



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI.

2025 FAY B. KAIGLER

Children's Book Festival



PRESENTED BY THE
SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND
INFORMATION SCIENCE

APRIL
9-11

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI MEDALLION

The University of Southern Mississippi Medallion is a highlight of the Children's Book Festival. Awarded annually for outstanding contributions in the field of children's literature, the Medallion for 2025 goes to LeUyen Pham. Silver medallions are cast for the recipient, while nickel medallions are available for purchase during the festival.



RECIPIENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI MEDALLION

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1969 Lois Lenski | 1988 Jean Fritz | 2007 Eve Bunting |
| 1970 Ernest H. Shepard | 1989 Lee Bennett Hopkins | 2008 Pat Mora |
| 1971 Roger Duvoisin | 1990 Charlotte Zolotow | 2009 Judy Blume |
| 1972 Marcia Brown | 1991 Richard Peck | 2010 David Wiesner |
| 1973 Lynd Ward | 1992 James Marshall | 2011 T.A. Barron |
| 1974 Taro Yashima | 1993 Quentin Blake | 2012 Jane Yolen |
| 1975 Barbara Cooney | 1994 Ashley Bryan | 2013 Jon Scieszka |
| 1976 Scott O'Dell | 1995 Tomie de Paola | 2014 Christopher Paul Curtis |
| 1977 Adrienne Adams | 1996 Patricia MacLachlan | 2015 Paul O. Zelinsky |
| 1978 Madeleine L'Engle | 1997 Eric Carle | 2016 Jacqueline Woodson |
| 1979 Leonard Everett Fisher | 1998 Elaine Konigsburg | 2017 Kate DiCamillo |
| 1980 Ezra Jack Keats | 1999 Russell Freedman | 2018 Dav Pilkey |
| 1981 Maurice Sendak | 2000 David Macaulay | 2019 Tamora Pierce |
| 1982 Beverly Cleary | 2001 Virginia Hamilton | 2020 Rita Williams-Garcia |
| 1983 Katherine Paterson | 2002 Rosemary Wells | 2021 Andrea Davis Pinkney |
| 1984 Peter Spier | 2003 Lois Lowry | 2022 Brian Selznick |
| 1985 Arnold Lobel | 2004 Jerry Pinkney | 2023 Gene Luen Yang |
| 1986 Jean Craighead George | 2005 Kevin Henkes | 2024 Cynthia Leitich Smith |
| 1987 Paula Fox | 2006 Walter Dean Myers | |

Leuyen Pham

2025 SOUTHERN MISS MEDALLION RECIPIENT



LEUYEN PHAM is the Caldecott Honor-winning illustrator of *Bear Came Along* by Richard Morris, but you've likely seen her warm, memorable character designs in a variety of different titles. Pham illustrated Julianne Moore's picture book series *Freckleface Strawberry*, and frequently works with author Shannon Hale to create series like *Princess in Black* and *Itty-Bitty-Kitty-Corn*. In addition to illustration, Pham also writes her own stories. She's the author and illustrator of *Big Sister*, *Little Sister*, *There's No Such Thing as Little*, *A Piece of Cake*, *All the Things I Love About You*, *The Bear Who Wasn't There*, and *Outside, Inside*. Recently, Pham teamed up with another Southern Miss Medallion winner, Gene Luen Yang (2023) to create *Lunar New Year Love Story*.

Though born in Vietnam, Pham grew up in California and fell in love with drawing, despite her parents' desire for her to pursue other career paths. After earning a degree at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, Pham worked for DreamWorks Feature Animation before pivoting to the world of children's literature full-time.

Pham lives in Los Angeles with her family, continuing to create the vivid characters we know and love. Pham's work deals with many different topics - from the pain of not fitting in in *Itty-Bitty-Kitty-Corn* to the distress of the pandemic in *Outside, Inside*, to shifting family dynamics in *Big Sister*, *Little Sister* - but her characters share one important trait. They're all inviting, asking the reader to stop a moment and enjoy the story that's about to unfold. We're excited to welcome Pham to USM this spring and celebrate her career in children's literature!

