



*Happy
Birthday*
W.S. MERWIN

*Celebrating Our Founder's 90th
with Family and Friends*

Open Garden Days
Program Scheduled
Through May 2018

Artists Young and Old Find
Inspiration in the Garden

Merwin *Palm* Exhibit at
Chicago Museum Closes

Poet Laureate Billy Collins
is Next Green Room
Presenter

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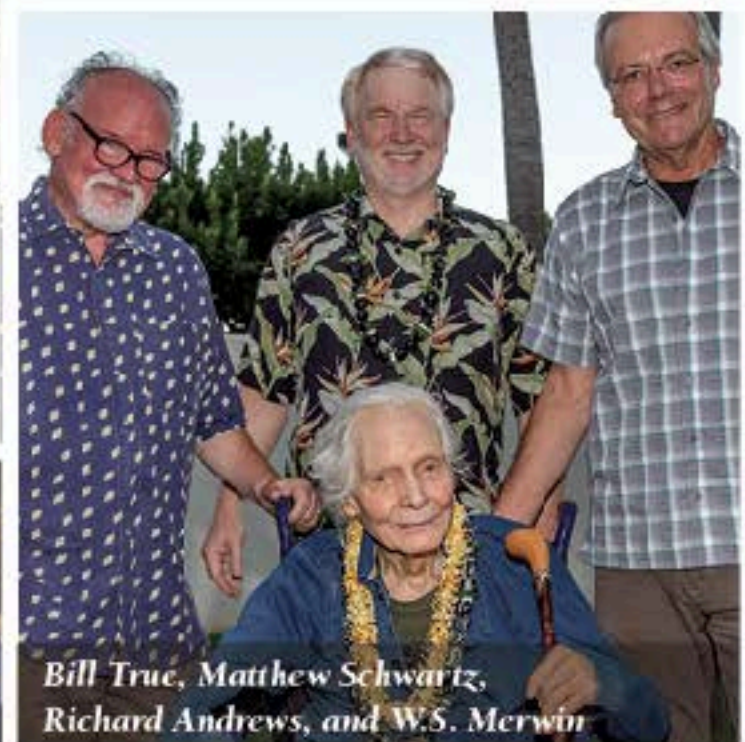
*In Memoriam

OUR MISSION

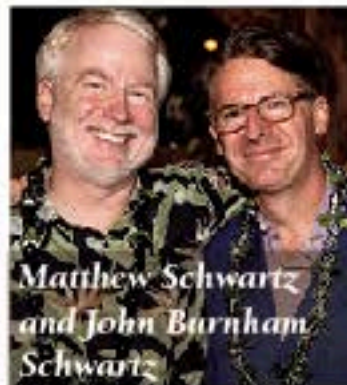
*The Merwin Conservancy's mission is
to preserve the legacy of
W. S. Merwin, his home and palm forest,
for retreat and study for writers,
for environmental advocacy and community education.*

W.S. MERWIN CELEBRATES HIS 90TH BIRTHDAY ON MAUI, SURROUNDED BY FRIENDS AND FAMILY

On Friday, September 29th, The Merwin Conservancy hosted a very special evening at the Maui Arts & Cultural Center honoring our friend and founder W.S. Merwin on the occasion of his 90th birthday. Friends and family joined together from near and far to show their appreciation for him, and express all that he has meant to them over the years. Special presentations were made by Merwin's stepsons Matthew Schwartz and John Burnham Schwartz, a proclamation was made by the office of the Governor of Hawai'i naming September 30th *W.S. Merwin Day*, and tribute videos were shown, recorded by friends who couldn't be at the event in person, including former Green Room artists Bill Porter (aka Red Pine), Jane Hirshfield, Michael Ondaatje, Terry Tempest Williams, and Naomi Shihab Nye. The highlight of the evening was a presentation by renowned poet and poetry advocate Edward Hirsch, president of the Guggenheim Foundation, who shared about the evolution of W.S. Merwin's poetry over the decades. The evening concluded with a Q&A led by Merwin's editor Michael Wieggers and Hirsch, and the standing-room only crowd singing *Happy Birthday*. W.S. Merwin spent his actual birthday, September 30th, surrounded by family and close friends.



