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Photo available upon request

Tracy Chevalier Offers Conversation and Reading in Oberlin

Best-selling historical novelist (and Oberlin College alumna) Tracy Chevalier will speak about and do a reading from her most recent book, *The Last Runaway* in a free, public program on Tuesday, May 14 at 7:00 p.m. in Oberlin. The community and its nationally significant history in the abolition movement, plays a role in her latest novel, published earlier this year. The story introduces Honor Bright, a young English Quaker woman who emigrates to a fictional village just outside Oberlin in 1850, and ends up taking part in the Underground Railroad. The author's inspiration came during a visit to her alma mater, while seated on Toni Morrison's *Bench by the Road*, just across the street from the program's venue, First Church in Oberlin (corner of Main and Lorain Streets). A reception and book-signing with the author will follow in the fellowship hall. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and books will be available for purchase. The event is co-sponsored by the Oberlin Heritage Center, First Church, U.C.C., Friends of the Oberlin College Library, and the Oberlin Public Library.

The seventh novel by Chevalier, and her first to be given a setting outside of Europe, *The Last Runaway* has been received with worldwide acclaim:

Daily Mail (U.K.) Tracy Chevalier...has found a subject that both fascinates and moves her and the result is this quietly powerful and gripping novel. (March 14, 2013)

USA Today. With compelling characters and swift pacing, *The Last Runaway* adds a worthy new chapter to a story that has consumed generations. (January 8, 2013)

Columbus Dispatch. A novel that beautifully evokes the life and land surrounding Oberlin in the 1850s. (January 13, 2013)

NPR. *The Last Runaway* is beautifully written and offers much for the reader to savor. Honor's story serves as a powerful testament to the force of conscience and the difference that just one inspired individual can make. (January 17, 2013)

Tracy Chevalier grew up in Washington, DC and is a graduate of Oberlin College (1984) with a BA in English. She received an MA in creative writing from the University of East Anglia, Norwich, England. Chevalier presently resides in London with her husband and son. Before turning to writing full-time, she worked as a reference book editor for several years. Her second novel, *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, won the Barnes and Noble Discover Award, sold 4 million copies worldwide, and was made into a film starring Colin Firth and Scarlett Johansson.

Chevalier also is set to be the Commencement speaker for Oberlin College in late May and will receive an Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree at that time.

For more on Tracy Chevalier, visit www.tchevalier.com. For additional information about this upcoming community event or more on Oberlin history, visit www.oberlinheritage.org or call (440) 774-1700.

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