

GORE VIDAL

b. October 3, 1925

“We must ... allow the world to discover this subterranean life of ours which connects kings and farm boys, artists and clerks. Let them see that the important thing is not the object of love, but the emotion itself.”

Eugene Luther Gore Vidal's career as a novelist, essayist, screenwriter, critic and political activist spans six decades. Boldly challenging the status quo, he has weathered censorship and criticism for his writing and politics.

Vidal's childhood was marked by access and privilege. He attended Phillips Exeter Academy, one of the country's most prestigious preparatory high schools. His family's political connections played a major role in shaping his life work. Vidal's maternal grandfather served as a Democratic senator from Oklahoma, while his father worked in the FDR administration as the Director of the Bureau of Air Commerce. Vidal has familial ties to the Kennedys and is a distant cousin of Jimmy Carter and Al Gore.

After graduating from Phillips Exeter, Vidal joined the U.S. Army Reserve. He served in the Army Transportation Corps in Alaska, where he wrote much of his first novel, "Williwaw" (1946).

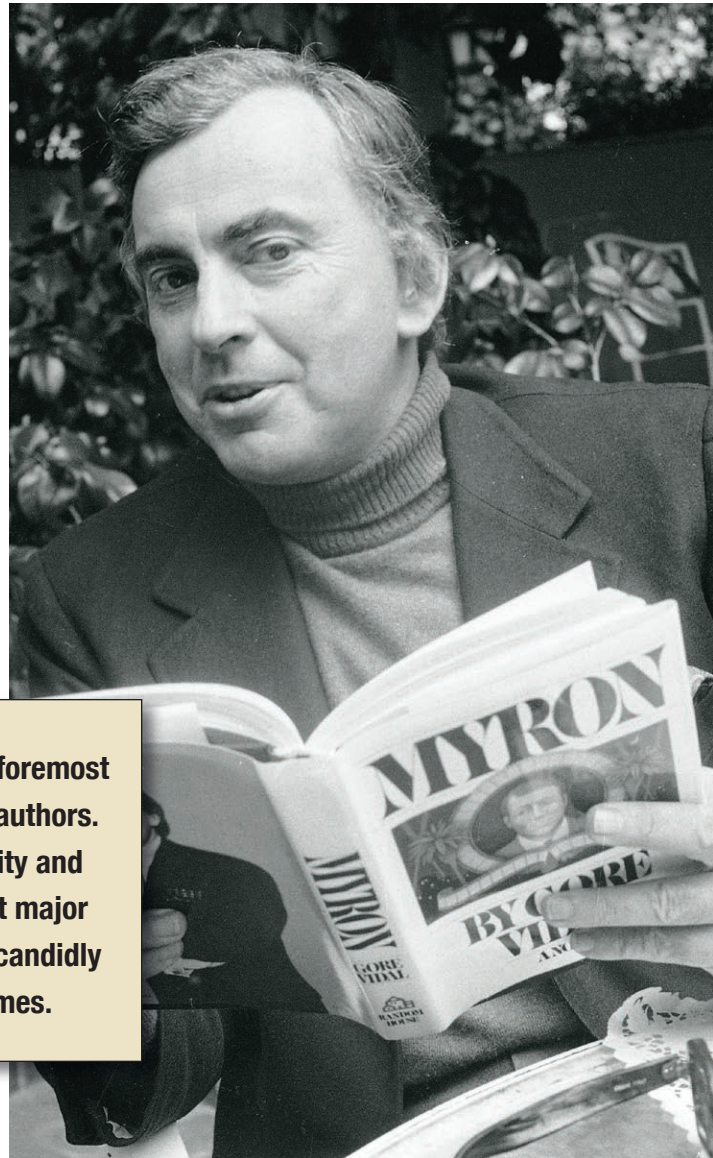
The release of Vidal's third novel, "The City and the Pillar," met scathing criticism for its homosexual themes. Major media publications, including The New York Times, refused to review his subsequent books. His sales declined.

Financially strained, Vidal began to dabble in alternate mediums that proved more lucrative. These pursuits culminated in his success as a distinguished playwright and screenwriter.

In 1957, Vidal's first political play, "Visit to a Small Planet," premiered in New York. A satire on post World War II fear of communism, the play received Broadway acclaim and became a film in 1960.

Vidal also excelled as an essayist and historian who often stirred controversy with his progressive political views. His commentary spans four decades and includes over 20 pieces. In 1993, Vidal received the National Book Award for his collection of essays, "United States" (1952-1992).

Since his writing career began, Vidal has published over 30 novels of various genres. His successful series of historical novels includes "Washington D.C." (1967), "Lincoln" (1984), and "The Golden Age" (2000). Vidal explores feminism and transsexuality in his satirical novel "Myra Breckinridge" (1968).



Gore Vidal is among the foremost 20th century American authors. His 1948 novel, "The City and the Pillar," was the first major American novel to deal candidly with homosexual themes.

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