Bill True, Matthew Schwartz,
Richard Andrews, and W.S. Merwin



Matthew Schwartz
and John Burnham
Schwartz



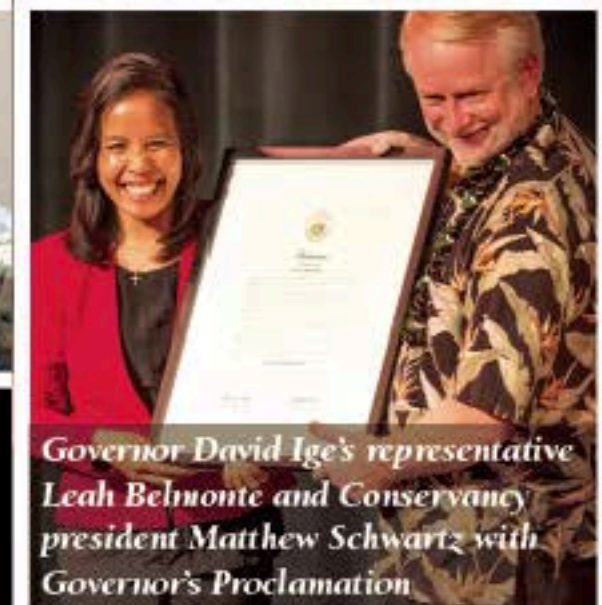
Conservancy Vice President
Robert Becker greets
W.S. Merwin



Carol Wilcox, Mina Morita,
Gaylord Wilcox, and W.S. Merwin



Edward Hirsch and
David Grubin



Governor David Ige's representative
Leah Belhonte and Conservancy
president Matthew Schwartz with
Governor's Proclamation





The Green Room

An Environmental and Literary Salon Series

Fostering a reverence for nature,
language and imagination

Special thanks to our event sponsor FIM Group and our venue partners Maui Arts & Cultural Center and Liljestrand House for making this event series possible.



Bryan Berkowitz

No. 14 with Hope Jahren

In early May, The Merwin Conservancy was honored to have Dr. Hope Jahren, award-winning scientist and best-selling author of *Lab Girl* as the featured speaker in The Green Room. Jahren kept the audience at the edge of their seats with readings from her book, accompanied by stories about the wonders of plants and her discoveries in the lab. Jahren also made an appearance at Liljestrand House in Honolulu while visiting Hawai'i from Norway.



Bryan Berkowitz

No. 15 with Pualani Kanaka'ole Kanahele

On June 9th, we held our 15th installment of the Green Room featuring guest of honor Dr. Pualani Kanaka'ole Kanahele, who is a longtime friend of William and Paula Merwin and renowned kumu hula, scholar, and sought-after speaker. The room was in awe as "Pua" shared from her studies of the *Kumulipo*, a Hawaiian geneological chant that describes the creation and evolution of all life.



Bryan Berkowitz

No. 16 with Edward Hirsch

On September 28th and 29th, The Merwin Conservancy hosted Green Room guest Edward Hirsch on O'ahu and Maui. Edward is a celebrated poet and peerless poetry advocate whose devotion to poetry is life-long. He presented both his own poetry and W.S. Merwin's, in addition to talking about poetry as a force of human expression.

Coming Up December 8th

No. 17 with Billy Collins



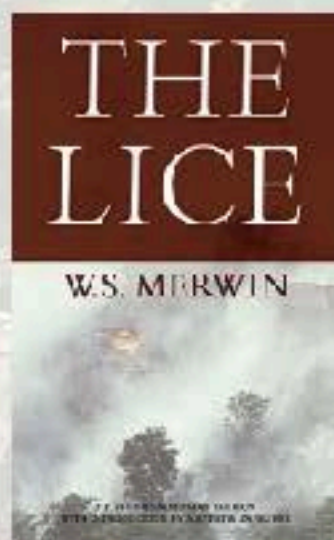
Bill Hayes

Our next featured guest in The Green Room will be celebrated poet and former U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins, reading from his collection of poetry.

