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Mississippi Book Festival Draws Thousands to Its 10th Annual Event

JACKSON, Miss. – More than 8,000 book lovers gathered today at the historic Mississippi State Capitol, Galloway Methodist Church, and First Baptist Jackson to hear from hundreds of authors at the 10th annual Mississippi Book Festival. At panel discussions, festival goers got to hear from an author lineup that included LeVar Burton, Jesmyn Ward, Erik Larson, Richard Grant, Kate DiCamillo, Natasha Trethewey, and many more. Today's event represented a 21% increase in attendance over 2023, while over the course of all festival events—including kids' programming in the Delta and Jackson, the festival reached 37,849 people.

Today's events kicked off with a 10th anniversary Opening Ceremony on the South steps of the Mississippi Capitol Building. During this ceremony, the Mississippi Book Festival's official Mississippi Writers' Trail marker was unveiled to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Mississippi Book Festival. "More than 291 authors participated in Saturday's festival, including 188 on 57 official panels and another 103 authors meeting the public in Author's Alley," says Ellen Daniels, Mississippi Book Festival Executive Director. "Many of the panels were standing room only and our nine booksellers sold thousands of books." In addition, the anniversary celebration featured live music, food trucks, children's activities, book signings, and more.

On Friday, September 13th, Kate DiCamillo, one of the Book Festival's visiting children's authors, spoke to more than 13,000 Mississippi students, through her in-person presentation at Belhaven Center for the Arts and through a live-streamed event to close to 575 classrooms all

over the state as part of the festival's KidNote program. At the conclusion of the in-person session, each student was given their own complimentary copy of her latest book, Ferris.

On Thursday, September 12th, Jacksonian and nationally celebrated author Angie Thomas spoke to nearly 15,000 students throughout the state. Due weather disruptions, this event was conducted virtually and schools will receive copies of her latest book, Nic Blake and the Remarkables: the Manifestor Prophecy.

On August 28th, beloved children's author Andrea Beaty spoke to nearly 2,000 children at the Bologna Performing Arts Center in Cleveland, Mississippi at the Mississippi Book Festival's inaugural Delta KidNote. Each student left with a copy of either Lila Greer, Teacher of the Year or Aaron Slater, Illustrator.

"Through our KidNote events, we celebrated the joy and beauty of reading," says Daniels. "This shared passion of our funders, authors, educators, and organizers made these events possible."

Today, thought-provoking panel discussions took place throughout the day, giving participants a glimpse into the minds and processes of their favorite authors. “We know the importance of promoting books and the stories within them and make it our mission," says Daniels. "We are honored to have hosted so many incredible authors and see ourselves in their stories.”

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About Mississippi Book Festival

The Mississippi Book Festival, a nonprofit founded by literacy advocates, launched in August 2015 on the State Capitol grounds and continues to draw thousands to its annual Literary Lawn Party and book lovers’ celebration. Hundreds of contemporary authors — national, regional and local — connect directly with fans and new readers, as invited guests on Official Panels that explore in-depth themes, or along Authors Alley, the festival’s hub for self-published authors.

To learn more about the Mississippi Book Festival, visit msbookfestival.com or follow on Facebook, Instagram (@msbookfestival), or Twitter (@msbookfest).