MAILER AT THE Bicentennial



The 23rd Annual Norman Mailer Society Conference

Sirata Beach Resort
St. Pete Beach, Florida

Conference Schedule

All sessions are in King Palm,
2nd floor, unless otherwise noted.

Wednesday, November 4

5:45–7:15 Welcome Reception and Cash Bar
The Grotto

7:30 Dinner on your own

Thursday, November 5

8:00–9:15 Continental Breakfast
Queen Palm, 2nd floor

9:15–10:15 Business Meeting

10:30–11:30 **Vote the Rascals In:**
The 1969 Mayoral Campaign

Justin Bozung, "Mailer/Breslin:
Looking Back at the Campaign"
Mary Lynn Navarro, "Norman as the Politician
/ The Politician as Norman"
Moderator: Matthew S. Hinton

11:45–12:45 **Mixing Memory and Desire and Mailer**

Raymond M. Vince, "Reflections on Time Present:
Attacks on Memory, Complexity, and Empathy"
Nicole DePolo, "A Triad of Novels: Norman Mailer's
Master Plan for an *Ancient Evenings* Trilogy"
Moderator: Maggie McKinley

12:45–2:15 Lunch on your own

2:30–3:30 **Mailer at the Bicentennial**

Robert J. Begiebing, "The Prophet Speaks"
J. Michael Lennon, "Hercules at the Crossroads: Mailer in 1976"
Moderator: Mashey Bernstein

3:45–4:45 **Sportsmanship and Brinkmanship**

Peter Balbert, "From the Big Toe of God to the Wings of Ego: Norman Mailer, Muhammad Ali, and the Challenge of 'King of the Hill'"
Jared Young, "Writing Giants and Riding Giants: Norman Mailer's Unlikely Influence on Modern American Surf Culture"
Moderator: Justin Bozung

5:00–5:30 **Philip Bufithis, "A Visit with Dr. Raymond Loomis"**

Interlocutor: J. Michael Lennon

5:45 Drinks and dinner on your own

Friday, November 6

8:00–9:15 Continental Breakfast
Queen Palm, 2nd floor

9:15–10:15 **Of the Making of Books**

Gerald R. Lucas, "Some Honorable Entries: Mailer's 1976 Self-Editing and the Bibliography as Argument"
Matthew S. Hinton, "The Mailer Logs: A Preview of J. Michael Lennon's Days with the Author"
Eric D. Martin, "Another Fire on the Moon: Reflections on Norman Mailer's *Of a Fire on the Moon* in Light of Our Return to Lunar Exploration"
Moderator: Raymond M. Vince

10:30–11:30 **On *The Castle in the Forest***

James A. Taylor, "Unleashing the Supernatural: Mailer and Hitler"
Jason Mosser, "Mailer's Hitler and the Bad Seed"
Moderator: Bonnie Culver

11:45–12:45 **Literature and Its Discontents**

David Mikics, "Could Mailer Be (Henry) Jamesian?"
Maggie McKinley, "The Devil and Norman Mailer: 'The Trial of the Warlock'"
Austin Dabney, "A Heated Rivalry: Norman Mailer and James Baldwin"
Moderator: Philip Bufithis

1:00–2:30 Lunch on your own

1:00–2:30 Executive Board meeting
Queen Palm, 2nd floor

2:45–3:45 **The Mind of a Rebel**

Emily Benedek, "The Letters of Jack Henry Abbott: History as Destiny"
Marc Triplett, "*Oswald's Tale*: Character in the Study of Assassination"
Moderator: Robert Dean Lurie

4:00–5:00 **On *The Big Empty***

David Lurie, Robert Dean Lurie, and John Buffalo Mailer, "*The Big Empty*, Twenty Years On"

5:15–7:15 Drinks and dinner on your own

7:30–8:30 **NMS Readers' Theatre**: "The Time of Another Time: An Encore of Mailer Cuttings Two Decades Later"

