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## High School Program

- Program:** Author Isabel Wilkerson Lecture and Q&A Session
- Date:** Friday, November 4, 2011
- Time:** 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. Lecture and Q&A  
11:00 Lunch available  
For those who may wish to extend their class visit, tours of Main Library could also be made available
- Location:** Main Library, downtown  
96 S. Grant Ave.  
Columbus, Ohio 43215
- Directions:** [columbuslibrary.org](http://columbuslibrary.org), under "locations"
- Support:** From New Albany Community Foundation and presenting sponsor, Battelle. Funds are available to support busing costs, books for teachers, and a light lunch for students (water, Subway sandwiches, and chips)
- Accommodations:** Main Library can accommodate 150+ students for this lecture and is inviting selected High Schools throughout Franklin County



Photo by Joe Henson

**Isabel Wilkerson** is the Director of Narrative Nonfiction at Boston University. Her first book, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (Random House; September 2010), fifteen years in the making, follows the intimate and moving stories of three African-American families who left the only place they'd ever known—the rural and small-town South—to find a better life in the urban North and West. It is the first major work to chronicle the Great Migration and its aftermath on a national scale, over the course of nearly a century.

Toni Morrison has called the book "profound, necessary, and a delight to read," and Tom Brokaw praises it as "an epic for all Americans who want to understand the making of our modern nation." Reviewers have acclaimed it as "a massive and masterly account....immensely readable (*The New York Times Book Review* cover review); "A deeply affecting, finely crafted and heroic book" (*The New Yorker*) and "a brilliant and stirring epic" (*The Wall Street Journal*).

Wilkerson was born and raised in Washington, D.C., where her parents settled after journeying from Georgia and southern Virginia during the Great Migration. She attended Howard University and graduated with a degree in journalism. A passionate and natural-born writer, she served as the editor-in-chief of her college paper, *The Hilltop*, and landed prestigious internships at the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Washington Post*. Her love of the written word has led her to a prolific and distinguished career in journalism, most of it spent at *The New York Times*.

There, as Chicago Bureau Chief, she won the 1994 Pulitzer Prize for feature writing for her pieces on the rural heartache of the Midwest floods and her profile of a ten-year-old boy growing up with a man's obligations on the South Side of Chicago. She was the first black woman to be awarded a Pulitzer Prize in journalism and the first black American to win for individual reporting. That year, she also won the George Polk Award for regional reporting and was named Journalist of the Year by the National Association of Black Journalists. She was later awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship to complete the research for *The Warmth of Other Suns*.

"Narrative writing is journalism's highest art," says Wilkerson, and it is also her specialty, in both her reporting and in *The Warmth of Other Suns*. By showing ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances, and telling stories with rich and textured detail, she makes an emotional connection with the reader. She has served as Ferris Professor of Journalism at Princeton University and James M. Cox Professor at Emory University.

Wilkerson is a gifted and passionate speaker who has spoken on the topic of the Great Migration on CBS' *60 Minutes* and at the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University. Most recently, she spoke at the American Library Association convention in Washington, the Reynolds School of Journalism at the University of Nevada and at the University of Mississippi at Oxford. She has also given talks at newspapers and at professional writing workshops throughout the country, as well as in Canada and Denmark.