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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 22, 2008

**SCOTTISH AUTHOR ALEXANDER MCCALL SMITH
SPEAKS ABOUT HIS WORK AT CAL PERFORMANCES
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1 AT 8:00 P.M.**

BERKELEY, August 22, 2008—Scottish author **Alexander McCall Smith** will give a talk reflecting on his experience as a writer titled *The Very Small Things of Life* **Wednesday, October 1 at 8:00 p.m.** in **Zellerbach Hall**. Known for his “gentleness and humanity, and his ability to evoke a place and a set of characters without caricature or condescension” (*The New York Times*), McCall Smith draws his inspirations from his life experiences and the cultures of the places he had visited. Precious Ramotswe, the main character in his internationally acclaimed *No. 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency* series (volume one published in 1998), was based on his encounter with a woman chasing a chicken around her yard in Botswana. “She looked very cheerful. At that moment I thought that I might write a book about a cheerful woman of traditional build” says McCall Smith. Having written an eclectic genre of books ranging from children’s books (*The Perfect Hamburger*, 1984) and specialist titles (*Forensic Aspects of Sleep*, 1997) to mysteries, McCall Smith will share with the audience his approach to writing followed by a book signing in the lobby of Zellerbach Hall. The evening is sure to be “one of the most entrancing literary treats of many a year” (*The Wall Street Journal*).

Born in 1948 in what is now Zimbabwe, **Alexander McCall Smith** was educated at the Christian Brothers College, Bulwayo, before moving to Scotland to study law at the University of Edinburgh. It was in this role that he first returned to Africa to work in Botswana, where he helped to set up a new law school at the University of Botswana. For many years, he was Professor of Medical Law at the University of Edinburgh and has been a visiting professor at a number of other universities elsewhere, including ones in Italy and the United States.

McCall Smith has written more than 60 books, including a dozen academic titles, several short story collections and a number of immensely popular children’s books. Referred to as the

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new P. G. Wodehouse, he is best known for his *No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* series, which rapidly rose to the top of the bestseller lists throughout the world. The fifth novel in the series, *The Full Cupboard of Life*, received the Saga Award for Wit. *The Miracle at Speedy Motors* (April 2008) is the ninth bestselling book in the series, and the tenth book, titled *Tea Time for the Traditionally Built*, will be published in April 2009. The series has now been translated into 39 languages and has sold over seven million copies worldwide. A television drama adaptation, produced and directed by the late Academy Award-winning film director Anthony Minghella, premiered on Britain's BBC One channel on March 2008 and will be shown on HBO in spring 2009.

McCall Smith's work includes several other popular series. *The Sunday Philosophy Club*, a mystery about a female sleuth named Isabel Dalhousie, appeared in 2004 and immediately leapt onto national bestseller lists. The following year, McCall Smith introduced the German Professor Dr. Moritz-Maria von Igelfeld series in the United States with books titled *Portuguese Irregular Verbs*, *The Finer Points of Sausage Dogs* and *At the Villa of Reduced Circumstances*. His serial novel written for Edinburgh's *Scotsman*, *44 Scotland Street*, was published in book form in 2005. *Espresso Tales* and *Love Over Scotland* followed in 2007.

McCall Smith currently lives in Edinburgh with his wife Elizabeth and their two daughters and is a Professor Emeritus at the University of Edinburgh. He co-founded an amateur orchestra called The Really Terrible Orchestra in which he plays the bassoon and his wife plays the horn.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Alexander McCall Smith** on **Wednesday, October 1** at **8:00 p.m.** in **Zellerbach Hall** are priced at **\$20.00, \$26.00** and **\$32.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$5 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988 or visit the Cal Performances web site at

www.calperformances.org.

For select performances, Cal Performances offers UCB student, faculty and staff, senior and community rush tickets. Rush tickets are announced two hours prior to a performance and are available in person only at the Ticket Office beginning one hour before the performance; quantities may be limited. Rush ticket sales are limited to one ticket per person; all sales are cash only. Rush ticket prices are \$10.00 for UCB students; \$15.00 for UCB faculty and staff (UCB ID required) and seniors age 65 or older; and \$20 for all other community members. Information is available at (510) 642-9988, press 2 for the rush hotline, two hours prior to a performance only.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Wednesday, October 1 at 8:00 p.m.

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

Strictly Speaking

Alexander McCall Smith, author

The Very Small Things of Life

Program: Cal Performances presents Scottish author Alexander McCall Smith, the creator of the “utterly charming and compulsively readable” (*Newsweek*) Precious Ramotswe series; he will talk about his work in an evening titled *The Very Small Things of Life*.

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