



Book Talk

Last October the Wade Center hosted a book launch for eminent author Patti Callahan's new novel, *Once Upon a Wardrobe*. Callahan has penned 15 novels, including the bestselling *Becoming Mrs. Lewis* (2020), a fictionalized biography of Joy Davidman. In *Once Upon a Wardrobe*, Callahan tells the story of Margaret (Megs) Devonshire, an Oxford University student who seeks out C. S. Lewis to learn more about *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950). Megs's younger brother George, homebound with a weak heart, is enthralled by the story and wants to learn everything he can about its author and the life-experiences that are reflected in this initial Narnia story.

Callahan's charming novel sheds a great deal of light on Lewis's childhood. The book reflects Callahan's meticulous research into Lewis's life, which included several consultations with Wade Co-director David Downing.

If you are looking for some new summer reading, this poignant and inspiring novel should be #1 on your list!

Marjorie Mead Honored

Wheaton College's new Armerding Center for Music and the Arts was dedicated last September, including an art gallery on the main floor named in honor of the Wade Center's Associate Director, Marjorie Mead.

At the dedication ceremony on September 24, 2021, a plaque was unveiled. Speakers included Wheaton College President Philip Ryken, David Geiser '71, Trustee Chair Emeritus, and Michael Wilder, Dean of the Conservatory of Music.

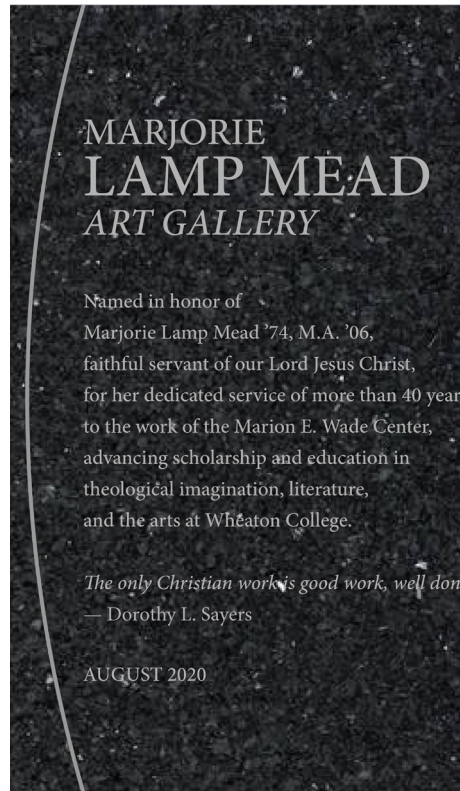
In response to this tribute, Marjorie Mead expressed her heartfelt gratitude to generous

donors who named the gallery in her honor (friends who prefer to remain anonymous). She observed that the Wade Center continues to "recognize the tremendous power of the arts to touch the heart and in-

form the mind." She added that the visual and performing arts are "expressions of the artist, but they are also a reflection of the creativity of our Creator, for our God loves to make beautiful things."

Please join her Wheaton College colleagues in congratulating

Marjorie for her many years of good and faithful service on behalf of the Wade Center, the College, and the Kingdom.



TOLKIEN FOR ALL AGES

The Wade recently received an unexpected gift: a sculpture of Tolkien's head by artist Stephen Paterson. The donors, William Sutherland and Mary Ann Stanek, decided that it would be a great addition to the Wade Museum, and we couldn't agree more! The seventeen-inch bronze resin bust now sits on the desk where Tolkien wrote *The Hobbit*.



Tolkien came to the Wade just in time. Students from North Park University soon arrived, admiring the sculpture before listening to a lecture by Wade Archivist Laura Schmidt on "The Making of *The Hobbit*." Laura, our resident Tolkien specialist, helped initiate the Wheaton College Tolkien Society (WCTS) in 2011. And she has been involved ever since.

