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**PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING AUTHOR J.R. MOEHRINGER
ADDRESSED THE CLASS OF 2012 AT BOSTON COLLEGE'S
FIRST YEAR ACADEMIC CONVOCATION**

Event unites freshman class at the start of its BC experience

CHESTNUT HILL, MA (September 2008) — Pulitzer Prize-winning author J.R. Moehringer—whose critically-acclaimed book, *The Tender Bar*, is a vivid memoir of discernment and maturation in his hometown of Manhasset, N.Y.—was the keynote speaker at the University's fifth annual First Year Academic Convocation on Thursday, September 18, 2008.

His address was preceded by the First Flight Procession: some 2250 members of the freshman class took part in a torch-lit procession across campus from Linden Lane to Conte Forum, in keeping with the exhortation of Jesuit founder St. Ignatius Loyola: "Go Set the World Aflame." The students will retrace the same route on their graduation day four years from now.

The freshmen were joined in their procession by members of the Golden Eagles Class of 1959 and other BC alumni. A total of some 4,000 students, faculty and guests then assembled at Conte Forum to hear Moehringer's address.



First Flight Procession (Photo by Frank Curran)

First Year Academic Convocation kicks off the academic year and unites the freshman class at the start of its BC experience. All students entering this fall's freshman class were given a copy of *The Tender Bar* and asked this summer to read and reflect on Moehringer's poignant memoir, as an introduction to BC's Jesuit, Catholic mission to educate "men and women for others."

Students also received a guide for reflection that offered insights into and questions about Moehringer's story of making decisions and expanding relationships during his own youth and young adult years, and are encouraged to engage in a dialogue on the topics with faculty, staff and fellow classmates.

The Convocation is more than a celebration, explains First Year Experience Director Rev. Joseph Marchese. “It becomes important for us to establish rituals that bond us to Boston College as a University. This event is a very moving experience for our freshmen students.”

J.R. Moehringer



Moehringer, a national correspondent for the *Los Angeles Times*, won a Pulitzer Prize for feature writing in 2000 for his portrait of Gee’s Bend, Ala., an isolated river town where many descendents of slaves live and where a proposed ferry to the mainland threatened to change the community. He lives in Denver, Colo.

Past First Year Academic Convocation Speakers

Past speakers at the First Year Academic Convocation have included both of this year’s major presidential candidates, **Sens. Barack Obama** (D-Ill.), who spoke in 2005, and **John McCain** (R-Ariz.) who delivered the keynote address in 2006. Last year’s speaker was **Jeannette Walls**, author of *The Glass Castle*, a story of her nomadic childhood that brought out the virtues of love and redemption.