



FLORIDA LITERACY COALITION, INC.

FLORIDA LITERACY COALITION PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FLORIDA LITERACY CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN ST. PETERSBURG MAY 9-11

ORLANDO, FL (May, 2012) – The Florida Literacy Coalition (FLC) will be hosting the 28th Annual Florida Literacy Conference next week at the Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront.

The conference will kick off with keynote speaker **Mawi Asgedom** during the opening general session. As a child, Mawi fled civil war in Ethiopia and survived a Sudanese refugee camp for three years. After being resettled in The United States, he overcame poverty, language barriers and personal tragedy to graduate from Harvard University, where he gave the Commencement address to an audience of 30,000. Mawi will describe his own mother's struggle to learn English and rejuvenate attendees with his humorous and inspiring stories of the immigrant experience and the pivotal role played by community organizations. Mawi has written eight books that are used in thousands of classrooms across America, and has spoken to over 1,000,000 students and educators nationwide. He will also be offering a free session for Florida Guidance Counselors to introduce his leadership course launching through Florida Virtual School on June 1.

Another highlight to this week is the Florida Literacy Awards Banquet, sponsored by Southwest Airlines, held Thursday, May 10. This is our opportunity to highlight the accomplishments and recognize the outstanding achievements of a Florida adult learner, literacy practitioner, volunteer, literacy program, and business supporter. **Dr. Gary Mormino**, the banquet keynote speaker, holds the Frank E. Duckwall professorship in history at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, where he directs the Florida Studies Program.

The conference concludes Friday afternoon with closing remarks by award winning documentary filmmaker **Sarah Entine**. Originally diagnosed with dyslexia in 1978,

Sarah only fully comprehended her disability 23 years later, at age 29. Her film, *Read Me Differently*, focuses on her experience growing up with misunderstood learning disabilities that spanned three generations in her family. An excerpt from the documentary will be shown.

FLC thanks the following conference sponsors that have helped to make this event possible: **Florida Blue, Southwest Airlines, Cruise Industry Charitable Foundation, Publix Super Markets Charities, Florida TechNet, Dollar General, Knology, Pinellas Public Library Cooperative, Tampa Bay Times and the St. Petersburg/Clearwater Convention & Visitors Bureau.** Please join us, and approximately 500 adult and family literacy practitioners, volunteers and adult learners next week to network, develop new skills and share promising practices during the 2012 Florida Literacy Conference.

About the Florida Literacy Coalition

Established in 1985, The Florida Literacy Coalition (FLC) promotes, supports, and advocates the effective delivery of quality adult and family literacy services in the state of Florida. As a statewide umbrella literacy organization and the host of Florida's State Adult and Family Literacy Resource Center, FLC provides a range of services to support more than 300 adult education, literacy and family literacy providers throughout Florida. Special emphasis is placed on assisting community-based literacy organizations with training and program development needs. For more information about the FLC call (407) 246-7110 or visit www.floridaliteracy.org.

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