

Frederick William Turner III to be Regents' lecturer for the Department of Literature

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A one-time university professor whose passion for jazz and the environment led him to a free-lance writing career will appear from Feb. 11-22 as a Regents' lecturer for the Department of Literature at the University of California, San Diego.

Frederick William Turner III, who left behind a full professorship in the English department of a major New England university, has written what UCSD literature professor Roy Harvey Pearce calls "the definitive biography on naturalist John Muir." Muir will be the focus of one of the three formal lectures Turner will deliver during his UCSD visit.

The topic of Turner's first lecture will be, "Origins of New Orleans Jazz: Sight and Sound," and will take place at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 12, in the UCSD International Center. A reception for Turner will follow the lecture.

A colloquium will be given by Turner on his experiences as a free-lance writer, from 4-6 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 19, in room B142 at UCSD's Third College Humanities Building.

Turner's last lecture is titled "Muir in the Mountains," scheduled for 8 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 20, in room 104 at UCSD's Third College Lecture Hall.

From Turner's home in Santa Fe, the writer spoke about his shift from academe to a non-academic career ("except for the occasional teaching gig"), and how it came about. "Turning away from the academy was not done in a contemptuous fashion. I owe a hell of a lot to it," he said.

"I had done everything (in teaching) I was going to do," Turner said. "I began asking myself, 'What am I going to do with the rest of my life except repeat myself?' Most of us (in academe) end up the last 30 years of our lives repeating ourselves with minor variations," he said, "with the exception of people like Roy Harvey Pearce, with whom I did graduate studies at Ohio State."

Pearce says of his former student, "What Turner has to say is intrinsically important. He is one of the most important interpreters of the idea of the west, its exploration and frontier."

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