

2023 Lunch 4 Literacy Luncheon featuring Kim Michele Richardson

(As published in The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking column the week of February 6, 2023)

Kim Michele Richardson is a NEW YORK TIMES, LOS ANGELES TIMES and USA TODAY bestselling author. She lives in Kentucky and writes historical fiction set in familiar surroundings, with characters easily identifiable with the rural Kentucky setting.

Richardson has said of her writing, "I stumbled across the heroic librarians of the Great Depression and the rare blue skinned Kentuckians. I could not stop thinking about them and wanted to embrace their strengths and uniqueness in story." And that she has most certainly done. The lead characters in her books are strong-willed women who face hardship head on and demonstrate the strength of character often found in women who have struggles in life.

Have you heard of the blue-skinned people? You may want to preview this condition prior to the luncheon so you will better understand what Richardson is including in her story and why the condition existed in rare individuals, as recent as the 1970's: <https://www.iflscience.com/the-science-behind-the-mysterious-blue-people-of-kentucky-47413>

Troublesome Creek, Kentucky, is the setting for this look at the mysterious blue skinned people starting in 1820 when Martin Fugate came to live there and married Elizabeth Smith. Four of their seven children were blue skinned. The latest person to exhibit this rare condition was Benjamin Stacey, born in 1975.

Richardson captures the impact of such odd colored skin as well as other struggles of the region during the Great Depression and shows the determination of a single woman who was convinced books could bring meaning to the depressed area and their people who were struggling just to make a living. The narrative is exciting and is said to be an "...important footnote of history that should be prized and preserved." See the many more accolades here: <https://www.kimmichelerichardson.com/the-book-woman-of-troublesome-creek>

She has been recognized with multiple awards for her five historical fiction novels and a bestselling memoir. We are fortunate she has agreed to speak to the Lunch 4 Literacy Luncheon.

Richardson has agreed to be the featured speaker via Zoom at the annual Lunch 4 Literacy luncheon held by the ALTRUSA Club of Oak Ridge and the Breakfast Rotary Club of Oak Ridge. The past few years have seen the luncheon remain a premier annual Oak Ridge event despite the limitations caused by the pandemic.

In addition to the event, here are some other methods of enjoying a fuller experience of Richardson's work:

Passage Read by Author: <https://youtu.be/2LnIKjogt3M>

Free 70-page *Book Woman of Troublesome Creek* Companion Booklet download with historical photos, recipes, and tips from the 1930s KY packhorse librarian initiative: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/sum63mkpyw63ocw/BookWomansDaughter-BookClubGuide.pdf?dl=0>

Free *Book Woman's Daughter* Companion Booklet download with historical photos, recipes and tips: <https://cdn.sourcebooks.com/assets/downloads/readinggroups/BookWomansDaughter-BookClubGuide.pdf>

Official Book Woman of Troublesome Creek Book Trailer: <https://youtu.be/pytN4Lrsees>

Official Book Woman's Daughter Book Trailer: <https://youtu.be/r6NZVWtuBes>

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Full Version Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXc7cjPUOsY>

"Book Woman of Troublesome Creek" tribute song by Ruby Friedman

Orchestra: <https://youtu.be/tPPvkTkxnNc>

An interview with Kim Michele Richardson:

https://www.bookbrowse.com/author_interviews/full/index.cfm/author_number/3243/kim-michele-richardson

Additionally, signed copies of *The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek* (\$16) and *The Book Woman's Daughter* (\$17) will be available for purchase at the following locations:

- Bud's Coffee Shop
- The Ferrell Shop
- The Oak Ridge Library
- Southern Bliss Boutique
- TN Bank

As you can see, this year is no exception for the annual Lunch 4 Literacy Luncheon as a nationally well-known bestselling author is again featured. Also, other experiential options to enjoy the program are available as well as the opportunity to purchase and read her books.

Thanks to the several faithful sponsoring organizations and the continuing support of attendees, more literacy grants are anticipated in 2023. Last year \$32,218 was awarded by the Altrusa Foundation and the Oak Ridge Breakfast Rotary Club Foundation.

The 2022 Lunch 4 Literacy grant recipients were:

- Clinton Middle College and Career Academy, Lake City Middle School, Norris Middle School, Norwood Middle School, and Robertsville Middle School received funding for author visits by popular children's author Nathan Hale for students of all six Anderson County and Oak Ridge middle schools.
- Aid to Distressed Families of Appalachian Counties (ADFAC) received funding for backpacks and supplies for its annual School Supplies Program.
- Boys & Girls Clubs of North Anderson County received funding for books and supplies for the "Rookie Readers" after-school program for K-2 kids at four club locations.
- Clinton Middle College and Career Academy received funding for copies of graphic-novel version of book, to support eighth-grade English instruction.
- Dutch Valley Elementary School's "Future Pioneers" program received funding for books and supplies for outreach to preschool-age children and families.
- Dutch Valley Elementary received funding for books and supplies for Reading Enrichment activities to encourage readers to develop more advanced reading skills.
- Emory Valley Early Learning Center received funding for math and literacy games, toys and books for the new outdoor classroom/natural playground.
- Friends of Literacy received funding for Literacy to Go book/resource packs for use by Oak Ridge Preschool families during school breaks.
- Glenwood Elementary School received funding for books for the school's "Book Vending Machine" used in an initiative to reduce truancy by incentivizing attendance.
- Grand Oaks Elementary School Library received funding for books to update the collection in the school library.
- Grand Oaks received funding for art supplies and books for programming that links art and literacy.

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- Grand Oaks fourth grade received funding for “book tasting” and other activities to engage students and families in reading.
- Roane Imagination Library received funding for contribution toward the local share of costs of sending Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library books to local kids.

So, make plans now to attend the annual Lunch 4 Literacy Luncheon on March 21, 2023, at 11:30 AM at the Oak Ridge High School for social networking gathering and box lunches, or at 12:45 PM for the event and online speaker in the auditorium.

Tickets are available at Eventbrite at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2023-lunch-for-literacy-tickets-517107651907>

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2023 Lunch for Literacy featuring **Kim Michele Richardson**

March 21, 2023 --11:30-1:30
Oak Ridge High School

**Tickets available on
Eventbrite
\$50**



In-person luncheon and program with keynote speaker attending virtually.

Doors will open at 11:30 for networking and boxed lunch in the ORHS Food Court. Program will begin at 12:45 in the ORHS Auditorium. Guests may enjoy their lunch prior to the program, or they can wait to "grab and go" at the program's conclusion.

Signed copies of both books available for purchase at the luncheon.

Lunch 4 Literacy poster featuring Kim Michele Richardson, New York Times bestselling author