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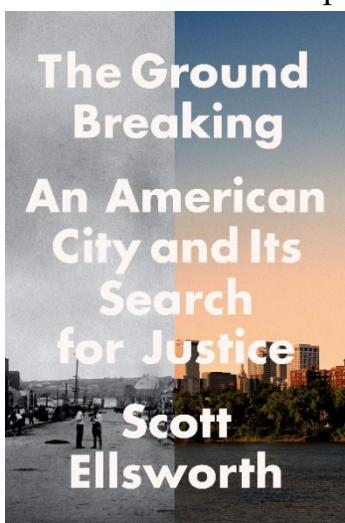
OLLI Reads Presents

• The Ground Breaking: An American City and Its Search for Justice

- January 28, 2022

10:00 – 11:30am

Speaker: **Dr. Scott Ellsworth**



The story of the Tulsa Massacre (1921) has become a symbol of what has been erased in the telling of American history. Scott Ellsworth, a native of Tulsa, stumbled upon an article about the “race riot” as a 12-year-old when a librarian was demonstrating a new technology—microfilm. He turned to that subject for his undergraduate history thesis at Reed College in Oregon and then the book *Death in a Promised Land* (1992). His book was considered the first-ever comprehensive history of the horrific 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre.

With *The Ground Breaking: An American City and Its Search for Justice*, Professor Ellsworth returns to the subject of Tulsa. Described as “riveting and essential,” *The Ground Breaking* not only recounts the long-suppressed story of the notorious Tulsa race massacre, it also unearths the lost history of how the massacre was covered up and the courageous individuals who fought to keep the story alive. Most importantly, it recounts the ongoing archaeological search for the unmarked graves of the victims of the massacre and of the fight to win restitution for the survivors and their families.

Both a forgotten chronicle from the nation’s past and a story ripped from today’s headlines, *The Ground Breaking* is a page-turning reflection on how we, as Americans, must wrestle with the parts of our history that have been buried for far too long.

The *New York Times* described *The Ground Breaking* as “A skillful narrative of excavating the truth about the Tulsa race massacre. . . . Candid and self-aware. . . . Part of what makes this book so riveting is Ellsworth’s skillful narration, his impeccable sense for when to reveal a piece of information and when to hold something back.”

The book was long-listed for the National Book Award, the Carnegie Medal from the American Library Association and recently was named as one of the Best Books of 2021 by Publishers Weekly.

Dr. Scott Ellsworth is a faculty member in the University of Michigan’s Department of Afroamerican and African Studies. He teaches courses on African American history, Southern literature, race and sports, and crime and justice in contemporary U.S. society. Trained as a historian, he received his BA from Reed College and his MA and Ph.D from Duke University where he was a member of the Duke Oral History Program. Formerly a historian with the Smithsonian Institution, he has written about American history for the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times*, and has appeared on National Public Radio, the *TODAY Show*, PBS’s *The American Experience*, the History Channel, the BBC, and in both film and broadcast documentaries. His book, *The Secret Game*, won a 2016 PEN Book Award, and was named by the *Chicago Tribune* as one of the Top Ten Books of the Year.