

Northwest Announces 2014-2015 Distinguished Lecture Series

Northwest Missouri State University has announced its 2014-2015 Distinguished Lecture Series, which features a best-selling author, a creator of super hero stories, the founder of a global health project and a former president of the American Civil Liberties Union.

The theme of this year's lecture series is "Be your own superhero: safer, happier, healthier and wealthier." The series consists of four lectures, beginning Thursday, Sept. 25. All lectures will begin at 7:30 p.m. in the Mary Linn Auditorium at the Ron Houston Center for the Performing Arts.

"Educators believe that two of education's greatest goals are to increase students' self-efficacy – their sense of their capacity to shape their own lives – while providing them with global ethic," said Kenton Wilcox, an instructor of English who is coordinating this year's series. "I'm looking forward to presentations that will be insightful, moving, inspirational and will resonate with every person in the audience."

The objective of the Distinguished Lecture Series is to enhance the academic environment through individual discipline and interdisciplinary topics. Supported by the Office of the Provost and the Office Campus Activities, the series presents the Northwest campus and surrounding communities with opportunities to hear from extraordinary individuals from around the globe. Scholars, world travelers and leaders in their fields visit the Northwest campus to share their wisdom, insight and experiences.

Jeannette Walls: The Glass Castle, (Thursday, Sept. 25)

Jeannette Walls is the author of a New York Times best-seller, titled "The Glass Castle." It is a depiction of Walls' life growing up in extreme poverty and her ability to overcome tragic hurdles despite their difficulty. The memoir was named one of the "Top 10 Books of the Decade" by Amazon and is known worldwide, selling a 3.5 million copies in the United States.

Walls is the author of other best-selling books, including "The Silver Star" and "Half Broke Horses: A True Life Novel," which is based on the story of Walls' grandmother. Her work has appeared in New York Magazine, Esquire, USA Today and MSNBC.

Leaving audiences inspired, Walls discusses how to use one's flaws as an advantage, overcome fears and face the past. A movie based on "The Glass Castle," starring actress Jennifer Lawrence, is in development.

Bill Rosemann: "Marvel: Inside the World's Most Heroic Brand" (Monday, Oct. 27)

Bill Rosemann, creative director for Marvel Comics, creates superhero stories and characters suitable for audiences of all ages. Throughout his career, Rosemann has worked as a journalist, copywriter and script writer, allowing him to become extremely creative in the comic world.

Working with some of the top creators, Rosemann has written and edited titles that include Spider-Man, Captain America, Iron Man, Thor and the Avengers. Rosemann also edited for the film "Guardians of the Galaxy."

Striving to create stories that correlate with real-life experiences and the comic world, Rosemann has been successful in his work, giving audiences insight to what we can learn from these characters when we find our own superhuman potential. He believes we, too, can touch lives and be an inspiration for change.

Derreck Kayongo: "From Homeless Refugee to Living the American Dream" (Wednesday, Feb. 4)

Derreck Kayongo and his family settled in the United States after fleeing a civil war in Uganda. He has become a renowned entrepreneur and is an expert in global health. Founder of the Global Soap Project,

Kayongo is calling attention to gain assistance in solving an international health crisis.

The Global Soap Project takes soap from hotels and reprocesses it into new bars to distribute it to neglected populations around the world. Today, the operation exists in 32 countries and has helped many refugees including people affected by natural disasters such as the 2010 Haiti earthquake.

Kayongo was named one of CNN's Top 10 Heroes of the Year in 2011 and is working on a book based on how he discovered his calling in life.

Nadine Strossen: "Current Challenges to Civil Liberties" (Wednesday, April 8)

Nadine Strossen is a former president of the American Civil Liberties Union and was not only the first woman to serve, but the youngest person ever to hold the position. Serving as a professor of law at a New York Law School, she has lectured and written about civil liberties, constitutional law and the growing role of the government.

Strossen has written two books in her career, titled "Defending Pornography" and "Speaking of Race, Speaking of Sex: Hate Speech, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties." She discusses issues that are relevant in today's society such as the War on Terror and government's potential efforts to endorse intrusive legislation, rapid technological change, a conservative political environment and more.