

LAB Fall meeting 2014

November 1st, 2014 Sat. 2:30 p.m.

Special performance by Rick Smith, son of Florida author Patrick Smith, at Central Library in Cocoa, Fl.

LAB, along with the Central Library Friends, paid for Rick Scott's performance. Over 120 people attended this performance. (The following weekend is the Patrick Smith event weekend (camping, cookout, riding,) at Forever Florida in Holopaw. Rick came from California for this event and the Forever Florida weekend following this.)

LAB president, Barbara Alderman, introduced the speaker. She also gave him a LAB check for \$300.00.

Rick spoke about his father's books. He showed video clips from his interview, with his father Patrick, before Patrick passed away this year. His father spoke about how he came to write about Florida, the land, and the people. Rick started with his dad's first book, The River is Home, written in Mississippi, before the family moved to Florida. Also he spoke about what is a Florida cracker, for his dad believed they got the name from a Florida cowboy cracking their whips over cattle.

Patrick Smith wrote A Land Remembered, now in its 18th edition. It was first published in 1984. Smith was a Great Floridian, a tribute named by the Governor. In his research about the book, he read about 60 books, about the citrus industry, cattle industry, Civil War, hurricanes,(both 1935 and 1928 hurricanes,) and the Lake Okeechobee deaths. He was the one that wrote about Florida history before anyone else knew about it. The novel is about a family that migrates from Georgia to Florida, and their generations following that and what happens to them. Many schools use the book to help explain about Florida's history of settlement.

He also wrote a book for social change, Angel City. It is about situations with migrant workers in the Homestead area ,especially about sugar cane workers. He dressed like them, worked with them, lived with them, for a while for his research. It was also made into a movie. Then came the changes in laws about migrant working conditions. Patrick Smith was helpful with those change through his book, Angel City, as his son explained.

Rick concluded with a brief overview of his father's other books, and also some short stories that have been discovered recently. People remember his dad for his writing style, his humor, and his down to earth attitude. Many times people would call his dad's Merritt Island home to thank him for writing a book all about their family that had homesteaded here in Florida. Of course he didn't write about them in particular,(that's how real the stories were to them) but he would graciously thank them, and then continue on with his work.

It was an enjoyable and educational time, a good presentation given about a locally famous author.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary Lynn Bennett

