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# Oxford represents at Mississippi Book Festival

THE OXFORD EAGLE

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Email the author

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This past Saturday was the fifth annual Mississippi Book Festival in downtown Jackson.

Thousands streamed in and out of the State Capital grounds throughout the course of a warm sunny day to attend the "Literary Lawn Party."

This book lovers' celebration had a variety of outdoor activities for all ages to enjoy. It also boasted a loaded schedule of indoor panel discussions, featuring over 150 authors - which included a strong representation of Oxonians, both current and former.

Among them was a recent addition to the Oxford literary community, University of Mississippi's John and Renée Grisham Writer in Residence for the 2019-20 academic year, January O'Neil. The acclaimed writer was one of five on the Poetry panel, which was among several presented by a UM department or program.

Another panel named "Journalism is Dead. Long Live Journalism" was moderated by Ellen Meacham, a Taylor, Miss., resident and professor of journalism at the University of Mississippi since 2003. Meacham appeared at Off Square Books last year promoting her book release for "Delta Epiphany: Robert F. Kennedy in Mississippi," which deals with Kennedy's visit to the Delta in 1967, and the residual effects it had on the community.

Also on this diverse panel was UM graduate and former EAGLE intern, Jesse Holland. During a commentary mainly with moderator Meacham, the award-winning journalist, author and educator made poignant observations about the importance of local media.

"One of the greatest effects we can have as journalists is writing about what's going on at your house, not what's going on in Washington," Holland said.

Tom Franklin is another local writer and UM teacher who moderated a panel during the festival. For "Marlantes and Powers," Franklin directed a captivating conversation with the two remarkable writers and military veterans about their craft and life experiences.

Oxford representation was in full effect mid-afternoon at the Southern Fiction panel, which included three authors with ties to the city: Jamie Kornegay, a former producer for Thacker Mountain Radio, Lisa Howorth of Square Books, and past John and Renée Grisham Writer in Residence (and Oxford resident) Mary Miller. Both Howorth and Miller discussed their 2 book releases, which are currently available at Square Books.

Miller, who was participating in the festival for the fifth year as either a panelist or moderator, reflected fondly upon this year, and her Mississippi Book Fest experience as a whole: "One of the most remarkable things about this festival is how excited people are about books and how many books the author's sell. It isn't unusual for folks to buy my current book as well as my entire back catalogue to have me sign...it's a reason to look forward to August in Mississippi."