2025 KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



KATE LETH

Canadian artist Kate Leth wears many hats - they're an author, a cartoonist, designer, having worked for companies ranging from Marvel to KaBoom! and Hasbro. Leth has written graphic novels in the *Adventure Time* series (based on the animated series of the same name), penned Marvel's *Patsy Walker: AKA Hellcat* series, and created *Spell on Wheels* from Dark Horse. They've also shared their personal experiences with gender identity, relationships, and life in general in webcomics like *Valley Ghouls* and on their social media.

In addition to working in animation and comics, Leth has designed art for writers like Cassandra Clare and Holly Black, as well as the podcasts *Welcome to Night Vale* and *The Adventure Zone*. Of course, Leth also has a rad line of t-shirts, pins, and prints in their personal shop, too!

Leth most recently published *Mall Goth*, the story of teenager Liv Holme, who struggles to stay true to herself while navigating intense interpersonal relationships at her new school. *Mall Goth* is a Y2K tale of identity and self-acceptance that resonates with both teens and adults.



SUSAN CAMPBELL BARTOLETTI

had no clue she wanted to be an author as a child, but she soon realized that all she wanted to do was write. As she progressed through school, Bartoletti realized she had a passion for research, but she still didn't pursue a career as a writer. Instead, she taught eighth-grade English for years, eventually joining a writer's group after seeing her students nurture their own love of creative writing.

Since making the leap to writing full-time, Bartoletti has written nonfiction, picture books, and fiction. Her award-winning nonfiction for young people conveys the harsh truths of historical events in a way that is simultaneously age appropriate and truthful. She's covered topics like World War II (*Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Hitler's Shadow*), the Irish potato famine (*Black Potatoes*), the history of the Ku Klux Klan (*They Called Themselves the KKK*), and typhoid fever (*Terrible Typhoid Mary*). Bartoletti's fictional novels also show her love of research and historical accuracy. *The Boy Who Dared* expands on a real-life tale mentioned in *Hitler Youth*, while entries in the *Dear America* series look at the lives of kids during the 1800s. No matter what topic she's covering, Bartoletti brings a humanizing look to the subject matter, examining why people sometimes do bad things out of fear or ignorance.

COLEEN SALLEY STORYTELLING AWARD RECIPIENT

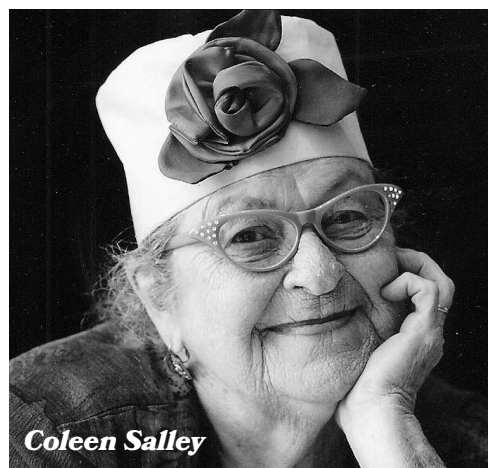


JOS N. HOLMAN

is a traditional storyteller, encouraging listeners to participate in his presentations and feel like they're part of the tales. He specializes in multicultural folktales, as well as introducing poetry and nursery rhymes to young people. Holman formerly worked as a children's librarian, where he honed his craft, and he still enjoys participating in summer reading programs today. In addition to his storytelling performances, Holman also leads Reader's Theatre presentations with students and helps others find their storytelling voice.

Holman has served as librarian at the Tippecanoe County Public Library in Indiana for 21 years, working to provide access to stories for all young people. He has also taken his passion for storytelling online, sharing Black History Month presentations, poems, and other stories on Instagram.

So much of Holman's work focuses on giving back to his community through storytelling and celebrating the rich history and folklore of the art.



