

AUTHOR ROBERT PENN WARREN HONORED ON U.S. POSTAGE STAMP

WASHINGTON – Robert Penn Warren—the first official poet laureate of the United States—will be honored by the U.S. Postal Service with a stamp in the Literary Arts stamp series at an 11 a.m. ceremony April 22 in Penn’s hometown of Guthrie, KY.

The ceremony will take place at the Robert Penn Warren Museum at 122 Cherry St., and is part of a week-long series of events celebrating the 100th anniversary of Warren’s birth. The stamp will be available at the museum and at the Guthrie Post Office April 22, and at Post Offices and Philatelic Centers nationwide on Saturday, April 23.

“It is an honor to celebrate the life and accomplishments of Robert Penn Warren,” said Ann Wright, Kentuckiana District Manager, U.S. Postal Service, who will dedicate the stamp. “His powerful ability as a poet and author—as three Pulitzer Prizes attest—is unmatched.”

Joining Wright are Warren’s children, Gabriel Warren and Roseanna Warren Scully, and Guthrie Mayor A. Scott Marshall.

This stamp, 21st in the Literary Arts series, recognizes the achievements of Robert Penn Warren, a three-time recipient of the Pulitzer Prize, the only writer to win the prize in poetry “Promises: Poems, 1954-1956” in 1958, and “Now and Then: Poems, 1976-1978” in 1979 as well as fiction “All the King’s Men,” 1947.

Robert Penn Warren was born in Guthrie, KY, on April 24, 1905. In 1921, he enrolled at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN, where a composition class taught by poet John Crowe Ransom helped him see his world as “the stuff of poetry.” Warren’s early verse led to his membership in the Fugitives, a 1920s-era poets’ group that included Ransom, Allen Tate and others who would go on to become successful writers.

After graduating summa cum laude from Vanderbilt, earning a master’s degree from the University of California, and pursuing additional studies at Yale and Oxford, Warren held academic positions at several universities, including Louisiana State University. There, he helped found and edit “The Southern Review,” a major literary quarterly with a national readership. Outside the classroom,



Warren wrote as often as possible. His eventual body of work, spanning over six decades, included 16 volumes of poetry, 10 novels, a collection of short stories and college textbooks on poetry and fiction.

Poetry was Warren's greatest literary love. He once confided to a friend that while he had set out to write another novel, "nothing but poems would come." His poetic musings were often conversational or colloquial, with a stylistic boldness that could reach the sublime, especially in his later years. In "Evening Hawk," one of his most famous poems, Warren used bird imagery to contemplate time's passage: "His wing / Scythes down another day...we hear / The crashless fall of stalks of Time." Fusing fact with fiction, the poet wove his memories—of people and places, images and incidents—and his personal and political concerns into meditations on the meaning and significance of life. "What is a poem but a hazardous attempt at self-understanding?" he wrote in a memorable 1985 essay.

Warren's best-known novel, "All the King's Men" (1946), was set in Louisiana in the 1930s, a time and place he knew well from his years at Louisiana State University. He told a fascinating tale about the rise and fall of several compelling characters, most notably Willie Stark, a southern politician who achieved power but lost his ideals and ultimately his life. Though readers saw similarities between Huey "Kingfish" Long, a Louisiana politician felled by an assassin's bullet, and the fictional Stark, Warren maintained that Stark was not meant to be Long. His book won the Pulitzer Prize and inspired an Academy Award-winning film.

Warren received scores of other awards as well, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1980. He died on September 15, 1989, in West Wardsboro, VT.

Artist Will Wilson of San Francisco, CA, based his portrait of Warren on a 1948 photograph obtained from the Center for Robert Penn Warren Studies at Western Kentucky University. The background art recalls scenes from "All the King's Men."

To see the Robert Penn Warren commemorative postage stamp and other stamp designs, go to the Postal Service's online store at www.usps.com/shop, and simply click on "Release Schedule" in the Collector's Corner.

Current U.S. stamps, as well as a free comprehensive catalog, are available by toll-free phone order at 1-800-STAMP-24. A selection of stamps and other philatelic items are also available at the online Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop. In addition, beautifully custom-framed prints of original stamp art are available at www.postalartgallery.com.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. An independent federal agency, the Postal Service makes deliveries to more than 142 million addresses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of \$69 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. Moreover, today's postage rates will remain stable until at least 2006. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world's mail volume—some 206 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves seven million customers each day at its 37,000 retail locations nationwide.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Issue: *Robert Penn Warren*
Item Number: 458300
Denomination & Type of Issue: 37-cent commemorative
Format: Pane of 20 (1 design)
Series: *Literary Arts*
Issue Date & City: April 22, 2005, Guthrie, KY
Designer: Carl T. Herrman, Carlsbad, CA
Illustrator: Will Wilson, San Francisco, CA
Art Director: Carl T. Herrman, Carlsbad, CA
Typographer: Carl T. Herrman, Carlsbad, CA
Engraver: Southern Graphics System
Modeler: Donald Woo
Manufacturing Process: Gravure
Printer: Sennett Security Products (SSP)
Printed at: American Packaging Corporation, Columbus, WI
Press Type: Cerrutti, 950
Stamps per Pane: 20
Print Quantity: 45 million stamps
Paper Type: Phosphor Tagged Overall
Adhesive Type: Pressure-sensitive
Processed at: Unique Binders, Fredericksburg, VA
Colors: Magenta, Yellow, Cyan, Black, PMS 129 (Yellow)
Stamp Orientation: Horizontal
Image Area (w x h): 1.41 x 0.84 in./35.814 x 21.336 mm
Overall Size (w x h): 1.56 x 0.99 in./39.624 x 25.146 mm
Full Pane Size (w x h): 7.25 x 5.94 in./184.15 x 150.87 mm
Plate Size: 120 stamps per revolution
Plate Numbers: "S" followed by five (5) single digits
Marginal Markings: © 2004 USPS • Price • Plate numbers in four corners of pane
Plate position diagram • Biographical text on back of stamp
Barcodes in four corners on back of pane
Catalog Item Number(s): 458361 First-day cover \$0.75
458393 Cancellation Keepsake \$8.15

There is one philatelic product available for the Robert Penn Warren commemorative stamps:

- Cancellation Keepsake \$8.15 (Item 458393).

This Cancellation Keepsake (a first-day cover and full pane of stamps) will be available while supplies last and may be ordered online at www.usps.com or by telephone at 1-800-STAMP-24.

HOW TO ORDER THE FIRST-DAY-OF-ISSUE POSTMARK

Customers have 30 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at their local Post Office™, by telephone at 1-800-STAMP-24 and at the Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others), and place them in a larger envelope addressed to:

ROBERT PENN WARREN COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS
POSTMASTER
202 W PARK ST
GUTHRIE, KY 42234-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by May 20, 2005.

HOW TO ORDER FIRST-DAY COVERS

Stamp Fulfillment Services offers first-day covers on new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation.

Each item has been assigned an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly "USA Philatelic" catalog and at www.usps.com/shop. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 1-800-STAMP-24 or writing to:

INFORMATION FULFILLMENT
DEPT 6270
US POSTAL SERVICE
PO BOX 219014
KANSAS CITY MO 64121-9014

First day covers remain on sale for at least one year after the stamp's issuance.

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