

**MISSISSIPPI
BOOK
FESTIVAL**

FUNDER INVITATION 2025

Big Names, Bigger Stories



The 10th anniversary of the Mississippi Book Festival confirmed its standing as a first-class forum for authors, readers, and booksellers on a delightful September day.

Next fall, the Mississippi State Capitol Building, nearby Galloway Church, and the grounds in-between will once again transform into a booklover's paradise with more than 150 celebrated authors in nearly 50 official panel sessions. Independent booksellers and local food vendors will line the streets, and the Capitol Grounds will be covered with book signing opportunities, children's activities, and valuable resources for writers, educators, and families.

This expertly-crafted lineup of best-selling authors, award-winning journalists, revered poets, and renowned storytellers brings the world to Mississippi and the written word to life each year.

*Be part of the excitement at the next Literary Lawn Party –
September 13, 2025!*

Journalists-turned-authors Jonathan Eig and Robert Samuels discussed their Pulitzer Prize-winning biographies of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and George Floyd, then responded to the aspiring journalists in the audience with a challenge: “produce work that has resonance... beyond the moment” and keep in mind “the gift of legacy that you provide.”



By far, the most popular place on the festival site is the Book Signing Tent located on the south lawn of the Capitol Grounds. It is here that countless fans connect one-on-one with beloved authors to collect signatures, selfies, and memories. These magical moments are made possible through careful scheduling, efficient management, and the generosity of participating panelists.

Big Thanks

to the support of generous funders, the 10th anniversary festival connected hundreds of authors with thousands of booklovers in a fun-filled day — free and open to all!



37,500+ PEOPLE participated in our 7-day celebration of the written word at pre-festival events around the state and at the one-day festival in the capital city.

29,000 STUDENTS took part in three KidNote sessions with Kate DiCamillo, Angie Thomas, and Andrea Beaty in a statewide orchestration of in-person and online engagements.

8,100+ BOOKLOVERS attended the festival's 52 official panels and 8 workshops in 12 venues.

5,600 BOOKS were sold by 17 booksellers at the festival on Saturday.

3,500 FREE BOOKS went into the hands of students at pre-festival literary programs.

1,800+ HOURS OF LIVE STREAMING brought panels in Galloway Sanctuary to online audiences in real-time.

400 VOLUNTEERS powered setup, activities, directions, run-around, and take-down of the festival site.

188 OFFICIAL PANELISTS engaged audiences in official panel discussions.

165 EXHIBITORS shared information on the Capitol lawn or sold items on the surrounding streets, including Authors Alley participants, Independent Booksellers, and local Food Vendors.



KidNote's success continues to grow! The festival's annual event has expanded to include multiple age groups and venues in the capital city and the Delta. The 2024 events provided opportunities for young people to meet and be inspired by leading storytellers Angie Thomas, Kate DiCamillo, and Andrea Beaty, while learning about their works and the creative process that made them.





We're on the map! The festival itself has been honored with an official Mississippi Writers Trail marker recognizing its powerful influence on the legacy of Mississippi writers. On hand for the unveiling were founders Holly Lange and Jere Nash, Executive Director Ellen Daniels, presenting-funder Community Foundation for Mississippi President Jane Alexander, and Mississippi Arts Commission's David Lewis.



137 FUNDERS donated to make the festival possible.

52 HOURS OF PANEL VIDEOS were recorded – 46 panels by the festival in addition to 6 by C-SPAN Book TV.

12 ATTRACTIONS provided engagement throughout the day including the Book Signing Tent, Kids Tent, Rocky's House, Authors Alley, Booksellers Row, Community Lawn, Capitol tours, Capitol Rotunda exhibits, MPB Kids Club, a Pop-Up Library, as well as food vendors and live music.

10 YEARS marked milestones in festival totals for the decade – more than 1,200 panelists, 71,500 attendees, and 28,200 books sold.

7 PULITZER WINNERS + 1 NATIONAL BOOK AWARD-WINNER participated as Official Panelists – Pulitzer Prize winners Beth Henley, Brody Mullins, Robert Samuels, Natasha Trethewey, Anna Wolfe, Jonathan Eig, and Jeff Duncan + two-time NBA winner Jesmyn Ward.

3 CHILDREN'S WORKSHOPS exceeded capacity with enthusiastic youngsters eager to learn about storyboarding, poetry writing, and bookmaking.

1 LITERARY TRAIL MARKER unveiled, cementing the festival as a leader in nurturing a culture of literacy and ideas.

“... a lavish celebration of both southern hospitality and a southern love of literature. The hosts were incredibly gracious and the audiences were true book-lovers, seeming to hang on every word.... I can't wait to go back.”

SEBASTIAN JUNGER
NEW YORK, 2024 OFFICIAL PANELIST



The Mississippi Book Festival connects readers with authors all year long through partnerships — celebrity book release events (Greg Iles, Natasha Trethewey, Tabitha Brown, Richard Grant, Wright Thompson), podcast releases (MPB), storytelling festivals (Mississippi Children's Museum), movie screenings, *Reading the Room* events — and its own young readers initiative *Turn the Page*.



Children's workshops were new to the 2024 festival and a rousing success! Beloved cartoonist Marshall Ramsey taught budding storytellers how to illustrate a story from start to finish, Mississippi Poet Laureate Catherine Pierce taught her young audience how to express themselves in verse, and Anna Lyons (Mississippi Museum of Art) shared the hands-on craft of bookmaking.



27,500+

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

The festival connected booklovers across the country online while keeping them up to date.



"It was the best festival I've ever attended as an author, full stop, period. The combination of both the caliber of the authors and the thoughtfulness of the programming was just phenomenal. And the crowd Saturday! Wow!"

GARRETT M. GRAFF

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR
VERMONT, 2024 OFFICIAL PANELIST

Festival favorite!

5,000+

VIDEO VIEWS

Official panelists and festival goers agree that the annual recording, archiving, and sharing of EVERY panel session is an invaluable online treasure trove!



"I have to say that this [festival] was the warmest experience I've ever had around any book festival in my life. It would be difficult to really thank you enough, and whenever you call, I will most certainly be there, for the new books or to moderate or otherwise."

JOSEPH EARL THOMAS

PENNSYLVANIA AUTHOR, 2024 OFFICIAL PANELIST



"... it is a beautiful and seamless institution and I am so pleased I had the privilege to attend. It is such an honor to be a tangential part of the cultural work you're doing."

JULIET GRAMES

NEW YORK CITY WRITER AND EDITOR, 2024 OFFICIAL PANELIST



1,700+

STUDENTS

During the 2023-24 school year, our young readers initiative, *Turn the Page*, offered 14 in-person author experiences to school districts across the state and gifted 1,726 free books!



In Galloway Sanctuary, a raucously enthusiastic and adoring capacity crowd welcomed beloved PBS *Reading Rainbow* host LeVar Burton and two-time National Book Award-winner Jesmyn Ward, moving them both to tears. When asked why she became so emotional, the Gulf Coast native replied simply, "I'm home." Wiping tears from his own eyes, Burton remarked that although it was his first time in Jackson he felt the same way.





A Literary Lawn Party

MSBOOKFESTIVAL.COM