THE COLEEN SALLEY STORYTELLING AWARD

The Coleen Salley Storytelling Award was established to honor the memory of Children's Book Festival supporter, storyteller and children's literature advocate Coleen Salley. Throughout her career and life, Ms. Salley worked tirelessly to promote quality children's literature. Each year, the award recognizes a storyteller whose mission reflects the ideals and dedication to the field that Ms. Salley personified. This session is supported by the family of Coleen Salley, the Coleen Salley Storytelling Endowment, and The University of Southern Mississippi Foundation.

PREVIOUS COLEEN SALLEY AWARD WINNERS

2010 Walter Mayes AKA Walter the Giant Storyteller
2011 Carmen Agra Deedy
2012 Caroline Herring
2013 Trout Fishing in America
2014 Mary Hamilton

2015 Rita Auerbach
2016 Tim Tingle
2017 Pat Mora
2018 Wanda Johnson
2019 William Joyce
2020 Michael Fry

2021 Elizabeth Ellis
2022 Donna Washington
2023 Amy Bruton Bluemel
2024 Juana Martinez-Neal

THE SOUTHERN MISS SLIS LECTURE

In 2021, the Dr. Teresa S. Welsh Children's Book Festival Lecture Endowment provided continued support for a scholarly keynote at the Kaigler Festival. This scholarly lecture series carries on the proud tradition that was originally established by the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation in 1985.

SOUTHERN MISS SLIS LECTURER



JAMIE C. NAIDOO

is the Director and Foster-EBSCO Endowed Professor at The University of Alabama School of Library and Information Studies. His scholarly research includes topics like library services to diverse populations and diversity in children's and YA media. He teaches a wide range of courses in public librarianship, children's literature, and storytelling. Naidoo often consults

with organizations (both non-profit and for-profit) that focus on developing children's media and educational curricula. In addition to the many scholarly articles and reference texts he's worked on, Naidoo has written two books, *Diversity Programming for Digital Youth* and *Rainbow Family Collections: Selecting and Using Children's Books with LGBTQ Content*, both of which offer practical advice to librarians on how to develop their library's collections.

Naidoo has earned a variety of awards for his work in library and information science, and we can't wait to welcome him to the festival!

PREVIOUS SOUTHERN MISS SLIS LECTURERS

1985 Brian Alderson
1987 Betsy Hearne
1988 Nancy Hands
1989 Ellin Greene
1990 Michael Patrick Hearn
1991 Dorothy Butler
1992 Ann Thwaite
1993 Anita Moss
1994 Anita Silvey
1995 Selma Lanes
1996 Leonard Marcus
1997 Ann Lundin
1998 Roger Sutton
1999 Susan Hirschman
2000 Richard Peck
2001 Patsy Perritt
2002 Barbara Elleman
2003 Eliza Dresang
2004 Eric Kimmel
2005 E.B. Lewis
2006 Floyd Dickman
2007 Leonard Marcus
2008 Barbara Immroth
2009 Pat Scales
2011 Roger Sutton
2012 Anita Silvey
2013 K.T. Horning
2014 Karen Nelson Hoyle
2015 Rita Auerbach
2016 Michael Cart
2017 Andrea Davis Pinkney
2018 Charlotte Jones Voiklis
2019 Bweela Steptoe
2020 Randy Testa
2021 Meg Medina
2022 Eric Tribunella
2023 Adam Trest and Erin Napier
2024 Liz Kleinrock

DE GRUMMOND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE LECTURER



WILL HILLENBRAND

is a celebrated author and illustrator whose works include eighty picture books for young readers. In addition to his own self-illustrated titles, he has also illustrated the works of writers and retellers, including Verna Aardema, Judy Sierra, Margery Cuyler, Judith St. George, Phyllis Root, Jane Yolen, Karma Wilson and Jane Hillenbrand.

About his book *The Voice In The Hollow*, School Library Journal said: 'There's not a word out of place in this blustery adventure. It's a masterful collaboration of illustration and text. This cozy winter tale, with its striking pictures, may appear to be cold but is quite the opposite.'

