About the Speaker

Alexander McCall Smith has written more than 60 books, including specialist academic titles, short-story collections and a number of immensely popular children’s books. Referred to as our new P. G. Wodehouse, he is best known for his internationally acclaimed No. 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency series, which rapidly rose to the top of bestseller lists throughout the world. The fifth novel in the series, *The Full Cupboard of Life*, received the Saga Award for Wit. The latest and ninth book in the series is *The Miracle at Speedy Motors* (April 2008). The series has now been translated into 39 languages and has sold over 15 million copies worldwide. The first episode of a film adaptation, directed by Anthony Minghella and produced by the Weinstein Company, is scheduled to premiere on HBO in March 2009. Another series, beginning with *The Sunday Philosophy Club*, about an intriguing woman named Isabel Dalhousie, appeared in 2004 and immediately leapt onto national bestseller lists, as did the sequels *Friends, Lovers, Chocolate, The Right Attitude to Rain* and *The Careful Use of Compliments*. The fifth Dalhousie novel is *The Comfort of a Muddy Saturday* (fall 2008). Mr. McCall Smith’s serial novel, *44 Scotland Street*, was published in book form to great acclaim in 2005, followed by *Espresso Tales* and *Love Over Scotland* (November 2007). In late 2008, the serial novel, *Corduroy Mansions*, depicting the lives of the inhabitants of a large Pimlico house, began to be published and podcasted in 100 daily web episodes by the UK’s *Daily Telegraph* prior to its hardcover release in 2009.

In addition, Mr. McCall Smith was for four years the vice-chairman of the Human Genetics Commission of the UK, the chairman of the British Medical Journal Ethics Committee, and a member of the International Bioethics Commission of UNESCO. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Crime Writers’ Association’s Dagger in the Library Award, the UK’s Author of the Year Award in 2004 and Sweden’s Martin Beck Award. In 2007, he was made a CBE for his services to literature in the Queen’s New Year Honours List.

Alexander McCall Smith currently lives in Edinburgh with his wife, Elizabeth (an Edinburgh doctor), and their two daughters, Lucy and Emily. His hobbies include playing wind instruments, and he is the co-founder of an amateur orchestra called “The Really Terrible Orchestra,” in which he plays the bassoon and his wife plays the horn.