



WEST VIRGINIA HUMANITIES COUNCIL

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Pulitzer Prize-Winning Author Viet Thanh Nguyen to Deliver McCreight Lecture in Charleston on Vietnam War's 50-Year Legacy

CHARLESTON, WV - Nationally renowned novelist and author Viet Thanh Nguyen will deliver the West Virginia Humanities Council's annual McCreight Lecture in the Humanities at Capitol Theater in Charleston on Thursday, October 23, at 7:30 p.m. Nguyen, who won the Pulitzer Prize in Fiction in 2016 for his debut novel, *The Sympathizer*, has written extensively about the legacy and memory of the Vietnam War.

"Our 2024 McCreight Lecture with Percival Everett was a standout event," says the Council's Executive Director Eric Waggoner. "We had to follow that event with the right speaker, and there is no one better for both the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War *and* the present moment than Viet Thanh Nguyen."

In 1975, Viet Thanh Nguyen was only four years old when Saigon fell to Northern Vietnamese communist troops, forcing his family to flee to the United States—along with hundreds of thousands of other refugees. Their first home on American soil was a refugee camp in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Young Viet was separated from his parents and placed with a sponsor family, but they eventually reunited in San Jose, California, where Nguyen grew up.

“Mr. Nguyen’s life and work touch on so many facets of what America is and has been for the past 50 years since the end of the Vietnam War. Like all wars, it echoes through the decades,” says Waggoner. “Nguyen’s writing speaks to Americans from every generation and walk of life. And the McCreight Lecture is all about creating opportunities for West Virginians to share the room with great authors and scholars like Nguyen.”

The Sympathizer was adapted into a critically acclaimed HBO miniseries starring Robert Downey Jr. in 2024. Nguyen’s other works include *The Committed* (sequel to *The Sympathizer*); *The Refugees*, a short story anthology; *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War*; and his autobiography, *A Man of Two Faces*. His most recent work, *To Save and To Destroy*, is a compilation of his 2024 Norton Lectures at Harvard University.

The West Virginia Humanities Council has hosted its annual McCreight Lecture for over 40 years. The program honors the memory of Betsy Keadle McCreight, a founding Board member who believed that the humanities were a necessary source of wisdom and vision at the heart of a democratic society. Past lecturers have included Ken Burns, Joyce Carol Oates, Henry Louis Gates, James McPherson, Edmund Morris, Annette Gordon-Reed, and Percival Everett.

The McCreight Lecture is free and open to the public. It will be held at Charleston’s Capitol Theater, 123 Summers St., at 7:30 p.m. (doors open at 7:00 p.m.). Taylor Books will offer a selection of Viet Thanh Nguyen titles at the event. A book signing and Q&A with the author will follow the lecture. This year’s lecture is a lead-in to the West Virginia Book Festival, which begins two days later at the Charleston Coliseum & Convention Center.

For more details, visit “McCreight Lecture” under the Programs tab at www.wvhumanities.org. For more information on the West Virginia Book Festival, visit www.wvbookfestival.org.

The West Virginia Humanities Council, a nonpartisan nonprofit, is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Supported by the NEH, the State of West Virginia, and private contributions, the Council’s mission is to provide a vigorous program in the humanities statewide.

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