Bonnie Culver, Matthew S. Hinton, J. Michael Lennon, and Enid Stubin

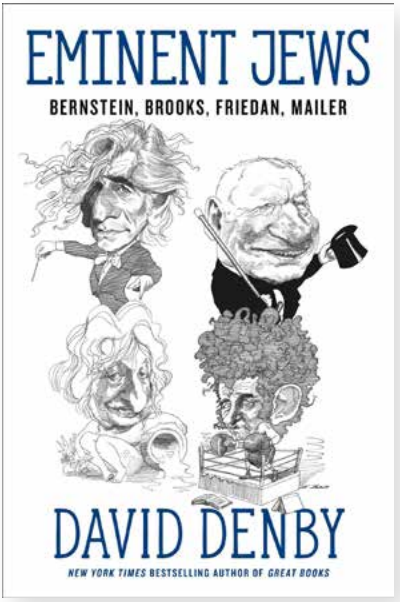
Saturday, November 7

9:45–10:45 **Remembering Barbara Mailer Wasserman**

Bonnie Culver, J. Michael Lennon, and Enid Stubin

11:00–1:00 Lunch
Queen Palm, 2nd floor

Presentation of the Robert F. Lucid Award to David Denby by Matthew S. Hinton



Presenters and Moderators

Peter Balbert is Professor of English at Trinity University, where he formerly served for sixteen years as department chair. He has published more than fifty essays on modern and contemporary writers, including Norman Mailer, D. H. Lawrence, and Ernest Hemingway. He is the author of *D. H. Lawrence and the Marriage Matrix*, *D. H. Lawrence and the Phallic Imagination*, *D. H. Lawrence and the Psychology of Rhythm*, and *D. H. Lawrence: A Centenary Consideration.* His book-in-progress, from which sections have been published in *The Journal of Modern Literature* and *The Mailer Review*, is entitled "D. H. Lawrence and the Great Black-Backed Gull: Essays on Lawrence, Freud, Mailer, and the Subversive Art of Conte à Clef."

Robert J. Begiebing, Professor of English Emeritus at Southern New Hampshire University and founding director of the MFA in Fiction and Nonfiction, is the author of eleven books, including fiction, criticism, memoir, collected journalism, and poetry. His fiction has been supported by the NH Council on the Arts, the Langum Prize for Historical Fiction, and a Wallace Foundation Research Fellowship. In 2023, he received the Mailer Society's Robert F. Lucid Award for *Norman Mailer at 100*.

Emily Benedek graduated from Harvard College. Her articles and essays have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, *Rolling Stone*, *Tablet Magazine*, and on NPR, among others. She has written extensively about the American West. Her first book, *The Wind Won't Know Me: A History of the Navajo-Hopi Land Dispute* (Knopf), was a finalist for the Robert F. Kennedy Book Prize. She is the author of *Beyond the Four Corners of the World: A Navajo Woman's Journey* (Knopf), and a memoir, *Through the Unknown, Remembered Gate* (Schocken). She is also the author of *Hometown Betrayal: A Tragic Story of Sexual Abuse and Secrecy in Mormon Country* (Greenleaf), and *Red Sea* (St. Martin's Press), a thriller about terrorism and counterterrorism. She has two daughters and lives in New York City.

Mashey Bernstein holds a PhD in American literature with a focus on Mailer's fiction. He retired in 2015 from the Writing Program and Film Studies Department at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He has written extensively on Norman Mailer, with articles appearing in *The Mailer Review*, *Studies in American Jewish Literature*, *The San Francisco Review of Books*, and the *London Jewish Chronicle*. His most recent article was on Mailer's Judaism in *Norman Mailer in Context*, ed. Maggie McKinley. He also writes on film, especially Jewish aspects of the media.

Justin Bozung is the editor of *The Cinema of Norman Mailer: Film Is Like Death* (2017) and an award-winning filmmaker.

Philip Bufithis is the author of *Norman Mailer* (available in Japanese), articles on modern American and English literature, and short stories, and is former Executive Editor of the literary magazine *Antietam Review*. He is Professor of English, Emeritus, Shepherd University, Shepherdstown, West Virginia.

Bonnie Culver's play *A Ticket to the Circus*, adapted from Norris Church Mailer's memoir, starring Anne Archer and directed by Michelle Danner, streamed in June 2024. Her play *Sniper* debuted Off-Broadway in 2005, and Princeton University's Theatre Intime produced *Sniper* in 2023. Her screenplays *I Do* and *Raining Rainbows* were finalists in the Mystic Film and the Southern California Film Festivals. *I Do* was a Second Rounder finalist at the Austin Film Festival, and *Raining Rainbows* was optioned by Marlee Matlin's Solo One Production Company. She is a member of the Dramatists Guild and Professor Emerita from Wilkes University, where she was a professor, dean, and co-founder of the Graduate Program in Creative Writing along with Mailer biographer Dr. J. Michael Lennon. *Sniper* and her other plays can be found at Havescripts.com and Amazon.com.

