

UNCSA

THE ASSOCIATES

## Professor/Poet Joe Mills Visits The Associates

The conference room on the fourth floor of the UNCSA Library was filled to capacity to hear the May guest speaker, Professor Joseph Mills. Besides having recently received the UNC Board of Governors Award for Teaching Excellence for his work in our Liberal Arts Division, Joe is also an award-winning poet. His six books of poetry, numerous critical articles, and two books (with his wife, Danielle Tarmey) on the wineries of North Carolina testify to his being a prolific, recognized writer.

He brought his poems to us, their humanity making us smile and wince. There were no loud “amen’s,” but there were knowing nods, sometimes applause, and genuine pleasure throughout. He read poems about his family and about life and death and love and about the passing of time. The two below are from his collection, *This Miraculous Turning*.

### Questions

On the Interstate, my daughter tells me  
she only has two questions. I’m relieved  
because she usually has two hundred.  
I say, *Okay, let’s have them*, and she asks,  
*What was there before there was anything?*  
Stupidly, I think I can answer this:  
*There was grass, forests, fields, meadows, rivers.*  
She stops me. *No, Daddy, I mean before*  
*There was anything at all, what was there?*  
I say that I don’t know, so then she asks,  
*Where do we go when we die?* I tell her  
I don’t know the answer to this either.  
She looks out the side, and I look forward,  
then she asks if we can have some music.

## The Last Speakers of a Language

My son asks for the cheesehonker.  
I don't get it for him right away because  
I don't know what it is. He raises his voice  
"Cheesehonker!

CheeseHonker!"

When I ask, "You want the Cheesehonker?"  
he becomes enraged. "No," he yells,  
"Cheesehonker!" Finally I say, "Show me,"  
and he toddles to his bedroom and points  
at the rubble. I rule out anything he can reach,  
but nothing else seems like a Cheesehonker,  
so I start holding up objects at random.  
When I get to a sparkly key ring, he grabs it  
and waddles away.

That was years ago,  
and now only my wife understands  
when I ask where the cheesehonker is.  
Just as we're the only ones who still talk  
of popcheeps, and things worth two dotties.  
We learned the vocabulary of our children,  
and then they grew away from it, leaving us  
the last speakers of a language, the curators  
of a way of life that briefly flourished, then,  
as the door jamb marks rose, disappeared.

There were other poems that resonated with his wry humor and keen understanding of human nature. His collection, *Exit, Pursued by a Bear*, has titles taken directly from Shakespeare's stage directions like, well, "Exit, Pursued by a Bear." Other titles are "Enter a Messenger with two heads and a hand," "The clock striketh," "Enter Bottom," "Thunder and Lightning, Enter Three Witches," and "Flourish. Exeunt all but Hamlet." You might be able to imagine what he did with those. Joe read a couple of poems from that collection and moved on to poems from other collections.

From *Angels, Thieves, and Winemakers*, he read this one:

### Aging

To speak of a wine's future  
is to speak of our own desires,  
how we hope as we age  
that we'll become more  
harmonious, less acidic,  
that our tannins will mellow.  
We recognize right now  
we have a burst of flavor,  
an energy, a liveliness,  
but also a harshness  
which later may soften  
until we're more balanced,  
more approachable,  
easier to appreciate.  
Hold onto us;  
we believe  
we'll get better

His other poetry collections are *Love and Other Collisions*, *Somewhere During the Spin Cycle*, and *Sending Christmas Cards to Huck and Hamlet*.

It is telling that, on the "Acknowledgements" page of *This Miraculous Turning*, there is a list of twenty-six literary magazines that have published poems from the collection.

Peppered throughout his readings were testimonies to appreciation for his colleagues and students. He spoke of how invigorating it is to work collaboratively with teachers from other disciplines, of reading poetry to dance classes, and of having his poems set to music and dance by his colleagues.

The Associates who heard him speak about his work and read his poetry were completely mesmerized. UNCOSA—and Winston-Salem and North Carolina—we

are all lucky to have him in our midst. Thank you, Joe, for your generous offering to the Board and other Associates.

## ASSOCIATES ANNOUNCE FUND DISTRIBUTION

The Board of The Associates met in closed session in April to decide on how to distribute our gifts to UNCSA. We are proud to announce those gifts.

President Susan Melville had prepared a history of our distribution since 2012. As our membership has grown, so has the amount that we are able to give to the school. In 2012, for example, we had only five thousand dollars to distribute; this year, we have ten thousand dollars. That increase is a direct result of your loyalty in sending in your dues year after year.

This year, the Board voted to continue building our Associates Endowed Scholarship Fund, funding our Associates Scholarship, and giving discretionary funds to the deans of the five art schools, the high school and college academic programs, and student life. Each of the deans will receive seven hundred fifty dollars, the Endowed Scholarship Fund will receive two thousand dollars, and the Associates Scholarship Fund will receive two thousand dollars.

The gifts this year are given in loving memory of John Ehle and Alex Ewing.

