

For Immediate Release

2.22.11

PBS HAWAII PRESENTS

“A Conversation with

America’s Poet Laureate: W.S. Merwin”

Program Will Premiere for Hawaii Audiences Thursday, February 24th at 8:30PM

Before Airing on PBS Stations Across the Country

Pulitzer Prize-winning poet and longtime Maui resident W.S. Merwin is America’s Poet Laureate. This honor had never been bestowed upon a Hawaii resident; let alone a writer who wants to be known as a Hawaii poet. True to this conviction, Mr. Merwin insisted on presenting himself to the world from Hawaii with an interviewer from Hawaii.

PBS Hawaii CEO and veteran journalist Leslie Wilcox spoke with Mr. Merwin at his lush, secluded home on Maui’s northern coast, where he and his wife Paula cultivate one of the world’s largest collections of endangered palm trees.

Flowing through the hour-long program, produced by PBS Hawaii, are readings from his work and his thoughts about poetry, literature, the power of words, Hawaiian myth and values, conservation, the future of mankind and much more. In the end, a never-before-seen portrait of the man and the artist emerges.

Merwin is the seventeenth United States Poet Laureate. He has published 26 collections of poetry and received numerous honors and awards in a career that spans more than six decades.

William Stanley Merwin was born in New York City in September of 1927, the son of a strict Presbyterian minister. He was raised in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. As a child, he listened to and was moved by the language of the King James Version of the Bible and the children’s poetry his mother often read to him. With a gift for languages, he graduated from Princeton University in 1948, and then traveled, living for many years, alternately, in Europe and the United States.

In 1976, Merwin moved to Hawaii to study Buddhism with the revered Zen master, Robert Aitken. Besides being a widely read poet and accomplished literary translator, Merwin is also recognized for his commitment to the environment. For the last thirty five years the Hawaiian Islands have been Merwin's home.

Because Merwin wishes to be represented to the world through this interview, selections from it will also be made available to media outlets around the globe.

For More Information Contact

Meriel Collins

mcollins@pbshawaii.org

973-1387

PBS Hawaii's mission is to inspire, inform and entertain by providing high quality programming and valuable services for our diverse island community. Major support of the station comes the people and business of Hawaii. Visit our website www.pbshawaii.org