In addition to dining with WCTS once a week, Laura serves as advisor for monthly meetings, aiding with event planning, such as plays performed for school children in Bakke Auditorium. With her help, WCTS members write an original script

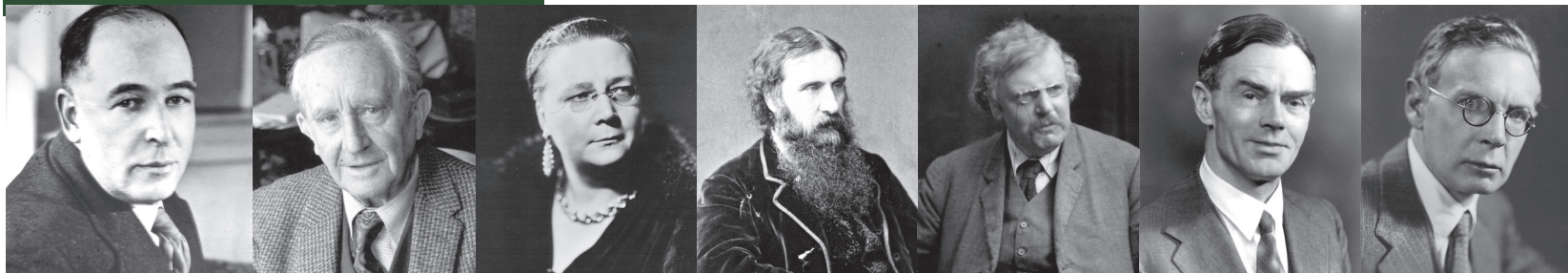
inspired by a Wade author and then produce the play themselves, designing their own sets and costumes. In 2019, over 500 children and adults attended productions of the WCTS play!

Laura guides students to write for older audiences as well, serving as advisor for WhInklings: the Wheaton College creative writing club. Between 2013 and 2019, WhInklings produced a creative writing journal, using for its title a term Tolkien coined to describe his creation of fictional new worlds: *Sub-Creation*.

The significance of WCTS is summarized by student Raymond Hanus III: "I view Tolkien Society as an opportunity for ministry, both through providing a place where all students feel welcome, and through our Caring Council, which seeks to support society members through prayer ministry and a weekly small group. I count it an incredible privilege to be a part of this group and to serve as president this year." And, like other WCTS members, he is also privileged to know Laura Schmidt.



WCTS students Raymond Hanus III, Emily Nead, Sasha Hommes, Lucy Henneker, and Elise Peterson take their bows after a stunning performance.



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DIRECT FROM THE DIRECTORS

CRYSTAL & DAVID C. DOWNING

Many incentives encouraged us to take on the role of co-directors at the Wade,

not least of which was the amazing staff. Research trips during the 1990s and early 2000s had introduced us to Marjorie Mead's decades-long historical and practical wisdom. She, far more than any other Wade personnel, helped make our books on Lewis and Sayers possible. We did not anticipate, however, the intensity of delight provided by other staff members, a delight that was reinforced last December when Wheaton College asked the Wade Center to provide a dramatic reading from Sayers's BBC radio plays about Jesus for its annual Christmas luncheon. Always glad to celebrate Sayers's work, Crystal recruited Archivist Laura Schmidt, Receptionist Hope Grant, and Office Manager Melissa Doogan to perform roles from the first play in *The Man Born to Be King* cycle (1941-42). After multiple rehearsals, circumstances necessitated a last minute switch to Special Projects Assistant Shawn Mrakovich, who rose to the occasion in order to voice the mother of Jesus. Hope's theatrical background helped guide and energize our staged reading, while Melissa and Crystal took two roles each, making swift costume changes in the midst of the performance. Enthusiastic responses from Wheaton faculty and staff provided extra reward for an uplifting experience of staff camaraderie.



Wade staff participate in the College's annual Christmas luncheon program.

ANGELS UNAWARE: Hospitality at the Wade

The last chapter of Hebrews begins, "Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers." That exhortation guides Wade staff as they demonstrate not only mutual love for each other, but also hospitality to the many strangers that walk through the Wade doors. And time after time they sense having "entertained angels unawares." Several hours before the Russian invasion, for example, two Ukrainian pastors made a last-minute visit to the Wade, explaining how they had just cobbled together multiple flights to get back to their families and congregations in Ukraine. We pray that they may discover angels unaware during a time of war.