Will has spent most of his life in Cincinnati, Ohio, where he grew up as the youngest of four boys. His childhood routines revolved around the neighborhood, his parents' barbershop, the Northern Hills Library, playing baseball, and drawing. He now works in a small studio in the upstairs of his Cape Cod home, which he shares with his wife, Jane, a kindergarten teacher. Their son Ian, a geologist, is an avid reader and writer of many published scientific papers. Currently, he is doing postdoctoral work at the United States Geological Survey in Denver, Colorado.

PREVIOUS DE GRUMMOND LECTURERS

- 2010 Richard Peck
- 2011 Gary Schmidt
- 2012 Margery Cuyler
- 2013 Wendell Minor
- 2014 Kathi Appelt
- 2015 Deborah Wiles
- 2016 Tim Tingle
- 2017 Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
- 2018 T.A. Barron
- 2019 Sophie Blackall
- 2020 Emma Walton Hamilton
- 2021 Sharon Draper
- 2022 Lesa Cline-Ransome and James Ransome
- 2023 Loren Long
- 2024 Jason Chin

THE DE GRUMMOND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE COLLECTION

Founded in 1966 by Dr. Lena de Grummond, the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection is the result of one woman's dream to collect original materials from authors and illustrators of children's books to use as resources for students in library science. Today, the collection has grown far beyond its original intent and is now one of the largest such collections in North America.

While the collection has many strengths, it mainly focuses on American and British children's literature, historical as well as contemporary, and it holds original materials and published works in the McCain Library and Archives on the Hattiesburg campus of The University of Southern Mississippi.

The de Grummond Collection contains works from more than 1,400 authors and illustrators, including Randolph Caldecott, John Newbery, Kate Greenaway, Ezra Jack Keats and H.A. and Margret Rey. These are some of the most celebrated names in children's literature, with Caldecott, Newbery, Greenaway and Keats all having prestigious national awards named in their honor, and the Reys being the creators of Curious George.

Keats, the man behind *The Snowy Day*, is one of America's most groundbreaking authors because of his efforts to break the color barrier in children's publishing. *The Snowy Day* is considered to be one of the most important American books of the 20th century. The de Grummond Collection is the sole repository of the works of Ezra Jack Keats, holding original artwork, typescripts, dummies and preliminary sketches for 35 books by the Caldecott Award-winning author/illustrator that compliment the archives of his personal and professional papers.

For more information, contact
Karlie Herndon, Curator
de Grummond Children's Literature Collection
McCain Library and Archives
The University of Southern Mississippi
118 College Drive #5148
Hattiesburg, MS 39406
601.266.4086

2025 Ezra Jack Keats Awards

The Ezra Jack Keats (EJK) Foundation, in partnership with the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection at The University of Southern Mississippi (USM), will present the winners of the 2025 Ezra Jack Keats Award, along with four honor books, at the award ceremony on April 10, 2025, during the Fay B. Kaigler Children's Book Festival at USM in Hattiesburg, Miss. The annual EJK Award celebrates exceptional early career authors and illustrators for portraying the multicultural nature of our world in the spirit of Ezra Jack Keats.

Deborah Pope, executive director of the EJK Foundation said, "This year our winner and honor books include stories about comical space aliens in need of human kindness, a little girl's drive to connect with a new culture and her mother, and the barrier-breaking educator Augusta Baker. It's a joy to recognize new writers and illustrators who create such beautiful and entertaining books, books that reflect the childhood experiences and daydreams of our diverse population."

Karlie Herndon, curator of the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection and the Ezra Jack Keats Papers at USM, said, "The 2025 EJK Award Committee has once again selected excellent picture books that are somehow both timely and timeless. Among this year's winners and honors we find stories of curiosity, kindness, and communities coming together. These books will spark creativity, empathy, and joy in young readers, and I couldn't be more excited to welcome these up-and-coming creators into the EJK legacy." Since its inception, the EJK Award has celebrated over 100 exceptional early career authors and illustrators for portraying the multicultural nature of our world, the universal experience of childhood, and the importance of family and community. Past winners include renowned bookmakers Oge Mora, Meg Medina, Christian Robinson, Bryan Collier and Sophie Blackall.

