A group of writers and workshop leaders, nearly all of them from Louisiana, will be featured at the 29th annual Deep South Writers Conference, Sept. 22-24 at the University of Southwestern Louisiana.

Heading the group of writers is Ernest J. Gaines; also featured will be Albert Beissie Davis, John Gery, Harold King, Sue Owen and Jan Villarrubia.

All events will be held in USL’s H.L. Griffin Hall.

Gaines, USL’s writer-in-residence, is best known for his novels, “The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman” and “A Gathering of Old Men,” both of which were made into movies. He has also written “Bloodline,” a book of short stories; and “A Long Day in November,” a children’s book. Among his honors are five honorary doctorates, the California Commonwealth Gold Medal Award and the Outstanding Southeastern Author Award. He is presently working on a novel entitled, “A Lesson Before Dying.”

Davis’ poetry and fiction have appeared in the Sewanee Review, The Southern Review and the Nanucket Review. His works have twice won in Deep South Writers Conference competition — “Leechtime” won the 1956 novel competition; and “What They Wrote on the Bathhouse Walls, Yen’s Marina, Chinese Bayou” won the 1965 poetry competition. Davis teaches at Nicholls State University, and lives and writes in Terrebonne Parish.

Gery is the author of “Charlemagne: A Song of Gestures,” “The Burning of New Orleans” and “Three Poems.” His poems have appeared in Chicago Review, Southwest Review, Outbridge, and Verse and he has published critical essays in Poesis, Concerning Poetry and Essays in Literature. The winner of poetry awards from Plumbers Ink, the Deep South Writers and the Academy of American Poets, Gery teaches English at the University of New Orleans.

King has worked as a newspaper feature writer, political reporter and journalism instructor. He has written nine novels, including “Shelkagari,” “World War II,” “Code of Arms,” “Closing Ceremonies” and “Paradigm Red,” the latter of which was filmed as “Red Alert” by CBS/Paramount Pictures. Among the countries holding rights to his works are Germany, Spain and Italy. He has won the Porgie Award in Contemporary Fiction and was recognized by the University of Oklahoma for writing excellence.


Villarrubia is a poet, dramatist, journalist, teacher and screenwriter whose “All Saints Day” appeared as a segment for the television series “Frank’s Place.” Her poems have been cited in the Academy of American Poets and Deep South Writers competitions. She received fellowships for her work in drama from the Louisiana State Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts. Her “Ode to Jews” won awards in the Backdoor Theater New Play Competition and the Contemporary Arts Center four-state competition. Her other dramatic works include “Yellow Roses That Big,” “The Tourist,” “The Wedding” and “A Child of the 50s.”

Registration for the conference will be 4-6 p.m. on Sept. 22 in Griffin Hall, followed by contest awards and readings at 7:30 p.m. in Room 315.

On Sept. 23, registration will continue at 8 a.m. Poetry, fiction and drama workshops will be held 9 a.m. to noon and poetry and fiction workshops and readings will be held 1:30-5:45 p.m. More readings are scheduled for 7 p.m.

A hospitality room will be open at 8 a.m. on Sept. 24, followed by more readings.

Registration fee for the conference is $15, and $25 after Sept. 15. Students with valid ID cards pay $15 at the door. Checks should be made payable to Deep South Writers Conference and mailed to Dr. James D. Wilson, USL Box 44681, Lafayette, LA 70504.

For more information on the conference, call (318) 231-6908 or write to Wilson at the above address.