



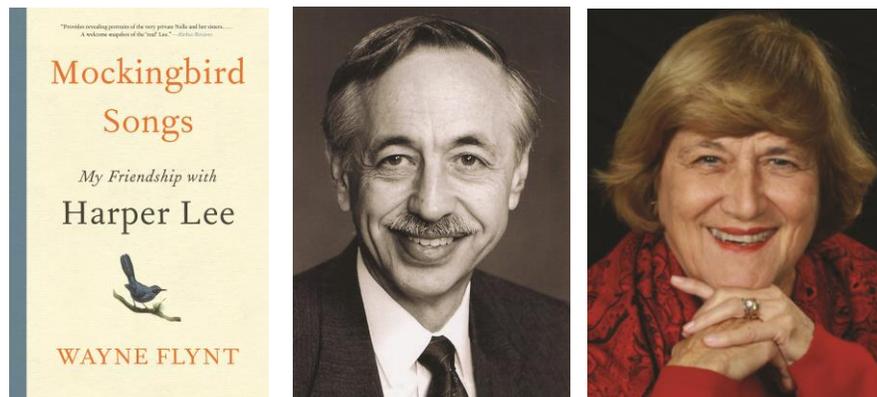
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**WSRE'S LOCAL LAUNCH OF PBS' "THE GREAT AMERICAN READ"  
WILL SPOTLIGHT "TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD" AUTHOR HARPER LEE**

*WSRE's Public Square Speakers Series will present "Harper Lee—In Her Own Words"  
with Wayne Flynt and Nancy Anderson in Pensacola on May 24*



PENSACOLA, Fla., April 2, 2018 — In his 2017 book, "Mockingbird Songs: My Friendship with Harper Lee," Wayne Flynt says that "Nelle Harper Lee was in many ways like the mockingbirds Miss Maudie described on that hot Maycomb day ... complicated and independent." Flynt will be joined by Nancy Anderson to read excerpts from his book and share letters written by the "To Kill a Mockingbird" author on Thursday, May 24 at 7 p.m. in the WSRE Jean & Paul Amos Performance Studio at Pensacola State College. Admission is free.

This presentation of the WSRE Public Square Speakers Series is part of the public television station's local launch of "The Great American Read," a new PBS series which goes in search of America's best-loved book. Television personality and journalist Meredith Vieira will host the eight-part series which begins with a two-hour special on May 22 at 7 p.m. (CDT) and concludes following a summer of reading and a national vote with the reveal of "America's Best-Loved Novel" on October 23.

In the TV series, Vieira will take viewers on a journey across the country to uncover the nation's 100 most-loved novels, the people who love them and their authors. Throughout the summer, Americans will be encouraged to read the books and engage in the conversation by participating in local events, visiting an interactive website and voting for a favorite book from a list that will be published at [pbs.org/greatamericanread](http://pbs.org/greatamericanread). The list of 100 books comes from a national survey of ordinary Americans and will be revealed before May 22 when voting begins.

WSRE's launch event featuring Wayne Flynt and Nancy Anderson offers a clue that "To Kill a Mockingbird" has made that list of America's favorite books.

Flynt is professor emeritus in the Department of History at Auburn University, author of 14 books and one of the most honored scholars of Southern history, politics and religion. He is also editor-in-chief of the "Encyclopedia of Alabama"—a free, online reference resource on Alabama's history, culture, geography and natural environment.

Anderson is a semi-retired professor and sought-after Harper Lee scholar. She taught English for 42 years at Auburn University Montgomery, where she continues to serve as the campus liaison for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. She also taught many summer institutes on "To Kill a Mockingbird" and authored the "Encyclopedia of Alabama" article on Harper Lee.

Flynt will sign copies of "Mockingbird Songs: My Friendship with Harper Lee" following the presentation. Copies of the book, along with "To Kill a Mockingbird" and "Go Set a Watchman" by Lee, will be available for purchase from Page and Palette at the event.

Admission is free, though guests are encouraged to bring a book donation for the Open Books Bookstore & Prison Book Project, which sends nearly 6,000 books each year to indigent inmates in Florida prisons.

Seating is limited. Reservations can be made at [wsre.org/speakers](http://wsre.org/speakers).

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#### **About WSRE, PBS for the Gulf Coast**

WSRE, a Public Broadcasting Service member station, is locally owned and licensed to the Pensacola State College District Board of Trustees. Since 1967, WSRE has served Northwest Florida and South Alabama with quality TV programs, educational media and community outreach reflecting the diverse cultural, political, geographic and demographic characteristics of the coverage area. WSRE aims to help improve educational outcomes and provide access to enlightening, informative and entertaining content for all learners. Visit [wsre.org](http://wsre.org) to learn more.