

Harper Lee
1926 – 2016

When Nelle Harper Lee published *To Kill a Mockingbird* in 1960, the previously unknown author skyrocketed to universal acclaim. She was awarded the 1961 Pulitzer Prize in Fiction for her book, which the following year was turned into an award-winning film of the same name starring Gregory Peck as Atticus Finch. Lee grew up in Monroeville, Alabama, a few doors down from Truman Capote, who served as the model for Dill in her novel. Despite her success, she never wrote another novel (the 2015 novel *Go Set a Watchman*, although billed as a sequel to *Mockingbird*, was actually an earlier draft). She did, however, remain friends with both Gregory Peck and Truman Capote. She accompanied Capote to Holcomb, Kansas, to help him research the murder of a family there. Although Capote originally planned to write a magazine article about the murders, his research led him to write *In Cold Blood*, one of the first nonfiction novels ever written. While Capote reveled in the limelight, Lee shunned it, gaining a reputation as a very private person. In 2007 Lee was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President George W. Bush.



Umberto Eco
1932 – 2016

Although best known for his novel *Il nome della rosa* (*The Name of the Rose*), Eco was a prolific and award-winning author of both fiction and nonfiction. Born in Alessandria, Italy, Eco studied medieval philosophy and literature at the University of Turin. He became an expert in the field of semiotics, which studies signs and symbols (for example, in literature or in culture) and how they communicate meaning. He wrote several books on the subject, the most famous of which is *Kant and the Platypus*, subtitled *Essays in Language and Cognition*. His novels combine his interest in semiotics with his extensive knowledge of medieval history, philosophy, religion, and literature. They include *Foucault's Pendulum*, *The Island of the Day Before*, *Baudolino*, and *The Prague Cemetery*. Eco's fiction has often been compared with that of Argentinian author Jorge Luis Borges, particularly in its use of intertextuality, the idea that all works of literature are tied together in a great web of meaning and allusion. Eco acknowledged the influence of both Borges and James Joyce on his own work. In addition to being a prolific writer, Eco was also a renowned teacher, serving on the faculty of numerous institutions. His home institution, where he taught for many years and retired as emeritus professor, was the University of Bologna, but he also taught at Harvard University, the University of Indiana, and Columbia University, among others.



Voices de la Luna Annual Gala



Bryce Milligan, Publisher and Editor of Wings Press; Sheila Black, Executive Director of Gemini Ink; and Jim Lavilla-Havelin, Poet and Editor

On Sunday, April 10, *Voices de la Luna* celebrated National Poetry Month by holding its annual fundraiser at the Whitley Conference Center at Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio. *Voices* partnered with Gemini Ink, a nonprofit literary organization that promotes the expressive use of the written word through classes and publications. *Voices* also recognized the fortieth anniversary of Wings Press and its publisher and editor, Bryce Milligan (see the interview with Milligan on p. 6 of this issue). Throw in good food, great wine from the award-winning Becker Vineyards, and performances by Andrea “Vocab” Sanderson and Regina Moya (and her children), and the evening was one to be remembered.



Principals of *Voices de la Luna*: James R. Adair, Executive Editor; Lou Taylor, Executive Director; and Michael Burke, Board Chair

Taylor Steps Down as Executive Director, Pineda Takes Over

In her three years serving as executive director of *Voices de la Luna*, Lou Taylor has been a bundle of energy, an always cheerful presence, and the glue that has held the organization together. Taylor recently announced her retirement from the position, and presiding over the 2016 gala was her final official act as executive director. She will be greatly missed, but true to form, she didn't leave the organization in the lurch, recruiting her own replacement and volunteering to train her! Carla Pineda, former manager of Viva! Books, has graciously agreed to step in as *Voices*' new executive director. Thanks to both Lou and Carla!

