

**2026 Conference Program**  
**Thomas Wolfe and the Natural World**  
**The Thomas Wolfe Society's Forty-Seventh Annual Meeting**  
**Asheville, North Carolina, May 29-May 30**  
**Renaissance Asheville Downtown Hotel Windsor Ballroom 1st Floor**  
**Friday, May 29, 2026**

**08:30-10:30** Board of Directors Meeting

**11:00-12:00** Registration

**12:00-12:20** Welcome and Prologue

Welcome: Ray Walker, President Thomas Wolfe Society

Welcome to Our City: Kayla Seay, Site Manager Thomas Wolfe Memorial State Historic Site

**12:20-12:30** Prologue: Phillip Lewis, Charlotte, North Carolina

**12:30-2:00** **Session I (Moderator: Cheryl Malinowski, Jacksonville, FL)**

"An examination of 'The Four Lost Men'" American Landscape

Mark C. Taylor, St. Paul, Minnesota

"A Drive in the Park: Automobility and Thomas Wolfe"

Andrew Keener, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

"*Look Homeward, Angel*: The Heart of Human Condition and Emotional Intelligence of Thomas Wolfe" Dr. Pete Lester, Troutman, North Carolina

**2:00-2:15** Break

**2:15-3:45** **Session II (Moderator: Alana Dagenhart, Statesville, NC)**

"'My Little Devils Like Me': Thomas Wolfe as a College Instructor"

Joe Bentz, Azusa Pacific University

"Mysticisms of Death in the Verses of Thomas Wolfe and Jim Wayne Miller"

Austin Maynor, Asheville, North Carolina

"The Web and the Rockstar"

Don Ashe, Hermosa Beach, California

**3:45-5:30** Meet and Greet, Thomas Wolfe Memorial followed by Dinner on your own

## **Saturday Morning- May 30, 2026**

**08:00-09:00** Breakfast on the Old Kentucky Home Porch

**09:00-9:45** **Session III (Moderator:Andrew Keener, University of North Carolina Charlotte)**

“The Thomas Wolfe-Anne Armstrong Connection”

Linda Behrend, Knoxville, Tennessee

“Thomas Wolfe on Nature in North Carolina and the ‘Yancey County Shooting Scrape’”

J. Todd Bailey, Asheville, North Carolina

**9:45-10:00** Break

**10:00-10:30** **Session IV (Moderator: Mack Hassler, Hudson, Ohio)**

“‘Mountain Blood’: The Construction of Appalachian Social Ecology in Thomas Wolfe’s *Look Homeward, Angel*”

Joshua Cody Ward, UNC Chapel Hill

**10:30-11:00** Business Meeting

**11:00-11:15** Final Words: Ray Walker, President and Jodi Meisenberg, Vice President

**11:15-11:30** Epilogue: Terry Roberts, Asheville, North Carolina

**Lunch on your own**

**2:00** Afternoon activities: Walking tour, Downtown Asheville, River Arts District, Biltmore Gardens , Blue Ridge Parkway, North Carolina Arboretum

## **Saturday Evening-May 30, 2026**

**6:00-7:00** Books by Thomas Wolfe Society Authors Available for Sale and Signing  
Cocktail Hour/ Cash Bar

**7:00** **Banquet Dinner- Renaissance Hotel “Top of the Plaza” 12th Floor**

“Thomas Wolfe: A Childhood in the Consumption Capital”

Professor David Freedman, Asheville, North Carolina

**Awards Ceremony:** Ray Walker, President

Conference Committee: Ray Walker, Jodi Meisenberg, Mark Canada, George Hovis, Anne Zahlan, Deborah Borland, Austin Maynor, Terry Roberts, Kayla Seay, Bill Turner, J. Todd Bailey