



RETIRED MEN'S ASSOCIATION OF GREENWICH, Inc. (RMA)
Invites you to a presentation on Webinar, August 31 at 11:00 a.m.
To sign up for the webinar log on to: <https://bit.ly/30IBj21>

Will Friedwald

Straighten Up and Fly Right: The Life and Music of Nat King Cole



Music critic Will Friedwald will speak on the life and career of Nat King Cole, one of the most popular American musicians of the 20th century, remembered today as both a pianist and singer. In his latest book, *Straighten Up and Fly Right: The Life and Music of Nat King Cole*, Friedwald offers a new take on this fascinating musician, framing him first as a bandleader and then as a star. In Cole's early phase, Friedwald explains, his primary task of keeping his trio going was just as much of a focus for him as his own playing and singing, always a collective or group performance. In the second act, Cole's collaborators were more likely to be arranger-conductors like Nelson Riddle and Gordon Jenkins, rather than his sidemen on bass and guitar. In the first act, his sidemen were equals, in the second phase, his collaborators were tasked exclusively with putting the focus on him, making him sound good, while being largely invisible themselves.

Friedwald will discuss how this duality appears over and over again in Cole's life and career: jazz vs. pop, solo vs. trio, piano vs. voice, the rhythm numbers vs. the ballads, the funny songs vs. songs of love and loss, Cole as an advocate for the Great American Songbook vs. Cole the intrepid explorer of other options: world music, rhythm & blues, country & western.

Friedwald has written about music for The Wall Street Journal and was the jazz critic for The New York Sun. He is the author of nine books, including *A Biographical Guide to the Great Jazz and Pop Singers*; *Stardust Melodies: The Biography of Twelve of America's Most Popular Songs*; *Jazz Singing: America's Great Voices from Bessie Smith to Bebop and Beyond*; *Sinatra! The Song Is You*; and *Tony Bennett: The Good Life*. He has written liner notes for nearly five hundred compact discs, for which he has received eight Grammy nominations. He has also written for Vanity Fair, The Village Voice, Entertainment Weekly, American Heritage, and The New York Times, among other publications

There will be no meeting at the First Presbyterian Church August 31

Next week in-person, September 7: Jonathan Lemire, American journalist and political correspondent, currently White House bureau chief of *Politico* and host of MSNBC's morning news show *Way Too Early* on his new book *The Big Lie: Election Chaos, Political Opportunism, and the State of American Politics After 2020*

The Greenwich Retired Men's Association offers a free in-person or Zoom Webinar speaker program every Wednesday at 11:00 a.m. For additional information see www.greenwichrma.org or contact us by e-mail at info@greenwichrma.org