

The National Willa Cather Center presents the
67th Annual Willa Cather Spring Conference
June 2–4, 2022 | Red Cloud, Neb.



LITERARY PRIZES
ACCLAIM
and
CONTROVERSY
67th Annual Willa Cather
Spring Conference

In 1922, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., published Willa Cather's fifth novel, *One of Ours*. Despite Cather's attempts to head off negative responses, reviews of *One of Ours* were decidedly mixed, with key critics such as H.L. Mencken deriding it as marking a precipitous descent from Cather's previous level of achievement as an artist. Nevertheless, it was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1923, and as a result Cather became, for the rest of her life and beyond, "the Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Willa Cather."

The Willa Cather Spring Conference theme in this centennial year of *One of Ours*, "Literary Prizes: Acclaim and Controversies," engages this divided response to her novel, which is characteristic of prize culture more broadly rather than a departure from it. Some possible topics keyed to the broader theme of the conference for those who wish to present as part of the Scholars Symposium include:

- **The critical reception of *One of Ours* in 1922 and later.**
- **The marketing of *One of Ours* by Knopf and how the firm positioned it as a prize candidate.**
- **The controversy over the award of the Pulitzer to Cather in 1923.**
- ***One of Ours* in relation to other Pulitzer winners in the prize's first decade.**
- ***One of Ours* as novel of the region then known as the Middle West, including its relationship to Webster County people and places.**
- **How the award shaped Cather's future trajectory as an artist.**
- **Other prizes, awards, and recognitions accorded to Cather, such as the Prix Femina and the Howells Medal.**
- **How Cather's status as a Pulitzer winner did shape and has continued to shape the marketing of her works.**
- **Cather's place today in critical discourse about value and prestige, including the place of Cather and her novels on various "best of" ranked lists.**

Proposals focusing on teaching and pedagogy at all levels of instruction are welcome!

Abstracts of no more than 250 words should describe papers or presentations approximately twenty minutes long. Innovative formats are encouraged. Abstracts, along with your contact information and institutional affiliation, should be emailed to **education coordinator Rachel Olsen at rolsen@willacather.org by February 15, 2022**. Responses to proposals will be sent by mid-March. Questions may be sent to Dr. Melissa J. Homestead, Academic Director of the 2022 Spring Conference, at mhomestead2@unl.edu.

Given the uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are planning for all possible formats: in-person in Red Cloud, completely online, or a hybrid. Presenters should plan to present their paper or participate in discussions online should circumstances require it.