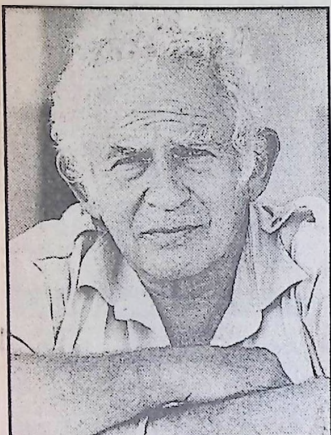


NORMAN MAILER



Panel, exhibit pave the way for author's visit

By **GEORGE SMITH**

Times Leader Staff Writer

Wilkes University is bracing for "An Evening with Norman Mailer" on Nov. 19 by hosting a panel discussion Wednesday on Mailer's work, life and times.

The controversial Mailer is one of the nation's top authors. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award in 1969 for his book "Armies of the Night." A second Pulitzer was awarded for "The Executioner's Song," published in 1979.

The panel discussion — which will be open to the public — will be held at 7 p.m. Wednesday at the Wilkes University Eugene S. Farley Library, Wilkes-Barre. An open, informal discussion of Mailer and his work will immediately follow.

In addition, a Norman Mailer exhibit is currently on the display at the Wilkes library through Nov. 19.

The exhibit features gallery posters, hand-written manuscripts, first editions of his works, film scripts and photographs of the 69-year-old Mailer that reflect the rich diversity of his journalistic, literary and political life and work.

Also on display are a selection of magazines featuring Mailer on their covers. Saturday Review, Newsweek, Life, Time, Esquire and the New York Times Magazine all have focused on Mailer and his work.

"You name it. There will be everything at the exhibit including first editions, posters, political campaign buttons and original manuscripts," said Dr. J. Michael Lennon, a Norman Mailer scholar and Wilkes University's vice president of academic affairs. "There will be eight separate display cases and all of the displays will ask the question, 'Will the real Norman Mailer please stand up?'"

"The displays will reflect Mailer the writer, Mailer the politician, Mailer the filmmaker and Mailer the family man. When Mailer appears at the (Dorothy Dickson) Dart Center Nov. 19, the

Fred

(Continued from Page 1C)

Township with his fiancée, Shirley Steckman, 52, and a Brittany Spangle named Ginger.

A short, heavy-set man with blue eyes and curly brown hair, Williams spends his off-air hours collecting stamps, reading the novels of James Michener and visiting his mother in his native Philadelphia.

Williams first became interested in radio when he monitored ship-to-shore communications for the Naval War College in Norfolk, Va. That led to a broadcasting career that so far has spanned 30 years. January will mark his second anniversary at WILK.

Over the years, he's developed his own style and says he doesn't look to such nationally-celebrated radio interviewers as Larry King, Rush Limbaugh or Howard Stern for tips.

To Williams, King doesn't ask tough questions.

"He throws softballs. He's a milk-and-cookies interviewer."

To Williams, Limbaugh is an entertainer.

"I don't want to be like Rush Limbaugh. I'd like to have his wealth and money."

To Williams, Stern is unprofessional.

"Now we're getting into the bottom of the garbage pit. He's

obscene. He's a real pig."

Williams sums it up this way: "There's nobody like me. You can't compare me. What I do and how I perform on the air is uniquely singular."

'I like a challenge'

Williams was recruited two years ago by WILK, the only 24-hour news, talk sports radio station in Northeastern Pennsylvania. He declines to give his salary but says he can walk into a store and not worry about how much an item costs.

He was fired from one radio station and told by the head of another that he'd never make it in the business.

"I like a challenge," Williams says. "I like to take an issue, examine both sides of it and dissect it and throw it on the table for debate."

"I love to be in the center of controversy."

That quest for controversy has landed Williams in some hot water over the years with newsmakers, station advertisers and sometimes, even station management. It has also led to more than 150 broadcasting awards.

