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Personal Biographers 'Saving Lives' at Tennessee Conference and Beyond

FRANKLIN, TN— While virtually unknown a few short years ago, the idea of ‘saving lives’ through professionally written personal histories or memoirs has exploded in popularity. Today, professionals in the emerging field have translated their backgrounds in journalism, film, oral history, psychology, storytelling, graphic design, publishing, history, and education into the business of documenting the lives of clients as well as the histories of corporations and other organizations around the world.

More than 300 of those professionals (from throughout the United States and Canada and as far away as Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, and several European countries) will gather outside Nashville in Franklin, Tennessee, November 8-12, 2007, for the 13th annual conference of the Association of Personal Historians (APH).

On-line registration for the four-day event at the Franklin Marriott Hotel & Cool Springs Conference Center begins July 1 at www.personalhistorians.org.

APH—the only organization of its kind devoted to the profession of preserving histories, life stories and memories for individuals, organizations and communities—has seen its membership grow tenfold since 1995. Jeanne Archer, who operates a Texas-based business, Life Journeys, and is the current president of APH, says personal historians have tapped into the desire of more people to know the stories of their families and communities before they’re lost. “My passion—and that of all APH members—is to encourage people to record their life stories now,” she says. “Most people value family stories and want to record them and pass them down. But in virtually every audience I speak to, people talk emotionally about the parents who died before their stories were recorded.”

This year’s conference program manager is Jane Baxter, owner of Roots & Branches Production—a producer of personal histories and biographies in video format. Baxter has organized 30 separate workshops, focusing on the skills, equipment and methods personal historians must hone in order to capture lives and memories effectively for future generations.

John Seigenthaler, former president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, journalist for the *Nashville Tennessean*, and founding editorial director of *USA Today*, will speak at the conference. Other featured speakers will include Bridget Kling, an award-winning producer of independent films and documentaries, and Robert Hicks, author of the *New York Times* bestseller, *The Widow of the South*.

Additional information about the Association of Personal Historians and its conference, as well as a complete schedule of events, is available at www.personalhistorians.org.

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