Austin Dabney is an M.A. student in English at the University of Cincinnati, concentrating in Literary and Cultural Studies. He graduated summa cum laude from Fisher College in 2025 with a B.A. in English. For the 2026 Norman Mailer Society Conference, he continues his inquiry regarding Norman Mailer

with a paper entitled "A Heated Rivalry: Norman Mailer and James Baldwin."

David Denby was born in New York in 1943 and attended Columbia (A.B.), the Columbia School of Journalism (M.S.), and the Stanford Department of Communication (M.A.). He worked as a film critic for *The Atlantic* (1970–73), The Boston Phoenix (1976–78), *New York* magazine (1978–1998), and *The New Yorker* (1998–2014), where he is currently a staff writer. His books include *Great Books*, *American Sucker*, *Lit Up*, *Do the Movies Have a Future*?, and *Eminent Jews: Bernstein, Brooks, Friedan, and Mailer*, published by Henry Holt in April 2025 and winner of the Robert F. Lucid Award of the Norman Mailer Society. He lives in New York with his wife, novelist Susan Rieger.

Nicole DePolo is a full-time Associate Professor of English at Fisher College and a part-time Associate Professor of Liberal Arts & Sciences at Berklee College of Music, both in Boston. She serves as the Vice-President of the Norman Mailer Society and Co-President of the Board of Governors for BRAWN (the Boston Rhetoric and Writing Network). She holds a Ph.D. in Editorial Studies from the Editorial Institute at Boston University, an MFA in Creative Writing from Wilkes University, and a BFA in Illustration from Rhode Island School of Design. Her doctoral dissertation, "Norman Mailer's Book of the Dead: A Companion to Ancient Evenings," was completed under the direction of Christopher Ricks and includes a critical edition of the second chapter of Mailer's ancient Egyptian novel, "The Book of the Gods."

Matthew S. Hinton was born in the back seat of his great-grandmother's Posten taxi in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. He is a founding member of Gaslight Theatre Company; has authored several plays, including *Quiet Cowboy* and *Linda Goes to Mars*; and he created an eight-year series of original one-acts by regional playwrights. His own collection of plays, entitled *Playroom* (Blue Moon, 2022), follows a small family through the unusual rooms of their home while exploring dysfunction, pocket dimensions, and callbacks to dad jokes. Hinton is also an accomplished scholar of the life and work of Norman Mailer, with work appearing in *The Mailer Review*,

Provincetown Arts, and *Norman Mailer in Context*, ed. Maggie McKinley (Cambridge University Press, 2021). He is the current president of the Norman Mailer Society. Additionally, he serves on the board of the Milford Readers and Writers Festival, and has been an armchair journalist at WVIA, an actor, and an audiobook narrator. He teaches writing and literature at Misericordia University (Dallas, Pennsylvania). He dreams in analog.

J. Michael Lennon is the author of the 2013 biography *Norman Mailer: A Double Life* and has edited several of Mailer's works, including the 2023 Library of America edition of *The Naked and the Dead* and *Selected Letters, 1945–46* and, with Gerald R. Lucas and Susan Mailer, *Lipton's: Norman Mailer's Marijuana Journal 1954–55* (2024). He teaches in the MFA program at Wilkes University.

Gerald R. Lucas is Professor of English at Middle Georgia State University and editor of *Norman Mailer: Works and Days*, the digital successor to the Lennon–Lennon print editions. He co-edited *Lipton's: Norman Mailer's Marijuana Journal, 1954–55* (Arcade, 2024) and *Reflections: 100 Years of Norman Mailer* (2023), and has directed Project Mailer since 2014.

David Lurie is an avid Mailer reader, an armchair historian, a diligent follower of college baseball, and a philosopher of life. In a previous existence he had a long and distinguished career in public health administration. He resides in Franklin, Tennessee.

Robert Dean Lurie is the author of *Begin the Begin: R.E.M.'s Early Years* (2019) and the forthcoming *Destination: The Unfolding Odyssey of Steve Kilbey and the Church* (2027). He is currently at work on a biography of filmmaker John Hughes and lives with his family in Wilmington, North Carolina.