Friday • December 8
7pm

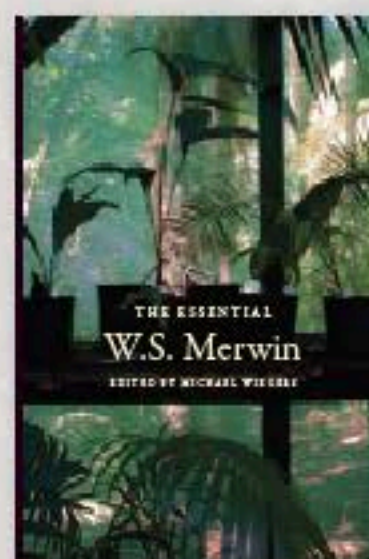
Maui Arts &
Cultural Center
McCoy Studio Theater

TWO NEW W.S. MERWIN BOOKS RELEASED



In May of this year, Copper Canyon Press released a 50th Anniversary edition of W.S. Merwin's groundbreaking 1967 book *The Lice*, inspiring a resurgence of support for Merwin's earlier work and bringing these poems to a new audience. In this new edition, the publisher includes never-before seen pages from Merwin's notebooks from around the time *The Lice* was first published, in addition to a new

foreword from Matthew Zapruder, a renowned poet and former poetry editor at *The New York Times*. In his foreword, Zapruder says the book was a "life changing revelation" when he first read it as a student, saying that today it is "both extraordinary and deeply troubling that this book would feel, once again, fifty years later, so undeniably timely and necessary".

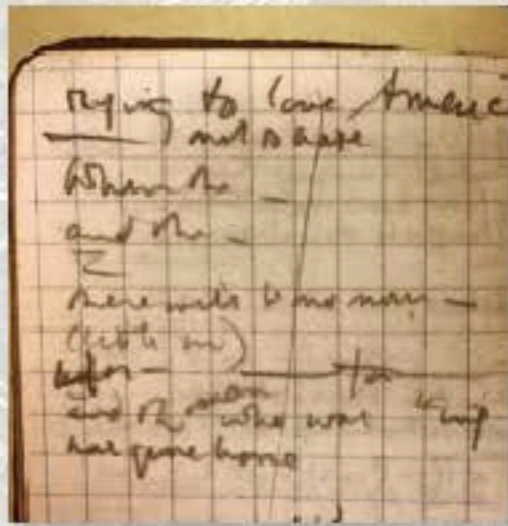


More recently in September, *The Essential W.S. Merwin*—a long-awaited collection of Merwin's lifetime contributions to poetry, prose and translation—was also released by Copper Canyon Press. Compiled by Merwin's long-time editor Michael Wiegman, this 300-plus page

volume "traces a poetic legacy that has changed the landscape of American letters", says the publisher. *The Washington Post* says this collection "beautifully demonstrates why Merwin has been one of America's most decorated and important poets for more than 60 years."

MERWIN ARCHIVES ON EXHIBIT AT UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS UNTIL NOVEMBER 17TH

Since 1984 and by arrangement with W.S. Merwin, the formative materials for his nearly seventy books of poetry, prose, translations and plays—including notes, notebooks, drafts, typescripts, proofs, and correspondence—have been deposited in the collections of the The University of Illinois Rare Book & Manuscript Library at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The Merwin Archive is a remarkably detailed impression of a profound literary career. In addition to celebrating his 90th birthday this year,



2017 has seen the publication of a fiftieth-anniversary edition of his ground-breaking work *The Lice*, as well as a career-spanning volume, *The Essential W.S. Merwin*.

To celebrate this milestone year, the Rare Book & Manuscript Library will mount back-to-back exhibitions of select items from Merwin's archive, beginning October 23 and closing November 17. The exhibitions will be chronological in scope, each two weeks in duration. The Rare Book & Manuscript Library is open from 9am to 5pm, Monday through Friday. If you're in the area, please visit!