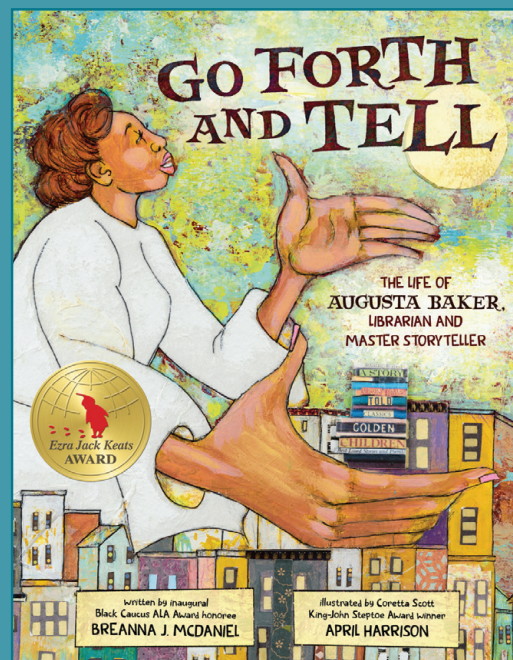




Ezra Jack Keats Award Recipients



Ezra Jack Keats Award Honor Recipients

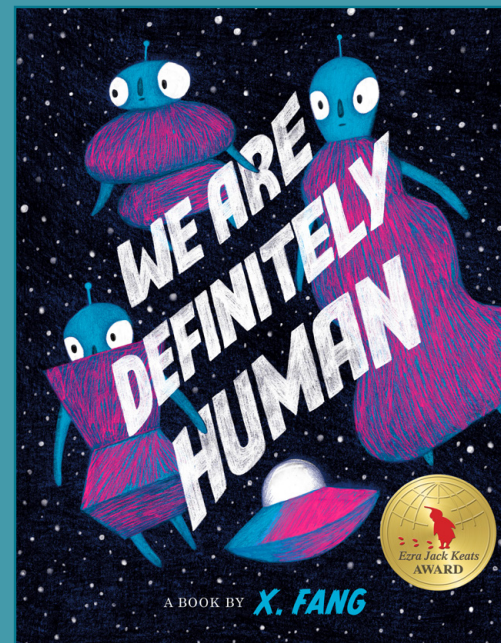


EZRA JACK KEATS AWARD WINNER FOR WRITER

Breanna Mcdaniel

Go Forth and Tell, The Life of Augusta Baker

Published by Dial Books for Young Readers



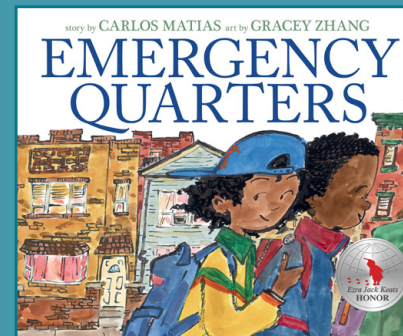
EZRA JACK KEATS AWARD WINNER FOR ILLUSTRATOR

X. Fang

We Are Definitely Human

Published by Tundra Books

WRITER HONORS



Carlos Matias

Emergency Quarters

Illustrated by Gracey Zhang

Published by Katherine Tegen Books,

Harper Collins



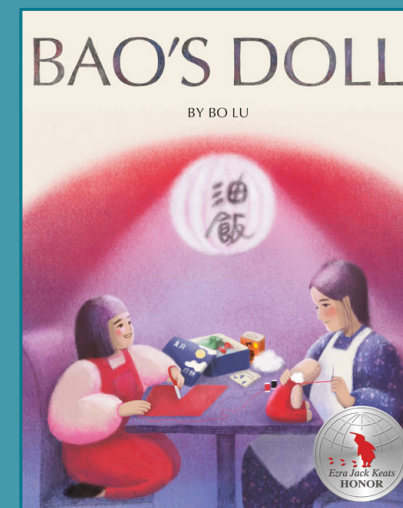
Antwan Eady

The Last Stand

Illustrated by Jarrett and Jerome Pumphrey

Published by Knopf Books

ILLUSTRATOR HONORS

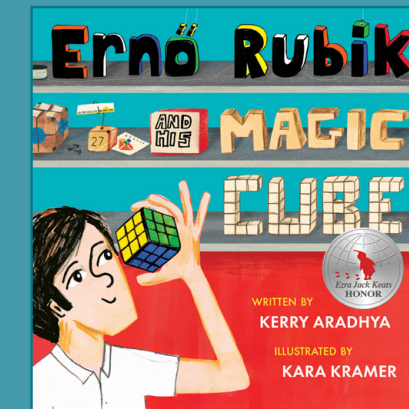


Bo Lu

Bao's Doll

Written by Bo Lu

Published by Abrams Books for Young Readers



Kara Kramer

Erno Rubik and His Magic Cube

Written by Kerry Aradhya

Published by Peachtree

The Ezra Jack Keats Award is co-administered by the EJK Foundation and the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection at The University of Southern Mississippi. A distinguished selection committee of children's literature and early childhood education specialists, librarians, authors and illustrators review the entries and announce the winners and honorees on the second Tuesday in March each year.

Ezra Jack Keats (1916-83) is considered one of America's greatest children's book illustrators and authors. His first book, *The Snowy Day*, which he wrote and illustrated, was published in 1962 and awarded the Caldecott Medal, the most prestigious children's book award for illustration in the United States, in 1963. Keats went on to write and illustrate over 20, now classic, books, including *Peter's Chair*, *Whistle for Willie* and *A Letter to Amy*. He wanted no child to be an outsider. "If we could see each other exactly as the other is," he wrote, "this would be a different world."

THE FAY B. KAIGLER-RUTH LAMONT AWARD

