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Nan Phifer
2126 Kimberly Circle
Eugene, OR 97405

Reference for Nan Phifer

I had not expected to be so drawn in by a writers' workshop. I was attending a Mideast literature conference and saw on the program a workshop on "Writing the Spiritual Memoir." Because I was a graduate of the University of Oregon, I went to the Nan Phifer workshop primarily to meet another person from the University.

Was I in for a surprise. A couple of them. First, this workshop drew a disproportionate number of conference participants who had to choose among concurrent literature sessions. I noticed as workshop participants introduced themselves that there were professors, poets, a philosopher, a theologian, and others drawn by this topic.

Never having attended such a workshop before, I was amazed by how easily and surely Nan Phifer guided this group, within a very short period of time, into actual writing. Through a seamless progression of exercises, Nan guided a process of reflection that tapped deep into the individual's personal experience. With great skill and an intuitive sense of timing, Nan Phifer then organized the writing assignment and small group responses. It was quite wonderful.

Concise and practical handouts, which were used in the various exercises, provided not only an invaluable tool during the workshop, but they allowed participants to take with them a guide for further work. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the workshop, however, was the extraordinary ability of the leader to connect with each person in a way that reassured and fostered creativity.

Participants left that workshop with more than guidance on writing a spiritual memoir. They left with deeper understandings of why they might want to explore more deeply their inner lives. I would recommend Nan Phifer as a highly effective writing workshop leader, but also for retreat settings where persons wish to explore the inner life.

Sincerely,

Lee Snyder, President
and Professor of English
Bluffton College

Office of the President