

William Bernhardt

Biography

William Bernhardt loves his job and it shows in his writing. *Library Journal* has called him the "master of the courtroom drama." His twenty-seven books have sold more than ten million copies worldwide. The *Vancouver Sun* dubbed him "the American equivalent of P.G. Wodehouse and John Mortimer." His most recent novel is *Capitol Conspiracy*, which takes attorney Ben Kincaid to Washington, D.C., for a high-profile case involving controversial anti-terrorist legislation, political skullduggery, and murder. His forthcoming novel, *Nemesis: The Final Case of Eliot Ness*, solves the mystery of America's first serial killer, whose identity has eluded investigators for decades. Bernhardt's novels are renowned for their unexpected twists, breathless pace, humor, and insightful consideration of issues confronting contemporary American society. He is also the author of *The Code of Buddyhood*, a coming-of-age novel described by *The West Coast Review of Books* as "a powerful and sophisticated novel about the nature of friendship," a biography for young adults, *Equal Justice: The Courage of Ada Sipuel*, a children's book, *Princess Alice and the Dreadful Dragon*, and he has edited an anthology of original short stories (*Legal Briefs*) and a multi-author fundraising novel for The Nature Conservancy (*Natural Suspect*). And as if that weren't enough, he is also an often-published poet and a member of the Academy of American Poets.

Bernhardt's books have been translated and published in more than two dozen countries. He has twice won the Oklahoma Book Award for Best Fiction and he received the Southern Writers Guild's Gold Medal Award. He was presented with a Career Achievement Award at the 2000 Booklovers Convention in Houston and he is one of only thirty people inducted into the Oklahoma Writers Hall of Fame—and the youngest author ever so honored. In 2000, he was honored with the H. Louise Cobb Distinguished Author Award, which is given "in recognition of an outstanding body of work that has profoundly influenced the way in which we understand ourselves and American society at large."

In addition to his work as a writer, Bernhardt is also a popular teacher and publisher. In 1999, he founded HAWK Publishing Group. Although HAWK focuses on discovering new writers, particularly those in the Southwest, it has also published books by acclaimed authors such as Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist N. Scott Momaday, Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter Janis Ian, and PBS newsman Jim Lehrer. He also sponsors the HAWK Writing Workshop and Seminars each summer to nurture and mentor aspiring writers. Throughout the year, Bernhardt teaches writing and literature to fortunate students who invariably remark on his passion, knowledge, and expertise.

Bernhardt is also active in the community. He currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Thomas H. Gilcrease Museum of Western Art, the Advisory Panel for the Oklahoma Arts Institute, the Advisory Council for "Nimrod: The International Journal of Poetry and Prose," the Publications Committee for the Oklahoma Historical Society, and the Selection Committee for the Peggy V. Helmerich Literary Award.

Bernhardt's many activities within and beyond the world of literature led OSU to dub him "Oklahoma's Renaissance Man." Other recent Bernhardt projects have included writing the music, lyrics, and script for a musical (he is an accomplished pianist and songwriter), producing two music CDs, constructing crossword puzzles for *The New York Times*, surfing, zip-lining over the canopy of the Costa Rican rain forest, jumping out of an airplane at 10,000 feet, and kissing a dolphin.