

St. Louis County Library **News Release: October 16, 2009**
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The Westfall Series presents a “Profiles in Presidential Leadership Event with Journalist Robert Merry

The St. Louis County Library Foundation’s ‘Buzz’ Westfall Favorite Author Series is pleased to present acclaimed journalist and historian Robert Merry who will discuss his book, “A Country of Vast Designs: James K. Polk, the Mexican War, and the Conquest of the American Continent,” Monday, November 16, at 7:00 p.m. at Library Headquarters, 1640 S. Lindbergh Blvd. The program is free and open to the public. Doors will open at 6:00 p.m. Books for signing will be available at the event from Barnes & Noble.

Robert W. Merry, the award-winning author of “Sands of Empire” and “Taking on the World,” restores the historical legacy of James K. Polk, a president of enormous achievements, largely forgotten yet still controversial today. In his vibrant narrative, Merry brings to life the outsized personalities of Polk’s time and their searing debates over slavery and expansion, the appropriate use of military force, federal power and states’ rights, the nature of the American character, and the fundamental principles of American foreign policy that echo powerfully down to our own day.

Robert W. Merry has been a political reporter and publishing executive in Washington, D.C., for 35 years. He spent 12 years covering Congress, the White House, and national politics for The Wall Street Journal and recently ended 22 years as an executive at Congressional Quarterly, Inc., including the last dozen years as CEO. He is the author of “Sands of Empire: Missionary Zeal, American Foreign Policy, and the Hazards of Global Ambition” and “Taking on the World: Joseph and Stewart Alsop—Guardians of the American Century,” which was labeled a “Notable Book” by the New York Times.

The program with Robert Merry is a St. Louis County Library ‘Buzz’ Westfall Favorite Author Series presentation. The Westfall series recognizes the many accomplishments of county executive ‘Buzz’ Westfall and features authors of politics, current issues, history, and sports. Past authors in the series include Cokie Roberts, Paul Rusesabagina, Michael Pollan, and Doris Kearns Goodwin. The series is co-sponsored by Fireman’s Fund Insurance Companies; Jack Dubinsky and Sons; McMahon Berger; Piper Jaffray; Plaza Frontenac; Sachs Properties; Brown Smith Wallace LLC; Royal Banks of Missouri; St. Louis Business Journal; Midwest Library Service; Nordstrom; The Booksource, Ivey-Selkirk Auctioneers, Bick Group, and S.M. Wilson & Co.

Throughout 2009, the St. Louis County Library Foundation and the Westfall sponsors will be presenting “Profiles in Presidential Leadership,” a series of lectures and book signings with prominent Presidential historians and biographers.

Program sites are accessible. Upon two weeks notice, accommodations will be made for persons with disabilities. Contact St. Louis County Library by phone 314-994-3300 or visit www.slcl.org.