W.S. MERWIN-INSPIRED EXHIBIT CLOSES AFTER FIVE MONTHS AT THE AMERICAN WRITERS MUSEUM



Photos by Sara Telub

Palm: All Awake in the Darkness was an immersive and interactive experience

For the last five months, we've been basking in the glow of the successful May debut of the American Writers Museum in Chicago. When it opened to the public, this historic museum featured *Palm: All Awake in the Darkness*, an immersive and intimate temporary exhibit inspired by the life and work of our founder W.S. Merwin. Created by artist duo Susannah Sayler and Edward Morris of the Canary Project and artist Ian Boyden, the exhibit came together thanks to the assistance of many at The Merwin Conservancy.

A special reception on May 6th included poetry readings from poets Rosanna Warren, Carrie Fountain, and Roger Reeves. In addition, Edward Morris spoke on behalf of the exhibit's designers, Conservancy executive director Jason Denhart spoke on behalf of our organization, and William and Paula's son John Burnham Schwartz spoke and shared a reading of W.S. Merwin's poem *Place*, which also was the anchor poem of the *Palm* exhibit.



W.S. Merwin's sister Ruth Moser stands inside a replica of the garden's shade house on opening night

The events surrounding the debut were well-attended, and as a result, a great deal of buzz appeared in the press. Coverage of the official opening ceremonies, featuring Pulitzer Prize-winning historian David McCullough, Chicago mayor Rahm Emanuel, author and poet Stuart Dybek, and others was streamed on C-SPAN. Much of the press gave favorable mentions of the Merwin-inspired exhibit. Most notably, Jenna Sauber, a writer at *Lit Hub* called *Palm* "the most sense-engaging exhibit of all, an immersive installation."

The exhibit was filled with gorgeous, dramatically lit, living palms, strewn with items one would find in and around Merwin's garden shed – many, in fact, borrowed from him – and a life-sized replica of his hand-built shade house that



Morris, Boyden, and Sayler, the artists behind the exhibit, on opening night

viewers walked through as they entered. Walking into the fully enclosed exhibit space, visitors were transported by a complete sensory change: the smells of organic matter, the feeling of humid air on your skin, the sounds of the birds and wind in the trees mixed with the sounds of a Hawaiian chant and audio recordings of Merwin's poetry and the voices of other poets closely connected to him.

Merwin Conservancy Executive Director Jason Denhart remarked that exhibit participants were "instantly exposed to the organic vitality and mindful contemplation that embodies Mr. Merwin's works and indeed, his approach to life".

A variety of events were held in and around the exhibit during its time at the museum before it closed on October 6th. There are discussions underway of where the exhibit might appear next. We'll surely keep you informed!

ARTISTS OF ALL AGES FIND INSPIRATION IN W.S. MERWIN'S GARDEN

"The one gift of human nature that distinguishes us from every other form of life is not our intelligence, it is the imagination."

—W.S. MERWIN

In public talks and in interviews over the years, W.S. Merwin has spoken a lot about imagination. When he accepted the job as U.S. Poet Laureate in 2010, one his main messages was, "the one gift of human nature that distinguishes us from every other form of life is not our intelligence, it is the imagination." Merwin has often referred to a quote from William Blake about the beauty of nature that says "to the eyes of the man of imagination, nature is imagination itself."

In the spirit of seeking inspiration in nature, The Merwin Conservancy's programs have recently brought groups of working artists to Merwin's garden for reflection time, in search of something that might inspire their next creations.

Photos by Sara Tekula



Participants in Paia Youth & Cultural Center's Project Venture Program making art in the Merwin gardens



ABOVE: Artist Kathleen Alexander with her Merwin-inspired watercolor, "Maui Loulu"

ABOVE RIGHT: Mālama Wao Akua native species exhibit at the Hui No'eau

Photos by Bryan Berkowitz

In early summer, several groups of youth artists from the Paia Youth & Cultural Center's Project Venture program came to draw, write, take photographs, and craft scripted segments for their in-house radio station.

