

MEDIA RELEASE

Contact: Harold George

904-827-6928

hgeorge@sjcfl.us

October 24, 2018

SAVE THE DATE: Lisa Wingate appearance is the highlight of St. Johns Reads 2019!

ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FL — 10/24/18 The St. Johns County Public Library System is excited to announce that St. Johns Reads 2019 is going to be very special! We have chosen Lisa Wingate's bestselling novel *Before We Were Yours* as our next community reads title, and Lisa Wingate will be visiting St. Johns County!

Before We Were Yours depicts the story of a horrifying and little known piece of depression era history. From Lisa Wingate's webpage:

"An engrossing new novel based on one of America's most notorious real-life scandals—in which Georgia Tann, director of a Memphis-based adoption organization, kidnapped and sold poor children to wealthy families all over the country—Before We Were Yours brilliantly fictionalizes and brings to life a shocking facet of America's past."

Between 1925 and 1950, approximately 5,000 children were taken from their families and sold to adoptive parents by the Tennessee Children's Home Society. Georgia Tann made a fortune taking children from poor and disadvantaged families. It is believed that several prominent people adopted children through the Tennessee Children's Home Society, including Joan Crawford and June Allyson.

Georgia Tann would ultimately elude justice as cancer took her life just as the authorities were launching an investigation into the Tennessee Children's Home Society.

The Library System is happy to announce that Lisa Wingate will be making a personal appearance at the World Golf Village on Saturday, February 23, 2019 at 2pm. Her appearance is funded in partnership with the seven Friends of the Library Groups, and a \$5000 grant award from the Florida Humanities Council (FHC) through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The author of 30 books, Ms. Wingate will be reading from *Before We Were Yours*, discussing her work and her process for researching and writing. Books will be available for purchase and signing by Ms. Wingate.

Before We Were Yours is a story told from dual viewpoints: a 12 year old girl in 1939 Tennessee struggles to keep her siblings together after having been taken away from their parents; a successful prosecutor with a bright future returns to South Carolina to care for her ailing father and starts to uncover the mysterious past of her grandmother. A brutal tale told with deep emotional connections and tenderness, the book is energized by the journey to where these two stories intersect. Having already spent over 50 weeks on the New York Times' Best Seller List, *Before We Were Yours* has struck a chord with readers who have enjoyed this tale of families, love, loss and triumph of the human spirit.

Lisa Wingate's appearance at the World Golf Village will cap a month of programs and events centered on reading and discussion of *Before We Were Yours*. The book is now available in multiple formats at your St. Johns County Public Library System. For further information or to place a hold on your copy of this outstanding book, call your branch library or visit our website at www.sjcpls.org.

"Funding for this program was provided through a grant from the Florida Humanities Council with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this program do not necessarily represent those of the Florida Humanities Council or the National Endowment for the Humanities."

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*The St. Johns County Public Library system serves the community by providing access to technology, facilities, collections, programs and services that help people meet our mission: **Connect, Learn, Enjoy @ Your Library**. For more information on the St. Johns County Public Library System, visit sjcpls.org.*