

**Cincinnati is Reading and Talking About: *A Lesson Before Dying***  
**Author Ernest J. Gaines to Speak in Cincinnati**  
**for “On the Same Page” Bookclub**

Ernest J. Gaines, the nationally acclaimed author of *A Lesson Before Dying*, is coming to the city to speak as part of a culminating event to the community-wide book club, *On the Same Page Cincinnati*. On Tuesday, April 23 at 2:30 p.m., The Shoemaker Center at the University of Cincinnati will be transformed from an athletic arena into a literary center when it hosts the award-winning writer as he discusses his book and its relevance to helping resolve racial differences. Books will be available for purchase during a book signing to be held immediately following the lecture in the Center. For more information about the author event call 513-556-4194.

Co-sponsored by the University of Cincinnati and the Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County, the event is free, open to the public, and requires no ticket to attend. “Together with the Public Library and the rest of the *On the Same Page* task force, we wanted to make sure this important and meaningful event is as convenient and accessible as possible to persons from all backgrounds,” said Mitchel D. Livingston, Vice President for Students Affairs & Services for the University of Cincinnati and one of the nine members who served on a community team that selected the book. “We’re encouraging college students, high school classes, book clubs and other groups, as well as individuals, to come to the event.”

“The Library is excited to see the community get behind such a worthwhile reading experience and to be part of a unifying literary event that enables all of us to share common ground and diversity,” commented Kimber L. Fender, Executive Director of the Public Library. “The book is engaging, as well as challenging, lending itself beautifully to book discussions organized throughout the region, across cultural, class, and racial lines.”

Later that evening from 8:00-9:00 p.m., WCET48 will present a live in-studio broadcast, *On the Same Page: An Evening with Ernest J. Gaines*, featuring the author, who will engage in a question-and-answer session with viewer call-ins. “This is an incredible opportunity for the public to interact with a world class author, whose stimulating, provocative writings are a catalyst for discussing social and racial issues,” said Susan Howarth, President and CEO of WCET48.

For those who wish to learn more about the author before the event, WCET48 will be airing a special, one-hour biographical program, *Ernest J. Gaines: Louisiana Stories*, on Sunday, April 21 at 7:00 p.m.

What began as an idea, conceived simultaneously through several community groups, has evolved into a thriving community-wide book club based on similar programs initiated in several other American cities. The idea to get all Cincinnatians reading the same book at the same time led to the creation of a special community-minded task force. Through a well-planned process that involved collecting input from the public, a committee was then formed to choose a book around which the community could come together and help close the racial divide through literature. The choice became *A Lesson Before Dying*, and the idea has grown into a major civic event featuring the highly sought after author as the grand finale to an incredibly inspiring reading experience.

The one-book-for-all reading project, launched on February 28, 2002, has steadily been gaining momentum. The enthusiasm with which Cincinnatians are embracing *On the Same Page* is surfacing all around the Tristate. At the libraries copies of the book are being checked out at record rates, and sales at area bookstores are elevating the book to the top of the bestsellers list. Discussion groups are forming in libraries, university and high school classrooms, coffeehouses, community centers, and churches.

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Adults and teens interested in participating in discussion groups or in keeping up on what's new with the club can log onto a central web site at **[www.cincinnati.com/bookclub](http://www.cincinnati.com/bookclub)**. Information about the book, the author, the culminating author event, (as well as guidelines for starting up book clubs, discussion questions and other helpful materials) can also be found on the site.

*On the Same Page Cincinnati* was spearheaded through *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, *Cincinnati Magazine*, WCET48, The Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County, Kenton County Public Library, Boone County Public Library, the Cincinnati's Mayor's Office, Joseph-Beth Booksellers, and Cincinnati Public Schools. Any group, organization or individual is welcome to participate in the book club. Groups are encouraged to submit listings of when and where organized discussions will take place on the *On the Same Page* web site. Partners and sponsors will be listed as they join the cause.