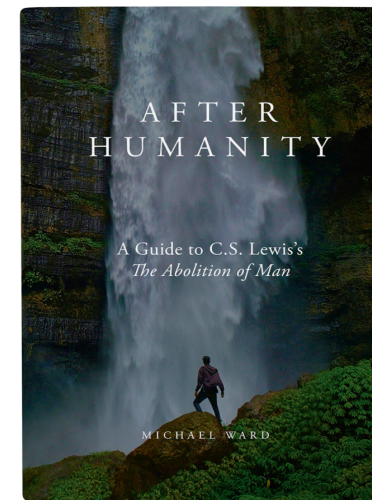


Oregon residents Hal and Fran Holman, in contrast, planned a multi-day visit in order to peruse materials by Lewis, Sayers, and Chesterton in the Reading Room, where Fran shared her life story. Born to a Jewish family in London, Fran immigrated to the USA where she met Hal and became a Christian. One day Hal brought home a library book titled *The Most Reluctant Convert*, by David C. Downing, which introduced Fran to the brilliant C. S. Lewis. Relishing their time at the Wade, Fran and Hal drove an hour from their home in Oregon several weeks later to hear the Downings talk about Lewis and Sayers in Eugene. Asking one of the best questions of the conference, Fran communicated to hundreds in attendance the importance of Wade authors: an angel unaware, indeed!

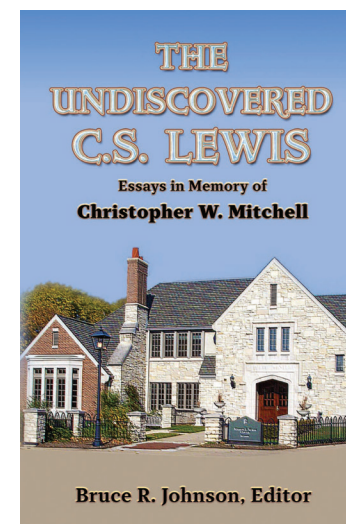
Launching from Illinois to Arizona

Two Wade-sponsored book launches helped launch the Downings to Arizona this past February. In June, nearly 100 online participants celebrated Michael Ward's *After Humanity: A Guide to C. S. Lewis's The Abolition of Man*.

Intended to be read side-by-side with *Abolition*, Ward's book explains Lewis's allusions, ranging from the identity of Shakespeare to translations of Greek and Latin. After summarizing the context and impact of *Abolition*, Ward's commentary includes numerous quotations from previously published assessments, attuning readers to both strengths and weaknesses of the work Lewis considered his best.



The second book launch focused not on the abolition of man, but on the honoring of one man. In November, friends and colleagues of Christopher Mitchell, Wade Director from 1994 to 2013, gathered in Bakke Auditorium to celebrate *The Undiscovered C. S. Lewis: Essays in Memory of*



Christopher W. Mitchell, edited by Bruce Johnson. Deftly organizing the event from his home in Arizona, Johnson invited contributors to summarize their essays for the live audience, explaining not only how their work enhances Lewis scholarship, but also how

they knew Mitchell. Wade staff members Marjorie Mead, Laura Schmidt, and both Downings talked about their essays, as did Wade Board Member Mark Noll. Bruce Johnson shared how Mitchell encouraged him to create a journal focused on Lewis studies, resulting in *Sehnsucht*, which often publishes the results of research done at the Wade. The evening culminated with a beautiful statement by Mitchell's widow, Julie, after she accepted an edition of the volume signed by all contributors in attendance. The many voices organized by Johnson added a celebratory atmosphere to the event, very appropriate for a book honoring the exuberant Chris Mitchell.

Like successively-firing booster rockets, the two launches sent the Downings to Arizona when Bruce Johnson invited them to discuss *The Abolition of Man* as part of a February Conference on Faith and Science at Arizona State University. Following a filmed recording of Michael Ward discussing *After Humanity*, David and Crystal joined Johnson on stage to discuss the continuing relevance of Lewis's work. Joining nationally known scientists at the conference, the Downings saw confirmed the importance of the Wade Center, whose archived authors continue to provide insight about the reconciliation of science and faith.



Crystal and David Downing discuss *The Abolition of Man* with moderator Bruce Johnson (on the left).