

MISSISSIPPI BOOK FESTIVAL

RELEASE DATE: March 20, 2024

Contact:

Ellen Daniels

Executive Director, Mississippi Book Festival

(662) 907-9079

ellen@msbookfestival.com

MISSISSIPPI BOOK FESTIVAL KICKS OFF 10TH YEAR CELEBRATION

Jackson, Miss - This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Mississippi Book Festival. The festival has spent a decade contributing to Mississippi's literary legacy, transforming the capitol into a literary hub that unites authors and readers for one day each year. Over the past 10 years, the festival has featured 1,000 authors, hosted nearly 50,000 day-of attendees, and reached more than 44,000 students.

The festival commenced their 10th year celebration this morning with their first round of author announcements. Many partners were present for the occasion from festival staff, board members, funders, community partners, and day-of volunteers. Among all in attendance, a few key stakeholders spoke a few words to mark the occasion: Senator Briggs Hopson and Representative John Read from the Mississippi Legislature, CEO and President of the Community Foundation for Mississippi Jane Alexander, Senior Pastor Cary Stockett of Galloway United Methodist Church, and Jackson Public Schools Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kathleen Grigsby.

“We want to express our immense gratitude to our State leaders and community partners for all of your support over the last 10 years,” said Ellen Daniels, Executive Director of the Mississippi Book Festival. “This event is massively important to not only our city but our entire state, and to see how it's grown and expanded through the years has been incredible. From hosting literary legends to fostering educational opportunities, the Festival would never have been able to leave such a lasting impact without your support, and that is not lost on us.”

The number of festival attendees has nearly doubled since the first festival. Not even the pandemic could stop the literary lawn party. In 2020, the festival held 2,500 online sessions, unwavering in its mission to provide a literary celebration for authors and readers.

“There truly is no other event like the Mississippi Book Festival,” said Jane Alexander, President and CEO of the Community Foundation for Mississippi. “Seeing thousands of all kinds of people, of all ages, flock to the Capitol Green, thrills me every time I see it. The ripple effects of the Festival will be felt and seen for years, all over our state. But the impact on Jackson and the positive light it brings to our capital city is the real gift.”

The festival is grateful for the support of the Mississippi Legislature over the past 10 years. Not only has the legislature offered financial support, but they have also allowed the festival use of the Mississippi State Capitol. Senator Briggs Hopson and Representative John Read both spoke at the festival’s press conference today, showing their continued support for the festival.

“It’s an honor to host my friends from the Mississippi Book Festival here at the Capitol today,” said State Senator Briggs Hopson, District 23. “It’s inspiring to see what we can do when we as State Leadership partner with organizations in our community to make a difference in our state. That is what we have seen happen through the book festival. We celebrate a decade of its success and hope to see it continue to thrive for many years to come.”

Literary lovers will not want to miss this year’s festival, which will take place on its new date of September 14th at the Mississippi State Capitol and Galloway United Methodist Church. The festival offers something for everyone, filled with author panel discussions, live music, food, and activities for children.

Daniels made the first round of author announcements at today’s press conference. Authors at this year’s festival will include Kate DiCamillo with *The Puppets of Spelhorst* and Angie Thomas with *Nic Blake and the Remarkables*, their latest books for young readers. Erik Larson will return to Jackson with his forthcoming book, *The Demon of Unrest*. Sebastian Junger will present his most personal work, *In My Time of Dying: How I Came Face to Face with the Idea of an Afterlife*. Aimee Nezhukumatathil will return with her soon-to-be-published *Bite by Bite: Nourishments and Jamborees*. Poet and novelist Kaveh Akbar will join us for the first time with his bestselling debut novel, *Martyr!*. Rachel Khong will feature her newest novel, the generational family saga *Real Americans*. Mississippi Book Festival alum Ron Rash will present his latest novel, *The Caretaker*. Historian and scholar Grace Elizabeth Hale joins us with her most challenging research assignment yet, *In the Pines*. Finally, Maurice Carlos Ruffin will

return to the festival with his new historical novel, *The American Daughters*. Stay tuned for more author announcements in the lead-up to our festival date on September 14th.

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