



**Wizard's
Wardrobe**

WHERE READING IS MAGIC

READERS' THEATRE EVENT

AN EVENING OF POWERFUL READINGS

About Wizard's Wardrobe

In September 2011 over 20 members and friends of First Presbyterian Church started tutoring at Giffen Elementary School.

In June 2014 a subset of that group, realizing that the children of Giffen needed more help, started planning the next step. Inspired by the TED talk "Once Upon A School", we set out to establish a one-on-one after-school tutoring program primarily for 1st through 3rd grade students, continuing on with them through elementary school. We incorporated one year later as South End Neighborhood Tutors and located space for the program one block east of Giffen. In February 2017, the Wizard's Wardrobe became a reality and opened its doors to 7 students. Since then we have served 23 students with 40 trained tutors.

Meeting a Need

- We believe that all children deserve the opportunity to succeed.
- Only 13% of the students in 3rd – 6th grade at Giffen Elementary School read at grade level. In grades one to three students learn to read; in grades four and above students read to learn. Once students reach 4th grade, those who cannot read are at an overwhelming disadvantage.
- Research shows that students who get 35-40 hours of individual tutoring can gain one year in academic growth.
- With three hours a week of one-to-one tutoring, we aim to achieve marked improvement in our students' reading skills, positioning them for academic success.



Debra & Eric Fagans
Founders of the Wizard's Wardrobe



Program

6:00

CASH BAR AND HORS D'OEUVRES

7:00

PROGRAM

***Master of Ceremonies* – Rex Smith**

***Guest Artist* -- Gregory Maguire**

Readers

Frankie Y. Bailey

Marion Roach Smith

Dijonnaye Daniels

Barbara Smith

James Preller

Ted H. Walker

Joined by Children at the Well:

Varun Mondayka and Ayah Osman

8:30

CLOSING

GREGORY MAGUIRE, born and educated in Albany, is a New York Times best selling author of over thirty-five books for children, teenagers, and adults. His best-known work is *WICKED*, which inspired the blockbuster Broadway musical of the same name. An advocate of children's literacy and literature, Mr. Maguire is an occasional reviewer for the Sunday New York Times Book Review, and has performed original work on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered." His most recent novel is *HIDDENSEE: A TALE OF THE ONCE AND FUTURE NUTCRACKER*.



REX SMITH is Editor and Vice President of the *Times Union*. He is a former national correspondent and bureau chief for *Newsday*, and previously edited community newspapers in Troy and Rensselaer. Rex has received numerous professional citations and awards, including the Distinguished Service Award of the national Society of Professional Journalists, a Pulitzer Fellowship and a Rotary Fellowship. He hosts a nationally syndicated weekly program, "The Media Project," on Northeast Public Radio. He is chair of the New York News Publishers Association, vice-chair of the state Fair Trial/Free Press Conference and past president of the state editors association. He has been a national leader in efforts to build a news literacy curriculum in high schools and colleges.



Frankie Y. Bailey, professor in the School of Criminal Justice, University at Albany (SUNY), is the author, co-author, or co-editor of a number of non-fiction books, including *Wicked Albany: Lawlessness & Liquor in the Prohibition Era* (2009) and *Crimes of the Centuries* (2016). She is the 2010 recipient of the George N. Dove Award for research on mystery and crime fiction and has been nominated for Edgar, Agatha, and Anthony awards for nonfiction. Frankie has authored five fictional books featuring crime historian Lizzie Stuart, two police procedural novels set in Albany, featuring Detective Hannah McCabe, and three short stories and is the winner of a Macavity Award for *African American Mystery Writers* (2008).



Frankie will be reading from *The Red Queen Dies*, one of the Hannah McCabe police procedural novels set in Albany.



Dijonnaye Daniels is a young aspiring author. She is a contributor for the "New Scene" newspaper. In addition to writing poetry, she is currently working on a stage play entitled *Beneath the Light of Day* about a family trying to figure out how to get more than the humble means that they have to live. Dijonnaye is a Long Island native and has lived in Albany for about fifteen years. She is a 2011 graduate from Albany High School and hopes to study photography.

Dijonnaye will be reading, "Three Short Poems."