They include the George Foster Peabody Award, the highest honor in broadcast journalism, which Williams won in 1970 for public service reporting in Lebanon, Pa., and the Abe Lincoln



TIMES LEADER/CLARK VAN ORDEN

■ Williams on the air at WILK recently

What I do and how I perform on the air is uniquely singular.

Fred Williams

WILK talk show host

Award, handed out in 1979 by the Southern Baptist Radio-TV Commission in Texas for Williams' 335 radio hours about the Three Mile Island nuclear accident.

'I don't do tabloid stuff'

It's just after 8 a.m. on a recent Monday. Williams busily searches for the day's hot topics in his WILK office, which he shares with Joe Thomas, a sports broadcaster.

A song by the Beatles plays softly in the background as he scans the pages of The Times Leader, The New York Times, The New York Post, The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, The Washington Post, Scranton Tribune and Citizens' Voice.

"As long as they print newspapers, I'm going to have a job forever," Williams says.

Dressed in a blue pinstriped suit, the U.S. Navy veteran sits behind his newspaper-clipping-cluttered desk, underlining articles with a highlighter and drawing arrows near paragraphs.

Black newsprint stains his fingers, which are adorned with gold rings.

"I look for excitement," says Williams after he gulps from a can of Diet Coke. "I look for emotion. I look for controversy because this program thrives on controversy. That's the nature of the beast."

What's stirring? Stories about murders, evangelicals, taxpayers, teachers salaries and strikes, President George Bush and Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton.

Williams holds up a New York Post bearing a photograph of Mia Farrow and Woody Allen.

"It's irrelevant," Williams says. "What Woody Allen and Mia Far-

row do does nothing to enrich the intelligence of my audience."

"I don't do tabloid stuff."

Pick a topic, any topic

Behind Williams' desk stand four, five-drawer filing cabinets, where issues are filed alphabetically in folders.

"You name me a topic of conversation and I guarantee you I have a folder on it," says Williams as he pulls drawer C toward him.

"Cancer, condoms, credit cards, China, censorship, car repairs, CIA. You name it, I got it."

Williams takes his purple plastic rimmed glasses on and off while he talks. He also loves to talk with his hands, especially when he's on air.

Williams stuffs a highlighter and two black ink pens in his pink shirt pocket and gathers a stack of folders, loose articles and two cans of Diet Coke and heads for the studio just down the hall.

His studio is small and narrow, about the size of a ladies room at a movie theater.

Williams unpacks his material on the counter. Lays out the clippings. Props some up against a computer screen that tells him the name, hometown and age of each caller.

He rubs his palms together. Puts on a maroon headset. Coughs. Clears his throat. And takes yet another sip of Diet Coke.

He's ready. The on-air light flashes.

It's 9:05 a.m. — show time.

"Fred Williams at your service," he says into the microphone positioned in front of his thin lips. "We talk about the good stuff. Food for your brain. You will increase your brain power. We will learn together. We'll ask tough questions."

'He's tabloid radio'

Williams talks to about 20 callers an hour. He often interviews authors, politicians and news makers on his program, whether by telephone or in person. He loves talking politics — county and national.

His adrenaline rushes when a caller tells him off.

Take Mitch from Mt. Pocono.

"I'm just sick and tired of your constant Bush bashing," Mitch tells Williams over the air. "Admit that you're a liberal. Get it off your chest and you'll feel a lot better. You'll sleep better at night."

Williams' adrenaline also surges when he talks about taxpayer money and teacher salary contracts.

Take the Dallas Area contract talks last year.

Dallas teachers, angered by Williams' criticism, wrote the program sponsors asking them to drop their ads from the show.

"They tried to have me fired," Williams says. "It exploded in their face."

Williams says no one canceled ads. Teachers say a few advertisers did.

William Wagner, president of the Dallas Education Association, the teachers' union, says Williams is unfair, biased and often inaccurate.

"I think he is a very talented person, very entertaining. Unfortunately, he uses that talent to twist and distort the truth."

"He's tabloid radio."

Williams, who claims he's right most of the time, says his critics don't like his show because it exposes truth.

