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Author Charles Frazier draws record attendance to Gwinnett County Public Library's *Gwinnett Reads* event

Bestselling author of *Cold Mountain* reads from his latest novel *Thirteen Moons* for a standing room-only crowd

Historical fiction revolves around the clash of an industrializing America and a struggling Cherokee nation

DULUTH, GEORGIA (14 July 2008) - Charles Frazier, bestselling author of *Cold Mountain*, appeared Saturday evening at Gwinnett Center before more than 300 fans of his bestselling books. The crowd noshed on appetizers, enjoyed an interview and reading on stage with a Cherokee translator, and then clutched books for signing in a line that lasted two hours.

Frazier agreed to participate in *Gwinnett Reads*, a program of the Gwinnett County Public Library, to visit with his readers and share passages from his latest novel *Thirteen Moons*, a story that explores the clash of a young, industrializing American nation with the struggling Cherokee culture and traditions. Saturday's record attendance of 320 marks the one of the most successful *Gwinnett Reads* event to date.



Full House for Frazier at Gwinnett Center Ballroom

"We started the *Gwinnett Reads* program five years ago as an adult summer reading program," said Nancy Stanbery-Kellam, executive director of the Gwinnett County Public Library. "*Gwinnett Reads* acts as a countywide book club with everyone reading the same book, and we were delighted to have Charles Frazier accept our invitation. This event brought us Frazier's literary genius, as well as a window into efforts to preserve the Cherokee language and traditions, a cause very close to his heart."

Frazier shared the stage with Cherokee native Myrtle Driver Johnson, who interpreted several passages of *Thirteen Moons* in the Cherokee language. The audience was spellbound by the gentle, lilting quality of a language they had never heard before and did not know is in danger of disappearing.

Cherokee is a dying language, Johnson said, and could disappear from active use in less than 25 years. Johnson pointed out that the vast majority of Cherokee speakers are well over 50 years old. She also told about a language immersion program in western North Carolina for children age 18 months to five that could help keep the language alive. Her own four-year-old grandson is in the school, and when they are together they speak only Cherokee.

Frazier made it clear that his book, which came out last year, was a catalyst for exploring his Appalachian roots, and he has embraced the cause of helping to preserve the Cherokee language and traditions.

"The Cherokee language was the first way that the southern Appalachians gained a human voice," said Frazier. "It would be a great loss not to hear it spoken ever again in these mountains."

For two hours after the program, Frazier signed books published in English and Cherokee. *Thirteen Moons* is the first American novel ever translated into the Cherokee language. The Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation, based in Cherokee, North Carolina, has honored Frazier for his dedication to helping preserve their language and traditions.

"I grew up in the mountains of western North Carolina," said Frazier, "on land that had belonged

to the Cherokees just a hundred years before. I didn't understand how the Eastern Band of the Cherokees had managed to stay there after so many had been driven out on the Trail of Tears. This book is part of my search to understand how my people came to live on this land."

Gwinnett County Public Library lays claim to Georgia's highest book circulation numbers and ranks among the largest systems in the country. With its dynamic position of growth in the booming Atlanta region, Gwinnett County Public Library has been able to attract top authors for *Gwinnett Reads* since it began in 2003.

For more information

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