John Buffalo Mailer is an award-winning producer, screenwriter, journalist, playwright, actor, and director with over twenty movies to his credit. After graduating from Wesleyan University in 2000, he co-founded Back House Productions in New York City, developing plays by Beau Willimon, Lin-Manuel Miranda, and others. His first play, *Hello Herman*, premiered in New York in 2002 and was adapted into a film starring

Norman Reedus. With his father he wrote *The Big Empty* (2006). He has been an editor at *High Times*, *Tar*, and *Stop Smiling* and has written for *Playboy*, *New York*, *Artforum*, and *The Norman Mailer Review*, among others. A Lifetime Member of the Actors Studio, he executive-produced *How to Come Alive with Norman Mailer*, a feature documentary about his father that *Variety* named one of the top ten documentaries of 2024. He lives in New York with his wife, Olivia Rutigliano-Mailer, and their daughter, Violet Barbara.

Eric D. Martin started reading Norman Mailer back in college and did his senior oral examination on the authorial voice of *Advertisements for Myself*. He has worked as a features editor and horoscope writer for several trade publications in the beauty industry, college teacher in English and composition, and public-school administrator for IT and special-needs technologies. He is now retired and podcasts with his brother about classic rock, plays in a couple of roots-blues bands, and runs a small business selling vintage horror comics.

Maggie McKinley is a Professor of English and Honors Program Co-Coordinator at Harper College. She is the author of *Masculinity and the Paradox of Violence in American Fiction* (Bloomsbury, 2015), *Understanding Norman Mailer* (U of South Carolina Press, 2017), and *The Art of Looking Back: Joan Didion and American Nostalgia* (LSU Press, 2026). She is also the editor of the Cambridge collections *Philip Roth in Context* (2021) and *Norman Mailer in Context* (2021), and she currently serves as co-editor of the peer-reviewed journal Philip Roth Studies.

David Mikics is Professor of English at New College of Florida. He is the author of a number of books, including *Stanley Kubrick: American Filmmaker* (Yale Jewish Lives), *Bellow's People* (W. W. Norton), *Slow Reading in a Hurried Age* (Harvard/Belknap), and the editor of *The Annotated Emerson* (Harvard/Belknap). Most recently he edited *The MAD Files: Writers and Cartoonists on the Magazine that Warped America's Brain* (Library of America). He has written about Mailer several times for *Tablet* magazine, where he is a regular columnist.

Jason Mosser is a retired Emeritus Professor of English from Georgia Gwinnett College. He taught at a number of schools from the Georgia Institute of Technology to Rockford College. In addition to creative work, he has published widely on Norman Mailer and the New Journalism of the 1960s–70s. Dr. Mosser's article on Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* is expected to appear this year in a centenary collection published by Cambridge University Press.

MaryLynn Navarro is an Associate Professor of English whose research explores the intersections of popular culture, film, and representation. Her recent work was published by Edinburgh University Press. For more than two decades, she was involved with the National Association of African American Studies and Affiliates (NAAAS), contributing to numerous projects focused on race representation and expression in education. Her broader research and teaching interests include disability studies and the creative expression of neurodiversity.

Enid Stubin is Professor of English at Kingsborough Community College of the City University of New York, where she teaches courses in composition, literature, and Shakespeare. She has published in *The Reader* (University of Liverpool) and *The Mailer Review* and contributed to *Norman Mailer in Context*, ed. Maggie McKinley. Her interests include the intersection of politics, culture, and writing in the seventeenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries.

James A. Taylor has a B.A. in Philosophy from UMass Amherst and an MLS from Emory University. He retired from the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System after 31 years of service. During that time, he hosted a weekly television show, interviewing hundreds of authors, including one of his favorites, Norris Church Mailer.

Marc Triplett has been a member of the Norman Mailer Society since 2005 and serves as Secretary of its Board. He earned a B.A. from the University of Delaware and a J.D. from Cumberland School of Law in Birmingham, Alabama. He practices criminal defense law in Bellefontaine, Ohio.

Raymond M. Vince is an independent scholar, having taught Composition, American Literature, and other subjects for over thirty years. Originally from England, he holds graduate degrees in Theology, Logic and Scientific Method, and English. Ray has published nine articles in *The Fitzgerald Review* and *The Mailer Review*. He has also contributed to *New Dictionary of Theology* (1988), *Arthurian Writers* (2008), *Norman Mailer in Context* (2021), and *Neglected Scorsese* (2025).

Jared Young is an Assistant Professor at SUNY Orange. He received his PhD in English from Oklahoma State University. His research interests include literary disability studies, twentieth-century modernism, and war fiction. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *The Journal of Cultural and Literary Disability Studies*, *H-War*, *The Strategy Bridge*, and *The U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Journal*.



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1976 photograph of Mailer and son Michael courtesy of the Mailer archives. Program design by Giles Hoover.