



Flat Rock Campus

180 West Campus Drive, Flat Rock, NC 28731

Transylvania Center

45 Oak Park Drive, Brevard, NC 28712

www.blueridge.edu

For Release

March 5, 2010

MOUNTAIN WOMEN IN FICTION

The Arts and Humanities Series at Blue Ridge Community College will present 'Mountain Women in Fiction' on Wednesday, March 17 at 7:30 p.m. in the Patton Auditorium. Gwen Ashburn, Chair of University of North Carolina at Asheville's Literature and Language Department, will be the presenter for this free program offered in Women's History Month.



Gwen Ashburn received her undergraduate degree in literature from Queens College in Charlotte, N. C., and her doctorate in linguistics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She has taught English composition, linguistic, and literature courses at the University of North Carolina at Asheville since 1987. She served as Chair of the Literature and Language Department at UNC Asheville for five years and was appointed Dean of Humanities in January 2009. Currently her

research interests are Appalachian literature and women, Southern literature, and use of dialects in regional literatures.

In Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward Angel*, Eliza Gant is characterized as a stingy, hard-nosed businesswoman with little time for mothering the last of her nine children. Many mountain women like Wolfe's mother Julia, on whom Gant was modeled, worked because they had to. The difficult lives led by mountain women in the early twentieth century come to light through feminism and fiction.

Novels by Wilma Dykeman, John Ehle, Robert Morgan, Lee Smith, Fred Chappell, Denise Giardina, and Silas House, as well as Thomas Wolfe, portray women whose lives were far different from the stereotype of a Southern lady. Their works of fiction remind us how work shaped the lives of these mountain women who worked in mills and on farms, raised children and gardens, and fed families and animals.

The Arts and Humanities Series is sponsored by the Community and Continuing Education Department. This program is made possible by the North Carolina Humanities Council, a statewide nonprofit and affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. For more information contact Martha Howell at 694-1743 or at marthah@blueridge.edu.

###