

**Maines gives DLS talk on daughter’s transformational journey**

PRESQUE ISLE—The University of Maine at Presque Isle will present Wayne Maines—whose family was featured in the *New York Times* Best-Selling book *Becoming Nicole: The Transformation of an American Family* by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Amy Ellis Nutt—as the next speaker in its 2016-2017 Distinguished Lecturer Series. Maines will chronicle the journey that could have destroyed his family but instead brought them closer together. He will deliver his talk on Tuesday, Oct. 25, at 7 p.m. in the Campus Center. The event is free and the public is invited to attend.

During his talk, titled *Understanding Transgenderism: “Becoming Nicole: The Transformation of an American Family,”* Maines will tell the story of a mother whose instincts told her that her child needed love and acceptance, not ostracism and disapproval; of a father (himself) who overcame his deepest fears to become a vocal advocate for trans rights; of a loving brother who bravely stuck up for his twin sister; and of a town forced to confront its prejudices, a school compelled to rewrite its rules, and a courageous community of transgender activists determined to make their voices heard.

In addition to being a *New York Times* best seller, *Becoming Nicole* is a *New York Times* Notable Book, was named one of the 10 Best Books of the Year by *People* magazine, one of the Best Books of the Year by *Men’s Journal*, is a Stonewall/Israel Fishman Non-Fiction Award Honor book, and a 2015 Discover Great New Writers Award Finalist/Non-Fiction. *The Washington Post* describes it as “the inspiring true story of a transgender girl, her identical twin brother, and an ordinary American family’s extraordinary journey to understand, nurture, and celebrate the uniqueness in us all.”

“Culturally and politically, this is a very important moment for transgender people, and is therefore an important opportunity for all of us to better understand what it means to be transgender,” Lauren Passell said in the [B&N Reads interview](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/blog/understanding-transgenderism-with-becoming-nicole-author-amy-ellis-nutt/) she conducted with Nutt about the book.

In response to a question in this interview about why she chose to do a story on this family, Nutt replied, “Honestly, it was serendipity that brought us together, but when it did, I realized they were the perfect family to write about in large part because they were so average: solidly middle-class, hard-working parents with two young children. I knew readers would understand this family, recognize themselves in Kelly and Wayne or Jonas and Nicole, and that was very important to me.”

Maines’ talk will focus on an extraordinary girl and her family, who fought for the right for her to be herself, and, according to the synopsis, “will resonate with anyone who’s ever raised a child, felt at odds with society’s conventions and norms, or had to embrace life when it plays out unexpectedly. It is also a story of standing up for your beliefs and yourself—and it will inspire all of us to do the same.”

Maines is an Air Force veteran who lives with his family in southern Maine. The Maines family has been recognized by the Matthew Shepard Foundation (2015), the American Civil Liberties Union of Maine (2011 Roger Baldwin Award), and by Equality Maine (2012 P.E. Pentlarge Award) for their extraordinary efforts toward ending discrimination against transgender Mainers. Maines has been a public speaker at the national and state level in his chosen field of work, and now has turned his attention to using these same skills to help others understand, accept, and support transgender youth.

The University’s Distinguished Lecturer Series was established in 1999. Each year, the UDLS Committee sponsors four to six speakers who come from Maine and beyond, representing a range of disciplines and viewpoints. While the emphasis tends to be on featuring visiting academics, it is not exclusively so. The speakers typically spend two days at the University meeting with classes and presenting a community lecture.

All are invited to attend Maines’ Oct. 25 talk. For more information about this event, contact the University’s Community and Media Relations Office at 207-768-9452.

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