1998 marked the first presentation of the Kaigler-Lamont Award. The generous financial support of Fay Kaigler of McComb, Miss., made the award possible. Miss Kaigler was well-known for her love of children and, as an elementary teacher, devoted herself for many years to enhancing books and reading in the lives of children. Her students were soon hooked on books. In retirement, she continued to promote books and reading in her local public library. Her dear friend Ruth Lamont, who for many years was a successful school librarian in Baton Rouge, La., shared her passion for making books integral to children's lives.

The Kaigler-Lamont Award recognizes distinguished accomplishments in promoting children's reading by librarians and teachers in Mississippi schools, and by children's librarians in the public libraries of Mississippi.

This year's recipient is **Leah Rials**, librarian at Petal Middle School.

PAST RECIPIENTS OF THE KAIGLER-LAMONT AWARD

1998 Mattie Rials	2006 Carol Phares	2016 Becky Smith
1999 Lawana Cummings and Charjean Graves	2007 Ramona Barrett	2017 Nettie Moore
2000 Sybil Hanna	2008 Sally James	2018 Venetia Oglesby
2001 Sherry Donald	2009 Linda Perez	2019 Jennifer Baker
2002 Linda E. Sikes	2011 Faye Harris Bruce	2020 Beckie Nieman
2003 Gerrie Ann Weldon	2012 Dianne Butler	2021 Connie Robinson and Loraine Walker
2004 Vickie Ross	2013 Elizabeth Turner	2022 Otha Keys
2005 Victoria Penny	2014 Tracey H. Crawford	2023 Becky Bowen
	2015 Kathie Ward	2024 MacAllister Jackson

THE MAGNOLIA CHILDREN'S CHOICE AWARD

The Magnolia Children's Choice Award introduces youth to current literature with a goal of instilling a love of reading. The award was established in 2010 and is a partnership between the Mississippi Department of Education, the Mississippi Library Commission, the Mississippi Reading Association, The University of Southern Mississippi's School of Library and Information Science, the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection, the Mississippi Children's Museum and the Mississippi Library Association.



Votes can be cast by Mississippi children in grades K-12. Children in public, private or homeschooled settings are eligible to vote. In order to be eligible to make the reading list (and ultimately be selected by the children as the winner), books must have been published within the past two years. Titles that have won a national award (i.e. