LILLIAN E. SMITH WRITER-IN-SERVICE AWARD

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Lillian E. Smith Center for Creative Arts (owned and operated by Piedmont College in Demorest, Georgia) sponsors the annual Writer-in-Service Award, which includes a two-week residency at the Center, a $500 honorarium, and a $300 travel allowance. The Award is open to U.S. residents working to advance writing through public service careers or volunteer work. Eligible activities include, but are not limited to, arts education, literacy instruction, prison arts and education, English as a second language instruction, art-related therapies, etc. While the work of writing instructors and volunteers is vital to the community, the demands often limit personal writing time. This award provides an opportunity for those writers who, like Lillian E. Smith, recognize “the power of the arts to transform the lives of all human beings.”

LILLIAN E. SMITH (1897-1966)

At a time when oppression related to racial and gender identities was developing with greater visibility around the world, Lillian Eugenia Smith found herself compelled to speak out for rational thinkers who were becoming increasingly aware of the urgent need for social change. Born into a Southern family and raised in a society still trying to recover from the "War Between the States" and the traumas of two subsequent global conflicts, Smith decided she was in the right time and place to speak courageously against segregation. She had been schooled first hand in a culture which had perpetuated such oppressions, and she had a vision of how the journey ahead should be undertaken. One of the first twentieth-century white Southerners to champion the cause of desegregation, Smith used her creative vision through writing and through her truthful, honest, and engaging personal presence to work for social justice.

LILLIAN E. SMITH CENTER

The Lillian E. Smith Center is located in Rabun County, Georgia, just outside the town of Clayton. It is approximately 1.5 hours northeast of Atlanta and 1.5 hours from Asheville, Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Greenville. Nestled in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, the Center’s terrain is hilly and forested, featuring hiking trails, streams, and waterfalls. The campus that now houses the Center was once the Laurel Falls Camp for Girls, owned and operated by Lillian Smith from the mid-1920s to the 1940s. Three of the original cottages of the camp have been updated and are equipped to provide both lodging and small studio space. For more information about the Center, visit the website at www.piedmont.edu/lillian-smith-center.

Applications for the Writer-in-Service Award are generally accepted from November through mid-January each year. The winner is named in February.

For more information about the LES Center, visit the website at www.piedmont.edu/lillian-smith-center.
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