



## NEBRASKA HUMANITIES COUNCIL

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# **N E W S   R E L E A S E**

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For release: Nov. 18, 2008

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## **Broken Bow and Plattsmouth will host 2009 Chautauqua**

The Nebraska Humanities Council (NHC) will present the 2009 Chautauqua in Broken Bow June 17-21 and in Plattsmouth June 24-28.

For the second consecutive year, the theme is “Bright Dreams, Hard Times: America in the Thirties,” with scholars portraying five historical characters who helped shape America’s response to the Great Depression, a time of economic collapse, the environmental disaster of the Dust Bowl, and signs of worldwide political unrest.

**Patrick E. McGinnis** will portray Franklin D. Roosevelt, the president of the United States from 1932-1945 and the leader of the New Deal plan to help Americans. McGinnis holds a Ph.D. from Tulane University and is emeritus professor of history at the University of Central Oklahoma.

**Fred Krebs** will portray Huey Long, the Louisiana senator who used force and totalitarian tactics to attempt to bring aid to his constituents. Krebs is professor of history at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kan., and a Chautauquan with 15 different characterizations.

**Tonia Compton** will portray Aimee Semple McPherson, who provided relief to impoverished families in Los Angeles and was a pioneer evangelist and pastor. Compton is a history doctoral candidate at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and holds a master’s degree from Texas A&M.

**Wanda Schell** will portray Zora Neale Hurston, who worked for federal WPA projects collecting folklore and authored works of fiction and non-fiction during the Thirties. Schell is an accomplished actress and writer, as well as a published playwright, singer, storyteller and director.

**Doug Watson** will portray Will Rogers, American humorist, radio and film star, and essayist who commented on American culture and politics. As moderator for each performance, Will Rogers will bring audiences into the Thirties using his authentic American voice. Watson holds a Ph.D. from Texas Tech University and teaches English at Oklahoma Baptist University.

The Chautauqua runs Wednesday through Sunday, with a different scholar portraying his or her character each evening. Workshops for adults and children are held during the day.

Adult audiences have an opportunity to examine four themes that were important during the Depression era and have particular relevance today: The changing relationship between Americans and their national government, the flowering of artistic and intellectual activity, the role of religion in public life, and the democratization of American culture through radio and sound movies.

Middle schoolers research and portray local historical figures during the Youth Chautauqua Day Camp, high schoolers photograph images in their communities and compare them with photos of the past, children create a colorful mural based on a folktale by Hurston, and youth learn about children who wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt during the Depression and then write a letter to the current first lady.

Thousands of Nebraskans attended the Chautauqua in Falls City and Hastings this summer. It also traveled to Kansas for stops in Beloit and Lawrence.

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