



PRESS RELEASE

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WILLIAMS EARNS LITERACY PRIZE, SHARES SPOTLIGHT WITH LAURA BUSH

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – Julie Williams, a former American Journalism Historians Association president, earned the 2014 Ella Dickey Literacy Award during the annual Cherry Blossom Festival held April 24-25 in Marshfield, Mo.

Williams, an assistant professor in the Samford University Journalism and Mass Communication Department, was recognized with five other awardees, including former first lady Laura Bush. The award is given to authors whose works help preserve history.

“Having learned much about PR and advertising as a practical matter of publicizing my books, I did a dance about this unique publicity opportunity,” Williams recently wrote in an article for The Samford Crimson. “I’d tell the world in a press release that I’d won the same award as Laura Bush.”

Williams’ 2012 book, “A Rare Titanic Family,” came to the attention of conference organizer Nicolas Inman, who invites many celebrities, historical figures and presidential descendants to attend the annual event, she said.

Descendants of 26 presidents attended the festival. Williams said she was most impressed to meet Lyon Gardiner Tyler Jr., the grandson of 10th president John Tyler.

Williams performs one-woman shows of her great-aunt Sylvia Caldwell, who survived the April 15, 1912, Titanic disaster with Williams’ great-uncle, Albert Caldwell, and their baby. She also presents a talk her great-uncle initially gave about the tragedy, speeches on mass media history and nonfiction writing, and a one-woman show based on Carrie Ingalls of “Little House on the Prairie” fame.

For more information about “A Rare Titanic Family,” visit www.newsouthbooks.com/titanic. For more on Williams, see the story “AJHA Member Dresses the Part to Promote Titanic Story” at www.ajhaonline.org.

Founded in 1981, the American Journalism Historians Association seeks to advance education and research in mass communication history. Members work to raise historical standards and ensure that all scholars and students recognize the vast importance of media history and apply this knowledge to the advancement of society.

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Photo caption: Julie Williams, an assistant professor in the Samford University Journalism and Mass Communication Department, and former first lady Laura Bush were among six who received the 2014 Ella Dickey Literacy Award during the annual Cherry Blossom Festival April 24-25 in Marshfield, Mo. The award is given to authors whose works help preserve history.