

April 2021-revised

"Great Lives" Biography Book Group Brookfield Public Library 2021-22

Books are available at the Circulation Desk about a month before the meeting. Anyone interested in reading and discussing biographies is welcome!
Please check the sign in the lobby for the location of the meeting each month.

Monday, June 28, 2021

1:00pm

***Rocket Men* by Robert Kurson**

In early 1968, the Apollo program was on shaky footing. President Kennedy's end-of-decade deadline to put a man on the Moon was in jeopardy, and the Soviets were threatening to pull ahead in the space race. By August 1968, with its back against the wall, NASA decided to scrap its usual methodical approach and shoot for the heavens. With a focus on astronauts Frank Borman, Jim Lovell, and Bill Anders, and their wives and children, this is a vivid, gripping, you-are-there narrative that shows anew the epic danger involved, and the singular bravery it took, for man to leave Earth for the first time--and to arrive at a new world. (Polaris summary)

Monday, July 26, 2021

1:00pm

***Code Name: Lise* by Larry Loftis**

The year is 1942, and World War II is in full swing. Odette Sansom decides to follow in her war hero father's footsteps by becoming an SOE agent to aid Britain and her beloved homeland, France. Five failed attempts and one plane crash later, she finally lands in occupied France to begin her mission. It is here that she meets her commanding officer Captain Peter Churchill. As they successfully complete mission after mission, Peter and Odette fall in love. All the while, they are being hunted by the cunning German secret police sergeant, Hugo Bleicher, who finally succeeds in capturing them. They are sent to Paris's Fresnes prison, and from there to concentration camps in Germany where they are starved, beaten, and tortured. But in the face of despair, they never give up hope, their love for each other, or the whereabouts of their colleagues. (Polaris summary)

Monday, August 23, 2021

1:00pm

***Patriot or Traitor* by Anna Beer**

Sir Walter Raleigh's life is romantic, irresistible and of central importance to our island story. His death is a convoluted and contested tale of bargaining, failure and betrayal. Through the Elizabethan golden age and Raleigh's famous adventures to the final act, Anna Beer presents his stranger-than-fiction life in all its richness. Who was the real Sir Walter Raleigh? (Provided by publisher)

Monday, September 27, 2021

1:00pm

***Educated: a Memoir* by Tara Westover**

Tara Westover was seventeen the first time she set foot in a classroom. Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, she prepared for the end of the world by stockpiling home-canned peaches and sleeping with her "head-for-the-hills bag." As a way out, Tara began to educate herself, learning enough mathematics and grammar to be admitted to Brigham Young University. Her quest for knowledge would transform her, taking her over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge. Only then would she wonder if there was still a way home. Westover has crafted a universal coming-of-age story that gets to the heart of what an education offers: the perspective to see one's life through new eyes, and the will to change it. (Provided by publisher)

Monday, October 25, 2021

1:00pm

***Ninety-Nine Glimpses of Princess Margaret* by Craig Brown**

Princess Margaret aroused passion and indignation in equal measures. To her friends, she was witty and regal. To her enemies, she was rude and demanding. In her 1950s heyday, she was seen as one of the most glamorous and desirable women in the world. By the time of her death in 2002, she had come to personify disappointment. The tale of Princess Margaret is Cinderella in reverse: hope dashed, happiness mislaid, life mishandled. Such an enigmatic and divisive figure demands a reckoning that is far from the usual fare. (Polaris summary)

Monday, November 22, 2021

1:00pm

***Becoming* by Michelle Obama**

An intimate, powerful, and inspiring memoir by the former First Lady of the United States. From her girlhood on the South side of Chicago to life inside the White House, she tells her story with honesty and boldness issuing a challenge to the rest of us: Who are we and who do we want to become? (Dust jacket)

December-No Meeting

April 2021-revised

Monday, January 24, 2022

1:00pm

***Invisible: the Forgotten Story of the Black Woman Lawyer Who Took Down America's Most Powerful Mobster* by Stephen Carter**