Later in the summer, two groups of professional artists engaged in studies in preparation for the annual Mālama Wao Akua native species juried art exhibition. They spent hours among Merwin's native *Pritchardia* palms,

known as loulu in Hawaiian, watching them sway in the light and shadows. One of those artists, painter Katheleen Alexander, made a watercolor painting so beautiful that it was selected by the jury and featured in the exhibition at the Hui No'eau Visual Arts Center on Maui.

Just recently in October, a group of teenage boys from the Hui Malama Learning Center spent a half a day in the garden learning about W.S. Merwin's poetry and story of breathing life back into the land where he lives, and spent time doing some creative writing of their own under the canopy of palms.

If nature truly is imagination, then it is clear – through these artist visits – that there is much that this special place can bring into the world through the arts.

OPEN GARDEN DAYS WITH THE MERWIN CONSERVANCY

Community members who participate in our monthly Open Garden Days program are invited to experience W.S. Merwin's expansive gardens, a one-of-a-kind, historic place that is a cherished work of art. One of the most extensive palm collections known to exist on earth, located in Maui's once barren Pe'ahi Stream valley, the property has been lovingly restored by hand by William and Paula Merwin.

Led by Conservancy staff, these visits allow us to share the land, the stories, and the poetry with members of the public who are interested in witnessing W.S. Merwin's dedication to this special place, where he has led an intentional life imagining, creating, and planting trees for the last 40 years. These visits provide inspiration and possibility, and through sharing Merwin's story we provide a window into his life on Maui, and promote greater ecological understanding. Please join us!

Available Open Garden Days for 2018*

Tuesday, January 9th

Wednesday, February 21st

Tuesday, March 6th

Tuesday, April 10th

Wednesday, May 9th

*Reservations are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis, and Open Garden Days fill up at least a month in advance. Dates for 2017 are completely booked.



Learn more about the Open Garden Days program here:

www.merwinconservancy.org/open-garden-days/

Your Donation Supports Language, Nature and Imagination!

Make a Gift

Please make a tax-deductible contribution today to support the mission and work of The Merwin Conservancy as

we strive to preserve and promote the legacy of W.S. Merwin, his poet's home and his palm forest garden so they may inspire future generations.



Photograph by Diane Cook & Len Jenshel

Your gift will ensure W.S. Merwin's reverence for language, nature and imagination is continually shared with the world. Your gift will provide educational programs that spark creativity, curiosity, observation and

attention. Your gift will help us create the Artists Residency at Merwin House and allow us to continue to conserve and cultivate rare and endangered palms. Please join us today!

Leave a Legacy

Please consider leaving a legacy gift to The Merwin Conservancy in your last will and testament. Your bequest will preserve W.S. Merwin's poet's home and help launch our Artist-in-Residence Program at Merwin House. Your estate gift will support poets and writers so they may live and work at Merwin House and create new poetry and art.

For more information about how you may leave a legacy and give beyond your years, please contact Jason Denhart at 808-579-8876 or jdenhart@merwinconservancy.org.



Your Support Shapes Young Hearts & Minds

"The Merwin Conservancy is a living illustration of the values we aim to help instill in Maui youth."

—LAURA CIVITELLO,
Paia Youth & Cultural Center

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TWITTER: @wsmerwinlegacy

INSTAGRAM: @wsmerwinlegacy

FIND US ON YouTube

AND VISIT

www.merwinconservancy.org
to enjoy news, weekly poems and palm facts!

In Gratitude to Our Supporters

Through your generous support, your philanthropic investment and your partnership, you are ensuring that the legacy of William and Paula Merwin, their biodiverse palm forest and hand-built home will endure for future generations. Thank you.

MERWIN LEGACY CIRCLE* (Planned Giving/ Estate Gifts/Bequests)

Anonymous (2)
Paula and William Merwin
Ruth Merwin Moser
J. Kevin Tighe and Rebecca Fletcher

**Please let us know your plans! If you have left The Merwin Conservancy in your will or estate plan, we would like to thank you and welcome you to The Merwin Legacy Circle.*

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