



Welcome to the 23rd year of the Sun Valley Writers' Conference where our theme is *A Question of Character*. Giving character center stage this year is fitting for many reasons.

First, we will welcome several prominent biographers who will illuminate the mental and moral qualities of such diverse individuals as members of the British royal family, several of the titans of the tech world, and former President Richard Nixon, and suggest how their respective characters affected their responses to the world.

We will also hear from writers who venture beyond biography to explicate the character of a group, among them a distinguished historian who will explore the American volunteers who fought fascism during the Spanish Civil War, a Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer who will use contemporaneous writings to shed light on the American character during WWI, and an eminent sociologist who will help us understand the emotional forces motivating part of the contemporary American right by sharing stories from communities across Louisiana.

And we will again this summer ponder the impact upon character, whether fictional or real, of the most wrenching of human experiences. We will listen to accounts of the effect of trauma suffered by some of those who fought in Iraq and Afghanistan, hear of the disillusionment of an immigrant's American dream, contemplate photographs that tell of the human consequences of inhuman conflict, wonder at the mystery of how raising a young goshawk can assuage disabling grief, grapple with the idea that death is not an end to life but the final expression of one's character, and listen to the 2016 Pulitzer Prize-winner for fiction tell us of the indomitable character of his courageous heroine, a young slave who experiences and encounters incalculable suffering and tragedy.

Finally, a distinguished columnist will help us consider the development of our own characters and share with us his conviction that traveling the often difficult road to a strong character requires our nurturing along the way inner values such as humility, empathy and a desire to serve others.

I look forward to being with you at the 2017 Writers' Conference and to our searching together for answers to *A Question of Character*.

~ Grey Bryan, SVWC Board President

SUN VALLEY WRITERS' CONFERENCE

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