

# University of Dayton Receives Ohio Humanities Grant for "Erma 101" : University of Dayton, Ohio

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## Erma 101

Thanks to support from Ohio Humanities, the general public is invited to join writers at "Erma 101" at the sold-out March 31-April 2 Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop.

Who was the great humorist Erma Bombeck, and why has her writing stood the test of time? What's her place in literary history? What can we learn today from her approach?

Thanks to support from Ohio Humanities, a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the general public will be able to join writers at "Erma 101" at the sold-out March 31-April 2 Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop at the University of Dayton.

In these workshops, best-selling author, syndicated columnist, humorist and feminist scholar Gina Barreca will talk about Bombeck's enduring appeal and entertain participants at two 75-minute sessions: 3:30 p.m., Friday, April 1, and 10:30 a.m., Saturday, April 2, in the Auditorium in the 1700 South Patterson Building on River Campus. A book signing will follow her Saturday session. Visitor parking is available.

Barreca, author of the upcoming *If You Lean In, Will Men Just Look Down Your Blouse? Questions and Thoughts for Loud, Smart Women in Turbulent Times*, told Parade.com that Bombeck "captured the imagination of several generations of women, not just the generation she was writing for."

In a *Huffington Post* essay, Barreca said she has "worshipped at the Bombeck altar" since she first started reading Erma's newspaper columns as a child.

“Erma Bombeck wrote humor challenging the underlying assumptions of traditional domesticity,” she wrote. “While some of it can be placed in the self-effacing tradition (‘After marriage, I added 30 pounds in nine months, which seemed to indicate that I was either pregnant or going a little heavy on the gravy’), her essays often contained less sympathy and more bite than the conventional ‘good mother’ was meant to possess (‘So you swallowed the plastic dinosaur out of the cereal box. What do you want me to do, call a vet?’).”

The \$2,000 Ohio Humanities grant will be used for programming, marketing and promotional expenses affiliated with opening the sessions up to the public, according to Teri Rizvi, founder and co-director of the Erma Bombeck Writers’ Workshop.

“Erma Bombeck’s writing encompasses a variety of humanities disciplines — from literature to the social sciences. The general public, as well as contemporary writers of humor and human interest essays and books, need to understand Erma’s enduring appeal and why she continues to inspire millions of devoted readers even today,” Rizvi said.

Bombeck, a 1949 University of Dayton graduate, credited her alma mater with launching her writing career. Her syndicated column, “At Wit’s End,” appeared in more than 900 newspapers. She wrote 12 books, nine of which made *The New York Times*’ Bestsellers List. Bombeck also appeared regularly ABC-TV’s *Good Morning America* for 11 years. She was still writing her column for Universal Press Syndicate and developing a new book for HarperCollins Publishers when she died from complications of a kidney transplant on April 22, 1996. This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her death.

Launched in 2000, the wildly popular workshop attracts 350 writers from around the nation and always sells out. The 2016 workshop sold out in less than six hours.

The 2016 Erma Bombeck Writers’ Workshop is co-sponsored by the University of Dayton’s Alumni Association, College of Arts and Sciences and Bookstore; Ohio Humanities, a state affiliate for the National Endowment for the Humanities; *Writer’s Digest*; National Society of Newspaper Columnists; Books & Co.; Dayton Marriott Hotel; Dayton Mailing Services; 91.3 WYSO; Washington Centerville Public Library; and the Erma Bombeck Writers’ Workshop Endowment.

For more information about the 2016 Erma Bombeck Writers’ Workshop, click on the related links.

Contact Teri Rizvi, founder and co-director of the Erma Bombeck Writers’ Workshop, at [erma@udayton.edu](mailto:erma@udayton.edu).

