

University of Mississippi

eGrove

---

University of Mississippi News

---

9-30-2020

## New Grisham Writer-in-Residence Sets Up Shop in Oxford

Kellie Smith

Follow this and additional works at: <https://egrove.olemiss.edu/umnews>

---

### Recommended Citation

Smith, Kellie, "New Grisham Writer-in-Residence Sets Up Shop in Oxford" (2020). *University of Mississippi News*. 3415.

<https://egrove.olemiss.edu/umnews/3415>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Mississippi News by an authorized administrator of eGrove. For more information, please contact [egrove@olemiss.edu](mailto:egrove@olemiss.edu).

## New Grisham Writer-in-Residence Sets Up Shop in Oxford

Maurice Carlos Ruffin hailed as a stunning and audacious writer

SEPTEMBER 30, 2020 BY KELLIE SMITH

FaTvLiErCtSMPrSt



Maurice Carlos Ruffin

OXFORD, Miss. – New Orleans native Maurice Carlos Ruffin has been chosen as the **John and Renée Grisham Writer in Residence** at the **University of Mississippi** for 2020-21.

A New Orleans native, Ruffin rocketed onto the American literary scene with his widely praised first novel, “We Cast a Shadow,” the story of a father trying to shield his son from racism, told in the genre of a horror novel. The book was **lauded by The New York Times**, which chose it as a notable book of 2019. The Washington Post and National Public Radio also put “We Cast a Shadow” on their best books list for 2019.

“Horror is a fitting genre to write about race in America,” Ruffin said. “As far back as Richard Wright’s “Native Son,” Black American writers have turned to horror to describe a situation that can be, literally, horrible.”

Ruffin’s forthcoming short story collection, “The Ones Who Don’t Say They Love You,” will be published in the spring 2021 by One

World Random House.

Ruffin will spend the academic year working on a new novel he describes as an “upbeat and hopeful side of the race problem in America. It is about people coming together to solve those problems.”

He hopes to have his book written during his nine-month stay in Oxford, an ambitious goal for any writer.

“It took me four years to complete “We Cast a Shadow,” but I was able to write 20 pages in just three days this week, so I’m hopeful that I’ll be able to get this book done while I’m here,” he said.

When he isn’t writing, Ruffin teaches an undergraduate advanced fiction workshop online. Next semester, he’ll be teaching in the university’s **graduate creative writing program**, ranked as one of the best in the nation.

“Writing is a community exercise,” he said. “We think about the lone writers, but really, no writing gets done without those you trust to read your work and give commentary. The workshop model is a chance to accelerate the writer.”

That outlook epitomizes the philosophy about teaching creative writing at Ole Miss.

“Clearly, Maurice believes in the power of writing communities, and I expect that with his leadership – even on Zoom – those communities will form and flex their literary muscles,” said Ivo Kamps, UM chair and professor of **English**.

“We are extremely fortunate to have Maurice. The style and intensely relevant subject matter of ‘We Cast a Shadow’ will appeal to our students and should make them keen to learn all they can from its author.”

Ruffin enjoys being a member of Oxford’s rich literary community.

“There are a lot of great literary communities like New York, the center of publishing, but Oxford is special in that it is a nexus of Southern writers with a respect for that history,” he said. “The community here is adventurous and inspires me.”

Ruffin and his wife are enjoying exploring the area and living in the historic house that is home to all Grisham writers-in-residence. Coming from a large city, he is enjoying the friendliness of Oxford, where “people wave at you” as you pass them on the street, he said.

### Follow us on social



### Campus Briefs

#### Donations Sought for 25th Annual Books and Bears Program

OXFORD, Miss. – The University of Mississippi is asking the community to help spread a little joy this holiday season by donating to the 25th annual Books and Bears program. Donations such as toys, books, dolls, bicycles and other children’s play items are being accepted through Dec. 14. All donations will be collected and sorted

[Read the story ...](#)

#### More Posts from this Category

### Thank You To Our Donors

#### Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship Aims to Build Leaders

OXFORD, Miss. – Twenty-five inaugural recipients of the Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship – a program hosted by the University of Mississippi School of Education in partnership with the Mississippi Association of Coaches and the Mississippi High School Activities Association – are expected to increase their impact on student-athletes and their communities. The coaching fellowship

[Read the story ...](#)

#### More Posts from this Category

### Ole Miss In the News

#### Clarion-Ledger: New Essay Collection Tells the Story of Meredith’s Enrollment

Essays celebrate 60th anniversary of James Meredith’s enrollment at University of Mississippi By Lauren Rhoades Oct. 1 marks the 60th anniversary of James Meredith’s 1962 enrollment at the University of Mississippi as the school’s first African-American student.

"A program like this is special because it is designed to give writers like me an opportunity to devote more of our resources to the writing itself," Ruffin said. "It is a great blessing to be here."

 FILED UNDER: [COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS, NEWS RELEASES](#)

---

"James Meredith: Breaking the Barrier," a collection of essays edited by UM professor of journalism Kathleen Wickham, honors this historic milestone with

[Read the story ...](#)

---

[More Posts from this Category](#)

---

[Return to top of page](#)

Copyright © 2022 · [The University of Mississippi](#)

---