls City this fall, and Wisner, Red Cloud, McCook and Chadron after the first of the year.

Your gift will help HN make connections in your community. Check out the HN website for easy online giving.

Make your gift at HumanitiesNebraska.org/donate
Thank you!

The Nebraska Cultural Endowment Proudly Supports
Insert Nonprofit Name Here

Learn more about how the Nebraska Cultural Endowment ensures an endless tradition of arts and humanities in our state, visit NebraskaCulture.org
“Crossroads: Change in Rural America” gives seven Nebraska communities a chance to explore cultural and economic changes that affected their vitality over the past century. In 1900, 40% of Americans lived in rural areas. By 2010, that population measured less than 18%.

Designed and offered by the Smithsonian, this exhibition is sure to inspire discussions about what happened when America’s rural population became a minority of the country’s population and how local communities have managed the ripple effects to this day.

“Crossroads” includes six sections filled with photos, artifacts, and multimedia presentations provided by the Smithsonian. Each host site adds their own portion of the exhibition to provide the local view. For example, Kimball’s site hosts have brought in artifacts from area museums to create some displays that help tell the local story.

The timing of “Crossroads” in Kimball was chosen to coincide with the Plains Historical Society’s annual Farmer’s Day event, which will allow many additional people to contribute to the conversation about Kimball’s ability to thrive despite the many challenges facing all rural communities. There will be a special kick-off event on September 11, which will be attended by Rep. Adrian Smith, and then the exhibit will be open to the public at Kimball’s Fraternal Hall September 13-30.

For the second leg of the Nebraska Tour October 8 through November 12, the Johnson County Historical Society in Tecumseh has arranged for the Deer Creek Sodbusters are to give a demonstration of agricultural advancements over the years.

From November 19 to December 27, the Falls City Library and Art Center will host “Crossroads.” Organizers have selected works of art from the local Stadler Gallery for its display. Also in the works are walking tours, book discussions and other activities.

The remaining locations and dates for this touring exhibition are:

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>JAN 3–FEB 11</td>
<td>Wisner, Wisner Senior Center</td>
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<td>FEB 18–MAR 31</td>
<td>Red Cloud, National Willa Cather Center</td>
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<td>APR 8–MAY 25</td>
<td>McCook, Keystone Business Center</td>
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<td>JUNE 1–26</td>
<td>Chadron, Dawes County Historical Society</td>
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Humanities Nebraska thanks these sponsors for bringing Crossroads to Nebraska: Nebraska Cultural Endowment and Batten Trailer Leasing.

For more information about this program, visit humanitiesnebraska.org/crossroads
For sponsorship information, please contact heather@humanitiesnebraska.org.