She was black and a woman and a prosecutor, a graduate of Smith College and the granddaughter of slaves, as dazzlingly unlikely a combination as one could imagine in the New York of the 1930s--and without the strategy she devised, Lucky Luciano, the most powerful Mafia boss in history, would never have been convicted. When special prosecutor Thomas E. Dewey selected twenty lawyers to help him clean up the city's underworld, she was the only member of his team who was not a white male. Eunice Hunton Carter, Stephen Carter's grandmother, was raised in a world of stultifying expectations about race and gender, yet by the 1940s her professional and political successes had made her one of the most famous black women in America. Greatly complicating her rise was her difficult relationship with her younger brother, Alphaeus, an avowed Communist who--together with his friend Dashiell Hammett--would go to prison during the McCarthy era. Yet she remained unbowed. (Dust jacket)

Monday, February 28, 2022

1:00pm

***All You Can Ever Know* by Nicole Chung**

Nicole Chung was born severely premature, placed for adoption by her Korean parents, and raised by a white family in a sheltered Oregon town. From childhood, she heard the story of her adoption as a comforting, prepackaged myth. She believed that her biological parents had made the ultimate sacrifice in the hope of giving her a better life, that forever feeling slightly out of place was her fate as a transracial adoptee. But as Nicole grew up facing prejudice her adoptive family couldn't see, finding her identity as an Asian American and as a writer, becoming ever more curious about where she came from, she wondered if the story she'd been told was the whole truth. With warmth, candor, and startling insight, Nicole Chung tells of her search for the people who gave her up, which coincided with the birth of her own child. (Polaris summary)

Monday, March 28, 2022

1:00pm

***My Grandfather Would Have Shot Me* by Jennifer Teege**

The memoir of a German-Nigerian woman who learns that her grandfather was the brutal Nazi commandant depicted in *Schindler's List*, Amon Goeth. (Provided by publisher)

Monday, April 25, 2022

1:00pm

***Chasing the Light* by Oliver Stone**

Before the international success of *Platoon* in 1986, Oliver Stone had been wounded as an infantryman in Vietnam, and spent years writing unproduced scripts while driving taxis in New York, finally venturing westward to Los Angeles and a new life. Stone, now 73, recounts those formative years with in-the-moment details of the high and low moments. We see meetings with Al Pacino over Stone's scripts; the harrowing demon of cocaine addiction following the failure of his first feature, *The Hand* (starring Michael Caine); his risky on-the-ground research of Miami drug cartels for *Scarface* and tensions behind the scenes of his first Academy Award winning film, *Midnight Express*. (Polaris summary)

Monday, May 23, 2022

1:00pm

***You Ought To Do a Story About Me* by Ted Jackson**

In 1990, while covering a story about homelessness for the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, Ted Jackson encountered a drug addict sleeping under a bridge. Pointing to the daily newspaper by his feet, the homeless stranger looked the photojournalist in the eye and said, "You ought to do a story about me." When Ted asked why, he was stunned by the answer. "Because, I've played in three Super Bowls." That chance meeting was the start of Ted's thirty-year relationship with Jackie Wallace, a former NFL star who rose to the pinnacle of fame and fortune, only to crash and lose it all. Ted's account is pure, singular, and ambitious, a timeless tale about loss, redemption, and hope in their multifarious forms. (Polaris summary)

Monday, June 27-Selection Meeting

1:00pm

Come to the meeting and cast your votes for 2022-23!

Monday, July 25, 2022

1:00pm

***War Doctor* by David Nott**

For more than twenty-five years, David Nott has taken unpaid leave from his job as a general and vascular surgeon with the NHS to volunteer in some of the world's most dangerous war zones. He is now widely acknowledged to be the most experienced trauma surgeon in the world. Since 2015, the Foundation he set up with his wife, Elly, has disseminated the knowledge he has gained, training other doctors in the art of saving lives threatened by bombs and bullets. *War Doctor* is his extraordinary story. (Polaris summary)