

Southern**literary**trail

For Immediate Release

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The typewriter used by Harper Lee to write America's favorite novel, "To Kill a Mockingbird," joins a literary exhibition at her alma mater, The University of Alabama, that opens on November 2, 2018, and runs through December 7 in a Tuscaloosa, Alabama, gallery.

TUSCALOOSA, AL. – For months, organizers at The University of Alabama have been preparing to host a prestigious typewriter collection loaned by LAPD Commission President Steve Soboroff of Los Angeles to The Southern Literary Trail for exhibition at public colleges in the South. A consortium for the celebration of classic Southern writers and literary arts, the Trail is based at Mississippi State University, Starkville, where it is headquartered in the main library's John Grisham Room – a handsome, wood paneled space named for the author and MSU alumnus. In advance of stops at Andalusia Farm, the home of Flannery O'Connor in Milledgeville, Georgia, and Tuscaloosa, the Soboroff Collection began its tour during September 2018 at Mississippi State where it was greeted with a visit by Grisham.

The typewriters loaned from the Soboroff Collection for the southern tour include those once owned by Tennessee Williams, John Lennon, Maya Angelou, Gore Vidal, Ernest Hemingway, George Bernard Shaw, Truman Capote and Tom Hanks, who is also a collector of typewriters. According to Sarah McCullough, Director of The Southern Literary Trail, some exhibit visitors reacted emotionally at Mississippi State. "The typewriter of Tennessee Williams," McCullough said, "moved a visitor to tears."

For the Alabama chapter of the exhibit, entitled *Alabama Types: Poets, Playwrights & Storytellers*, University organizers are expecting a similar reaction to one typewriter in particular that is being added exclusively in Tuscaloosa: the Quiet Royal DeLuxe used by Harper Lee to write *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the 1960 classic named this week as America's favorite novel after surveys conducted by PBS for its program *The Great American Read*.

Lee's typewriter had been offered by representatives of the writer's estate as an Alabama addition to the exhibit long before the results of the national survey. "We were already celebrating the opportunity to exhibit Harper Lee's typewriter at the university she attended and especially to display it alongside Truman Capote's," said William Gantt, Chairman of The Southern Literary Trail board and an employee in The University of Alabama's Department of Theatre & Dance. "Now," he added, "The exhibit will also celebrate this selection of *To Kill a Mockingbird*."

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Nelle Harper Lee (1926-2016) entered The University of Alabama in 1945 to study law but left in 1949 before completing her degree. At the university, she edited and contributed columns to student publications including the satiric *Rammer Jammer* that often took jabs at campus life and the state's segregated political and social systems. In 1949, Lee moved to New York where *To Kill a Mockingbird* was largely written with the Royal DeLuxe. Lee lived in her Alabama hometown, Monroeville, when she died in 2016. A statement she signed in 2013 to authenticate the Royal as the typewriter she used to compose *Mockingbird* will be displayed with it in the Alabama exhibit.

Alabama Types: Poets, Playwrights & Storytellers will open on Friday, November 2, 2018, and run until Friday, December 7, 2018, in The University of Alabama Gallery, 620 Greensboro Avenue, Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Admission is free. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday through Friday with one Sunday opening on November 4, 2018, at 1 p.m. The exhibit is supported with a grant from The Alabama Humanities Foundation, a state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). For more information, call the Gallery at 205-342-2060 or visit Facebook at *Alabama Types*.

Photo: Harper Lee

The University of Alabama, Special Collections

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