

## **Nora Kelly Lee: The Power of a Writer**

Writing can vary in many different ways. It can be a creative avenue to entertain, a cutting edge avenue to teach or persuade, and also a profound avenue to touch and connect with someone. Any writer can be a vessel for this unique type of power over an audience. Nora Kelly Lee is one of those writers who pushes boundaries and affects people with her writing.

“As human beings we are storytellers. I think that we crave stories and if you become skilled at good storytelling then you can have a real impact,” Lindsay Hoffman said, communications and political science professor at the University of Delaware.

With roots from the UD newspaper, The Review as a writer and editor, Lee is now a contributing writer at The Atlantic magazine and previous senior editor there as well. Lee’s work tends to focus on U.S. politics and government. With some headlines ranging from “Mike Pence Tries to Sweeten the Deal” to “Congress Falls Short on Zika.”

On Oct. 26, the University of Delaware invited Lee to share her experiences and advice at their National Agenda 2022 Speaker Series. This series centers around voting polls and politics, thus being a fitting platform for Lee. Hosted by Hoffman who organizes this series for the public and more importantly her students who attend to get close with and learn from what these guests and what they have to say.

“It's great to hear and learn from people like Nora, someone who is not too far in age and someone who can give a raw and down to earth perspective on such heavy topics,” Jacqueline Bryan said, freshman majoring in political science who was in attendance to the event.

Hoffman gave Lee questions regarding many different topics. Topics including her undergraduate experience, the culture of the journalism field, social media's impact on news consumption, issues in politics, concerns about the upcoming polls, and more.

After a structured discussion, the discussion was opened up to the audience who probed Lee on, again, a multitude of topics.

A writer like Lee who focuses on politics, which is such a controversial field, especially in this day and age, expressed how vital that is for the world. She spoke on the importance of her writing which educates, touches, and influences her readers.

“When you find a story that hasn't been told, and then that story get's a ton of attention from readers, it's extremely gratifying. Because you know that there was that untapped potential in that subject matter and untapped potential in that readership,” Lee said.

Lee thinks the ability a writer has to be impactful doesn't stop at someone who only writes about pressing topics or in a stoic tone. While answering a student's question about other forms of consuming media, Lee mentions a fellow journalist at The New York Times by the name of Caity Weaver who writes now about news and culture. Weaver is Lee's favorite writer due to her unique ability to write anything in such a cheery and bubbly manner.

“She is just an effervescent writer, and everything she writes is just joyous. So I would just try to find those kinds of writers who can buoy your spirits while informing you about something,” said Lee.

In addition to a writer having a certain kind of power, that can also transcend to the simple yet strong power of the written word. In the year of 2022, news consumption has diverged into a multitude of platforms. Broadcast news, newsletters, podcasts, TikTok videos, and even Tweets. Despite this, Lee still emphasizes the importance of the written word.

“I think that the written word whether it's online or in print is going to continue to be how we consume the news. I hope that people will always fall back on the written word,” Lee said.

Even though times are changing, writers and others continue to preach how the written word is the blueprints of all the ideas people consume.

“I probably overvalue the written word. I just feel if you can write it then you can offer it in just about any form,” Scott Sturgis said, assistant news editor at the Philadelphia Inquirer and writing professor at the UD.

Running with the same theme, in an article titled “The Writing Project Connections, Communities, Cultures”, it discusses all the wonderful things the written word can do for people and societies as a whole.

“Words have the power to shape all aspects of ourselves, our shared community, and our shared humanity. *Written* words focus this power and manifest it in often permanent forms that have lasting impact on the world in both negative and positive ways,” from the article mentioned above.

As a seasoned writer Lee always continues to have a fresh take to captivate and move her readers. Lee prides herself on the fact that as a journalist about such essential subject matter, she has the opportunity everyday to continue being a vessel for change.

**Sources:**

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Nora Kelly Lee (quotes directly from presentation)

Scott Sturgis (you lol)

The Writing Project Connections, Communities, Cultures article

<https://www.inter-disciplinary.net/attheinterface/thewrittenword/>