James Preller is the author of many children's books, including *Bystander*, named a 2009 Junior Library Guild Selection, *Six Innings*, an ALA Notable Book, and the popular *Jigsaw Jones* mystery series, which have sold more than 10 million copies since 1998. James is married with three children. He lives in Delmar, blogs at Jamespreller.com, and frequently visits elementary and middle schools in the area and beyond.



Jimmy will be reading from his just published middle-grade novel, *Blood Mountain*, which has been named a 2019 Junior Library Guild Selection.

Marion Roach Smith is the author of four mass-market books, the most recent of which is *The Memoir Project: A Thoroughly Non-Standardized Text for Writing & Life* (Grand Central Publishing). A former staffer at The New York Times, she has been a commentator on NPR's *All Things Considered* and a talk show host on *Sirius Satellite Radio*. She currently runs a writing lab and teaches memoir worldwide at marionroach.com.



Marion will be reading an essay entitled *DNA* from her book, *The Memoir Project, A Thoroughly Non-Standardized Text for Writing & Life*.

Barbara Smith is an author, activist, and independent scholar who has played a groundbreaking role in opening up a national, cultural, and political dialogue about the intersections of race, class, sexuality, and gender. She was among the first to define an African American women's literary tradition and to build Black women's studies and Black feminism in the United States. She has been politically active in many movements for social justice since the 1960s.



Smith has edited three major collections about Black women including *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* (1983). *Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around: Forty Years of Movement Building With Barbara Smith* was published by SUNY Press in 2014.

Barbara will be reading from the introduction to her book of collected essays, *The Truth That Never Hurts: Writings on Race, Gender, and Freedom*.

Ted Walker Ted H. Walker, Sr. is a self-published author who has written *Waiting For You*, *Still Waiting For You* and *Kendra & Terrance*. The main themes are life, love, addiction, and loss. These fictional stories revolve around the lives of Kendra and Terrance. Seeking true love, Terrance has some 'inner demons' that are preventing him from finding and keeping true love. Kendra seems always to be unlucky with love. Ted currently lives in Albany, New York. He hopes to one day create a play based on his writing.



Ted will be reading a selection from *Waiting For You*.



Ayah Osman is a young Muslim American storyteller, poet, and student-activist from Niskayuna, NY. Ayah was formerly a *Children at the Well* storyteller and is now an assistant C@W storycoach.

Varun Mondaiyka has told stories at the Clearwater Festival, the Dance Flurry, Old Songs Festival and the historic Proctors Theater in Schenectady. Interested in bringing about cultural understanding through storytelling, he is an assistant C@W storycoach and executive producer of ShakerTEDx.



*The **Children at the Well** program, founded in 2006 in the Capital Region, seeks to build community, grow leaders, and foster authentic relationships grounded in the celebration of differences by increasing the capacity for civil discourse through the sharing of stories.*

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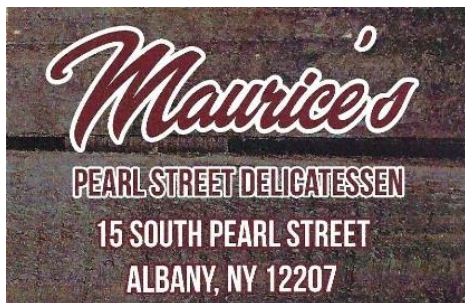
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Dear Friends,

On behalf of *The Wizard's Wardrobe's* volunteer tutors, board of directors, and especially our young readers and writers, I thank you for joining us this evening. By being with us, you are part of the magic that happens every day, after school, when children arrive and "walk through the wardrobe" (yes, we have an actual wardrobe).

We embrace three values. First, *reading is essential* to every child's success in school and in life as a whole.

Second, *one-on-one tutoring works* because every day a tutor is there to let a child know, "I care, you are important, you matter." And finally, through the belief that "*every child has worth*," we instill self-confidence that will impact a young child's entire life.

Your support makes it possible to spread the magic of reading and writing and make it every child's right to have the literacy skills they need to succeed.



Join us, tutor with us, find a good book, and form the habits of reading that will help every child reach their full potential.

Any book that helps a child to form a habit of reading, to make reading one of his deep and continuing needs, is good for him. — Maya Angelou

Sincerely,
Agnes Zellin
Executive Director

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www.wizardwardrobe.org