"If I had a talk show and every person agreed with me, I wouldn't be in business," Williams says. "The secret of talk radio is like, dislike; love, hate; agree, disagree."

Supporter, detractors

You can count Luzerne County Commissioner Rose Tucker among those who disagree.

Maybe she doesn't like the show because he called her Rose "Pinochio" Tucker over the air after comments about the Valley Crest Nursing Home.

"I thought it was ridiculous," Tucker says of the name calling. "I thought it was ridiculous and juvenile."

The show provokes "negativism," she believes.

"I think it gives a very tilted view of the subject much of the time and does not reach any positive solutions," Tucker says.

Williams says his record of awards and citations speaks for his ability and reputation.

"I think of Fred Williams as a person who is very concerned about the welfare of the man in the street," says his former boss Sullivan. "He has always come to bat for the little guy. He's taken on the giant of industry and municipalities."

A win/lose record

Sometimes Williams wins the battles. Sometimes, he loses.

A Lebanon, Pa. radio station, WAHT, fired him in 1985 for asking listeners to send him \$1 to feed his three dogs, Jasper, Ginger and Tiny.

Williams asked for because he was suspended three days after telling once a woman was his boss.

When Williams retract the statements, threatened to go on the air and tell his listeners Williams said was inap-

"He went ballistic," remembers. "He went said I had to retract and hell because I can say what on radio."

Williams lost the job unemployed for a year.

Then there was Loudson, Williams' boss at burg, Va. radio station.

Williams was in his just starting out in swept floors, fetched and poured coffee, wh records and following hurricanes for Petersor

One day, Peterson stately, tall, slender ge the fatherly kind of gl lams says — sat the j down.

He had some words "Fred, you better find s work because you're r for radio."

"I liked him a lot shook me up," Williams

Some 20 years late: won the prestigious award. Remembering advice, he mailed the fr the paper to Peterson a note: "Not bad for a gu to get out of the busine-

Mailer

(Continued from Page 1C)

exhibit will be moved there. People will be able to browse through it while they are waiting to hear Mailer speak, or while they are waiting to have a book autographed. There will be some really interesting items on display. We have his mother's and father's scrapbook from when 'The Naked and the Dead' was published, for instance."

Lennon, who has edited three books dealing with Mailer and his work, will be one of Wednesday's panelists. He intends to construct a portrait of Mailer based on the author's philosophies and myriad interests.

Other panelists will include Dr. Patricia Heaman, Dr. Bonnie Bedford, Larry Kuhar and Tracy Youells. All the panelists are affiliated with Wilkes University.

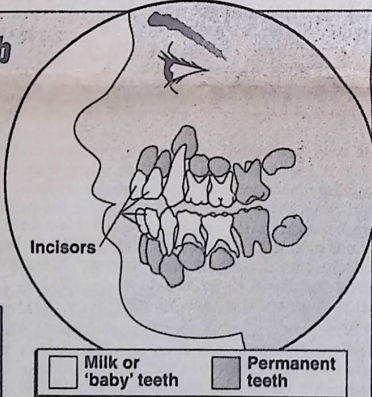
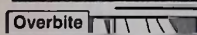
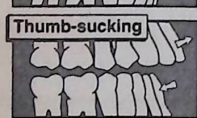
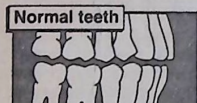
Mailer has authored 27 books in a long, furious literary career that has spanned 50 years. His short story, "The Greatest Thing in the World," was published in The Harvard Advocate in 1941; Mailer's most recent novel, the lengthy "Harlot's Ghost" published in 1991, is concerned with the moral integrity of the CIA.

Mailer recently completed a book on Pablo Picasso, which is awaiting publication.

MEDICAL ADVISER

When a thumb becomes a crowbar

If a child stops thumb-sucking before the age of 6, about the age when permanent teeth start coming in, any tooth-alignment problems usually correct themselves.



When thumb-sucking affects tooth alignment, this profile, left, results. The thumb acts as a crowbar, pushing the upper teeth out and folding the bottom teeth in.

Two other common misalignments are

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