A few days ago, you received your notice that it is time to renew your membership. Do it now, and you will be all set for the fall and spring semesters next year. You will have the satisfaction of knowing that your dues go to help students, you will get notices about all the special events The Associates sponsor, and you will continue to get the newsletter that reports on our activities.

### **Instruments needed for Student Initiative**

## **GRACE NOTES**

*Grace note: n. (music) an extra note added as an embellishment and not essential to the harmony or melody*

Students at UNCSA are unique. Selected by audition or portfolio, they are focused, ambitious, and talented. Their dedication, collectively and individually, is essential to the “harmony and melody” of the school. Occasionally, however, a group of students create “an extra note added as an embellishment.”

This particular embellishment is the brainchild of School of Music student Brittany Thomas. Brittany was graduated from UNCSA with a BFA two years ago and recently received an MM degree in horn. She will be here next year to work on her Professional Artist Certificate. As if academic classes and hours in the practice room were not enough, Brittany has set up a means by which students in several Title One Schools in the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School System might be provided with musical instruments. She and four other students have joined forces with Sunnyside Ministry to create the program. Rebecca Nussbaum, Director of Career Development and Community Engagement, is the faculty sponsor.

Brittany brought their plans to the May meeting of The Associates’ Board. She would like our help. Many of us may have musical instruments in our homes that are not being used. There might be a three-quarter violin, for example, that your child has outgrown. Brittany and her crew will collect instruments and take them for any repairs that they might need. B & F Repairs in Greensboro has agreed to repair them at a 50% rate. After they are repaired, they will be available for students who otherwise would not be able to practice.

Funding, then, is also needed for repairs and for other basic needs of musicians— reeds, cleaning swabs, instrument oil, strings. Contributions would be welcome if you are not quite able to donate that old trumpet!

If you would like to donate an instrument, contact Brittany at [GraceNotesWS@gmail.com](mailto:GraceNotesWS@gmail.com), or take your instrument to Sunnyside Ministry, 391 Haled Street, Winston-Salem, NC 27127. You can find them on Facebook at [facebook.com/GraceNotesWS](https://facebook.com/GraceNotesWS).

Next spring, the students hope to have a side by side concert with UNCSA and WSFCS students. Imagine that.

This program is indeed an “embellishment” to the usual work these students do. Besides being aptly named with its musical definition, the program is filled with “grace” in its broader definition. They deserve our support.

## MAY BOARD MEETING

The election of people to fill the Board positions for the next two years was the first item of business at the May meeting of The Associates Board. Those elected are

President	Linda Bettis
Vice President	Shelley Holden
Secretary	Susan Melville
Financial Liaison	Calvin Jones
Behind the Scenes	Anne Sessions, Nola Miller
Film Liaison	Howard Skillington
Helpmates	Dave Valentino, Judy Watson
Hospitality	Janet Bealer Rodie, Sarah Pierce-Rubio, Inez Davis
Host Families	Anna Goodman, Amy Hubbard
Membership Relations	Karen Robertson, Amy Orser
Members at Large	Diane Nations – Gift Baskets Mary Allen Martin— Tour Guides Nancy Gwyn
Newsletter	Howard Skillington
Salon@Six	Carolyn Bailey, Sandy Romanac Broadway, Becky Brown
Social Media	TBD

In other business, Salon@Six Co-Chair Carolyn Bailey reported that thirty-two Associates and their guests attended the April 15 Salon that was held at the home of Alex Helsabeck. With the students and other guests, there were fifty-three people there to hear voice students from The School of Music perform. Dean Brian Cole introduced Professor Marilyn Taylor who introduced the fourth-year students.

Bob McNair reported that Associates have contributed about 4200 hours through May 1. April's reported hours numbered 351.5.

Host Families Co-Chair Anna Goodman reported that Ken and Vicki Davis had hosted the host families and their students for the end-of-year party.

Karen Robertson told us our membership finished the year at 311. She is starting the membership drive for next year now. It's time to renew, folks.

Bob McNair reported that the Pickle Pantry project has been very successful this year. One Helpmate, Heather Belk, spent several hours doing a major inventory of the pantry helping the staff end the year and get ready for next fall.

Savannah Stanbery, Advancement Liaison, announced that the “Day of Giving” had been successful. The goal had been to have 500 donors; there were 533 donors bringing in a total of \$67,448. She thanked the Associates who had contributed.

President Susan Melville extended appreciation to those members of the Board who are retiring this year: Bonnie Cook, Mindy Bloom, Clare Jordan, Bob McNair, Carloyn Peddycord, and Pam Short.

## **Calendar**

Monday, May 21

Wine(d) Up Party. New Digital  
Media Building Lobby. 5:30-7:00

## **General Information—Important Links**

The Associates Website: <http://www.uncsa.edu/Associates> At our website, you will find the Board members listed, the calendar of Associates events and Associates-sponsored events, and other general information. You will also find the form to renew your membership.

Email Address: [uncsaassociates@gmail.com](mailto:uncsaassociates@gmail.com)

The Performance Calendar Website:  
<http://www.uncsa.edu/performances/>

Our Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/uncsaassociates>

Newsletter: [unsaassociates.news@gmail.com](mailto:unsaassociates.news@gmail.com)