

Lee Marshall Smith

Doctor of Letters

Lee Smith has been a vibrant cultural force in the literary life of North Carolina, the American South and the United States at large for more than three decades. She is author of 15 novels and collections of stories. Among them are “Oral History” (1983) and “Fair and Tender Ladies” (1989), both winners of the Sir Walter Raleigh Award; “The Last Girls” (2002), co-winner of the Southern Book Critics Circle Award; and “Family Linen” (1985), “The Devil’s Dream” (1992), “Saving Grace” (1995) and “On Agate Hill” (2006), all of which have been reviewed widely and enthusiastically. A native of Grundy, Virginia, Smith writes with a keen feel for the landscapes, culture and language of Southern Appalachia. In particular, she has captured and given voice to the remarkable courage, endurance and creativity of Appalachian women. Smith is that rare author who has achieved both popular success and the admiration of academics. She has written a Book of the Month Club selection (“Oral History”) and a New York Times bestseller (“The Last Girls”), but she is also among the three or four authors most frequently discussed in the pages of *The Southern Literary Journal*, the leading journal in the field of Southern letters. With the aid of a Lila Wallace–Reader’s Digest grant, Smith has worked with writing students in many settings, including a three-year period with the Hindman Settlement School in eastern Kentucky, elementary school students in western North Carolina and high school students in her hometown. Smith has held faculty appointments in creative writing at Hollins College (1976), Duke University (1977), Carolina (1978–81) and North Carolina State University (1981–2000). Her honors include two O. Henry Awards, the John Dos Passos Award, the Robert Penn Warren Fiction Prize and the North Carolina Award for Fiction.

For outstanding accomplishments in the field of literature, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is pleased to confer on Lee Marshall Smith the degree of Doctor of Letter *honoris causi*.