

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF  
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## NEWS RELEASE

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Release Date: Immediately

### BOOK TALK AT THE ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY *VIRGINIA DURR AND LILLIAN HELLMAN, TWO UNCOMPROMISING WOMEN AND THEIR ALABAMA FAMILIES* PRESENTED BY DEBORAH MARTINSON

Join us at **noon** on **Friday, April 19, 2013** as **Deborah Martinson** presents ***Virginia Durr and Lillian Hellman, Two Uncompromising Women and Their Alabama Families***. This informative talk will be held at the Alabama Department of Archives and History.

Biographer Deborah Martinson writes about the lives of complicated women who commit to causes and make history. Two of her subjects, Virginia Durr and Lillian Hellman, were culturally driven by experiences within their Alabama families.

Birmingham native Virginia Durr, born in 1903, rebelled against her traditional southern upbringing to join with her husband, Clifford Durr, in the fight for racial equality and civil rights. Lillian Hellman used the banking family of her mother, Julia Newhouse from Demopolis, for the greedy characters in her hit Broadway play *The Little Foxes*. In the original production Alabama actress Tallulah Bankhead played the lead role of Regina Giddens, who was modeled on Hellman's grandmother, Sophie Marx Newhouse of Demopolis. Durr and Hellman crossed pathways when both became figures of national prominence.

Deborah Martinson is finishing her forthcoming book *Virginia Durr: Southern Radical Come Hell or High Water* after extensive research in Alabama and interviews with the children of Virginia and Cliff Durr of Montgomery. The Durr biography follows her previous book *Lillian Hellman: A Life with Foxes and Scoundrels* (2005). Professor and Chair in the Writing and Rhetoric Department of Occidental College near Pasadena, California, Martinson has appeared at festivals celebrating *The Little Foxes* in Demopolis. The biographer learned of Virginia Durr during her visit to Demopolis in 2007 for the Hellman festival and decided to dedicate her next book to the civil rights activist. She returns to speak about Virginia Durr and Lillian Hellman in this program during *Trailfest 2013 Celebration* sponsored by the Southern Literary Trail and co-sponsored by Friends of the Alabama Archives.

This program is made possible by a grant from the Alabama Humanities Foundation, a state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The event is free and open to the public. Books will be available for purchase. For more information visit the Alabama calendar on the Southern Literary Trail website at [www.southernliterarytrail.org](http://www.southernliterarytrail.org), on the Alabama Department of Archives and History website at [www.archives.alabama.gov](http://www.archives.alabama.gov), or (334) 353-4726.

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