

# Florida Humanities Speakers Directory



Engaging Speakers



Compelling Topics



Thought-provoking  
Discussions



## Craig Pittman

*Journalist, Author*

Craig Pittman is a native Floridian and an award-winning journalist and author. He spent 30 years working for the Tampa Bay Times and now writes a weekly column on environmental issues for the Florida Phoenix. He is the author of five books, including the New York Times bestseller *Oh, Florida! How America's Weirdest State Influences the Rest of the Country*, which won a gold medal from the Florida Book Awards. His most recent book is *Cat Tale: The Wild, Weird Battle to Save the Florida Panther*. His sixth book, *The State You're In: Florida Men, Florida Women, and Other Wildlife*, will be published in July 2021. He is also the co-host of the weekly podcast "Welcome to Florida;" In 2020, the Florida Heritage Book Festival named him a Florida Literary Legend. He lives in St. Petersburg with his wife and children.

### Programs Available

#### Contact Information:

727-385-1804

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#### Program Format:

- In-person
- Virtual

#### Oh, Florida!

Florida is known as the Sunshine State, but lately, it's gotten the reputation of being the Punchline State. Amid all the mockery that comes with the Florida Man and Florida Woman stories, though, people forget just how important and influential Florida has been. Everything from NASCAR to Native American casinos got started here, and major events such as the Rev. Martin Luther King's arrest in St. Augustine changed life across the country. This talk also delves into why Florida produces so much weird news.

#### CAT TALE: How the panther became Florida's official state animal — and nearly went extinct

In 1981, Florida's schoolchildren voted to make the Florida panther the state's official state animal. But by 1995, the state animal was in dire need of help. The panther population had dwindled down to fewer than 30, and some scientists thought it had fallen into single digits. Saving the panther required pulling off an unprecedented experiment, aided by a grizzled tracker, an outspoken veterinarian, and a handful of biologists who sometimes had to defy their own agencies to do what was right.

Need to reach Florida Humanities? For Grants, contact Lindsey Morrison at [lmorrison@flahum.org](mailto:lmorrison@flahum.org), for Florida Talks, contact Lisa Lennox at [llennox@flahum.org](mailto:llennox@flahum.org). For more information about the Florida Humanities Speakers Directory, visit <https://floridahumanities.org/speakers>.

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