

Final Written Report and Summary of Results for
Professional Development Grant

by

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With the Professional Development Grant I received in the Spring Semester of 2006, I traveled to San Angelo, Texas and presented a short story entitled "Lesser Mountains" at the 10th Annual ASU Writers Conference in Honor of Elmer Kelton, held at Angelo State University on 22-24 February 2006. While at the conference, I networked with other writers and arranged for one of them to read at Arkansas Tech later in the semester. I was also able to secure publication of the short story I presented in *The Texas Review*.

At the conference, I read "Lesser Mountains" to an audience of approximately 250-300 listeners, including the editor of *The Texas Review*, who subsequently offered to publish the story. "Lesser Mountains" is forthcoming in the Fall/Winter 2006 issue of *The Texas Review*. After the reading, I signed copies of my short story cycle *Whispers in Dust and Bone*. In addition to the reading and book signing, both of which positively represented the Arkansas Tech University BFA Program in Creative Writing to the very many people who were in attendance, I recruited a writer for the Reading Series that I oversee for the Department of English at ATU. Stephen Schroeder, an award-winning poet who currently lives and teaches in Chicago, accepted my invitation to read and speak to classes here at Arkansas Tech. He visited our campus in April 2006. The reading, reception, and class visits were a great success.

In conclusion, the trip was a great success for the BFA Program in Creative Writing at Arkansas Tech University, and for the university as a whole. I hope that I can attend next year's conference, at which I plan to debut my forthcoming novel, *Meeting the Dead*.