



For The Telegraph
Pulitzer Prize-winning author
Norman Mailer will speak at
Southern Illinois University
Edwardsville on Tuesday.

Mailer on writing and war

Pulitzer Prize winner
speaks Tuesday at SIUE

By SHERI MCWHIRTER
The Telegraph

EDWARDSVILLE — One of the most prominent American writers of the last century — a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner — is coming to SIUE to speak about the art of writing and his perspectives about contemporary politics at home and abroad.

Norman Mailer will speak as the finale event of the 2003-2004 Arts & Issues Series at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, in the Meridian Ballroom of the Morris University Center at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. He is widely considered one of the most important figures of 20th century American literature and continues his writing today.

"He is important for both his fiction and his new journalism," said Charles Berger, the chairman of the SIUE English Department. He added that he is encouraging his students to attend the lecture.

Mailer has written various types of compositions throughout his career, including novels, nonfiction, essays and screenplays, and he is well-known for helping to found The Village Voice in 1954 and wrote a weekly column for it for a short time. He studied aeronautical engineering at Harvard University, where he developed his interest for writing.

He was inducted into the Army in 1944 after graduation and worked as a surveyor in the field artillery, an intelligence clerk in the cavalry and a rifleman with a reconnaissance platoon in the Philippine mountains. His military experience gave him the idea for a novel about World War II, which was published in 1948 as "The Naked and the Dead," and brought Mailer immediate recognition. The book remains one of the classic novels on that war.

After a couple of novels that were not well received, he turned to journalism and his work at The Village Voice. In 1959, Mailer published "Advertisements for Myself," a collection of essays, letters and stories about politics, sex, drugs, his own writing and the works of others. It received considerable attention as it contained autobiographical passages of the pressures of success, money, liquor and the literary marketplace on the serious American writer.

He returned to the novel format with "An American Dream" in 1965 and "Why Are We in Vietnam?" in 1967, which was nominated for a National Book Award. In 1968 he published "The Armies of the Night," which won both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award, bringing both

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popular and critical acclaim. The book was a hybrid of fiction and nonfiction narrative about an October 1967 anti-Vietnam march of the Pentagon — a protest during which Mailer was arrested.

Mailer has 40 books published, including: "Barbary Shore" in 1951; "The Deer Park" in 1955; "Miami and the Siege of Chicago" in 1968, which won a National Book Award for nonfiction; "Of a Fire on the Moon" in 1971 about the Apollo moon landing; "The Prisoner of Sex" in 1971 as an essay response to the women's liberation movement; "Marilyn" in 1973, a biography of Marilyn Monroe; and, "The Fight" in 1976 about the Muhammad Ali and George Foreman fight in Zaire, Africa.

His next Pulitzer Prize-winning book was the nonfiction novel "The Executioner's Song," which was about the execution of convicted murderer Gary Gilmore.

Most recently, Mailer published the politically critical book "Why Are We at War?" which is an explosive argument about President George W. Bush and why war in Iraq was unjustified, scrutinizing the administration's words and actions leading up to the current political scene. Mailer claims that Bush is pursuing war not in the name of security or anti-terrorism or human rights but in an undeclared yet fully realized ambition of global empire.

"He has a lot to say about contemporary American society, the war in Iraq and the realities of American power at home and abroad," Berger said.

John Peecher, SIUE's coordinator of the Arts & Issues Series, said the university is pleased to bring Mailer to Edwardsville for the first time, saying that he is "larger than life and a true champion of American letters."

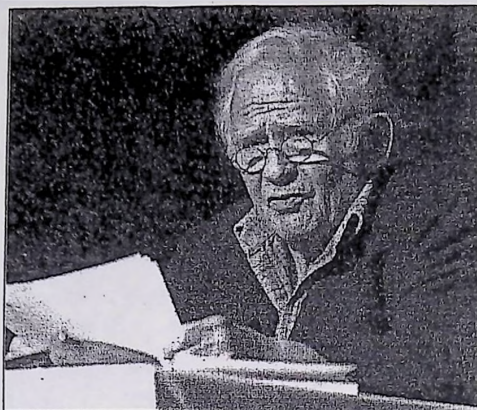
Tickets are still available for the lecture at \$9 and \$4.50 for students. Tickets may be reserved by calling Peecher at

(618) 650-2626, or can be purchased at the door.

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The Telegraph/MARCIE M. DARNES

Two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning author Norman Mailer reads Tuesday night from his most recently published book "Why Are We at War?" during an appearance on the campus of Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. Mailer was the last guest speaker of the season for the university's Arts & Issues series.

Author Norman Mailer sounds off against Bush, war in Iraq

By SHERI McWHIRTER
The Telegraph

Pulitzer Prize winner speaks at SIUE Arts & Issues Series

EDWARDSVILLE — Renowned American author Norman Mailer appeared at SIUE this week and railed against the intellectual and political abilities of President Bush, criticizing the administration's justifications for war in Iraq.

Mailer, a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner, spoke Tuesday night as the finale of this year's Arts & Issues Series at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. He talked about several political topics, including the public's reaction to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and the war in Iraq.

He said the United States went through an identity crisis after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. He said many people had to ask themselves why Americans are so hated in other

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NORMAN MAILER
TWO-TIME PULITZER PRIZE WINNER

parts of the world and also "are we not who we think we are?" He said the fervent patriotism that followed was "wholly irresponsible."

"We had to overcome our identity crisis. Hell, we had to overpower it — wave a flag," Mailer said.

"We don't need compulsive, self-serving patriotism. It's odious."

Mailer argued that since World War II, corporate structures have grown more prolific along with the idea that the United States can solve all of the world's problems. He said the country was founded on the concept that there is more good in people than bad, so people can make political decisions for themselves without a ruling aristocracy. He said democracy is existential, changing all the time, but that it is a difficult concept to arbitrarily denote, as shown in the war in Iraq.

"You cannot bring democracy to tyranny by conquest. Democracy must come from within," he said. "The truth is, we don't

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belong in any other country. The time has come to solve our own problems."

Mailer charged that Bush's worst motive for going to war was "wag the dog," keeping the public's attention off of the 2 million lost jobs, tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans and a president who has taken more vacation retreats than any other in history.

"George W. Bush might be the worst and least-qualified president the United States has ever had," Mailer said.

He said that while watching Bush's recent news conference, he found himself pitying the president's inability to answer simple questions and speak clearly but stopped his sympathy by remembering Bush didn't actually win the popular vote in 2000.

Mailer took several questions from audience mem-

candidate John Kerry. Mailer said he would rather see Kerry elected in 2004, as opposed to another four years under Bush's leadership.

"2004 may be the most important election in the United States' history," Mailer said.

Mailer read from his recently published politically critical book, "Why Are We at War?", which is an explosive argument about Bush and why war in Iraq was unjustified, scrutinizing the administration's words and actions. Mailer claims in the book that Bush is pursuing war not in the name of security or anti-terrorism or human rights but in an undeclared yet fully realized ambition of global empire.

The 2004-2005 Arts & Issues Series at SIUE is expected to be announced this summer. For more information, visit www.artsandissues.com on the Internet.