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### **New York Times Best-Selling Author Visits Gardner-Webb University on Feb. 18**

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# New York Times Best-Selling Author Visits Gardner-Webb University on Feb. 18

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Office of University  
Communications

January 30, 2019

*Gastonia Native, Wiley Cash, Shares From his Latest Novel, 'The Last Ballad'*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—New York Times best-selling author, Wiley Cash, will be at Gardner-Webb University on Feb. 18 as part of the Darlene J. Gravett Visiting Writer Series. A Gastonia native, Cash will offer a public reading and book signing at 7 p.m. in Stewart Hall, located inside the Tucker Student Center. The program is free and open to the public.

Cash is the author of three novels: “A Land More Kind than Home,” “This Dark Road to Mercy,” and his most recent work, “The Last Ballad,” which has been assigned reading to GWU students in multiple sections of Composition I and Composition II, some sections of American Literature II and one class of Fiction Writing.



Wiley Cash photo courtesy of Mallory Brady Cash

“For many years, the Department of English has brought in a visiting writer—including North Carolina writers Fred Chappell, Robert Morgan, Lee Smith, Jill McCorkle, and Ron Rash—and assigned a novel by that writer to students in English courses, from first-year composition to upper-level courses,” noted Dr. Chris Davis, professor of English. “The writer’s visit has always been a high point for the students, which allowed them to read a novel and then interact with the author in person. Cash’s novel, ‘The Last Ballad,’ tells the story of a young mother, millworker, and balladeer, Ella May Wiggins, whose name is connected forever to one of the most pivotal periods in North Carolina history, the 1929 strike of mill workers in Gastonia.”

Davis added that the generous gift from Gravett provides secure funding to continue the visiting writer series in the future. Gravett, who lives in Boiling Springs, joined Gardner-Webb in 1989 as a professor of English. She served as chair of the Department of English Language and Literature and dean of the Graduate School. In 2004, she was named associate provost for schools and became the University's first female member of the senior staff. After her retirement in 2007, she was honored with the title of associate provost emerita.

“We are so grateful for Dr. Gravett’s support for this series, which has such an impact on so many students,” Davis observed. “In the case of Wiley Cash, we saw the opportunity to bring in a writer with local ties—and his father graduated from Gardner-Webb Junior College.”

Cash has been a fellow at the MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, and the Weymouth Center. He serves as the writer-in-residence at the University of North Carolina in Asheville and teaches in the Mountainview Low-Residency MFA at Southern New Hampshire University in Manchester. He lives in North Carolina with his wife and their two young daughters.

For more information about the event, call Davis at 704-406-3224.

***Auxiliary aids will be made available to persons with disabilities upon request 48 hours prior to the event. Please call 704-406-2155 or email [disabilityservices@gardner-webb.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@gardner-webb.edu) with your request.***

*Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university that prepares students to become critical thinkers, effective leaders and compassionate servants in the global community. Emphasizing a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics, Gardner-Webb is a place where Christian conviction meets intellectual freedom. Ignite your future at [Gardner-Webb.edu](http://Gardner-Webb.edu).*

