Dear Reader,

Welcome to the fourth year of UW-Platteville’s Campus Read program! The purpose of a Campus Read is to bring the university and Platteville community together by providing a commonly-experienced “springboard” for discussion of provocative, sensitive, but crucial issues with which we, as educated, caring, thinking human beings wrestle.

According to Bryan Stevenson, “Each of us is more than the worst thing we’ve ever done” (17). In *Just Mercy* he invites us to look closely at some of the more troubling issues within the American justice system and to consider the effects of sweeping legal decisions on individual people. How often do we assume something about another person based solely on our first impression? What happens when someone is judged unfairly? At the very least, that person might be ignored. At the very worst? Those outcomes are presented to us in *Just Mercy*. Stevenson directly points at the brokenness he sees in the world. He encounters corruption in the criminal justice system, prejudice based on the color of his skin, and anger at his attempts to change the “status quo” of capital punishment. He frankly describes how humans are cruel to one another—both in and out of the justice system. He expresses frustration over the lack of legal defense for the poor, the abused, the young, the disabled. Yet within and around the many, many stories of people whose experiences could leave a reader disillusioned with the world, we meet joyful, grateful people—people who extend kindness to strangers, people who believe in innocence, people who hold on to hope, people who forgive. Primarily a call for reform, Stevenson’s book is also a testament to perseverance. I guarantee you will always remember *Just Mercy’s* central character, Walter McMillian.

Campus Read books are meant to challenge us and encourage conversation. Stevenson is a skilled lawyer who is championing a very specific call to action. Perhaps you agree with his perspective. Perhaps you do not. I invite you to participate in the Campus Read Book Club events this fall so you can explore what it means to “get close” to issues of justice and mercy.

My personal excitement about the Campus Read program is that I love books and reading. I hope that reading a book that is intense and informative—that draws the reader in—will inspire those of you who don’t consider yourselves “readers” to read more and to discover that the world of books, of words, of reading, is an entertaining treasure trove of stories, ideas, and insights.

Sincerely,

Mittie Nimocks Den Herder  
Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
BOOK CLUBS

Campus Read will host three book club events in the fall semester. Book club events are guided discussions of specific themes/issues from the book. Students, faculty, and staff can attend one or more of the following conversations.

All book club events will be held in Platteville Rooms, Markee Pioneer Student Center.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, Sept. 23</td>
<td>11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Discussion/Brown bag lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, Oct. 6</td>
<td>Noon–1 p.m.</td>
<td>Discussion/Brown bag lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, Nov. 10</td>
<td>5–6 p.m.</td>
<td>Discussion/Brown bag supper</td>
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KEYNOTE ADDRESS (Live stream from UW-Madison)

UW-Platteville will host a live stream of Just Mercy author Bryan Stevenson’s keynote address at UW-Madison on Monday, Oct. 26 at 7 p.m. in the Platteville Rooms of the MPSC. All students, faculty, staff, and community members are invited to the event.

To request disability accommodations, contact WATR at 608.342.1615.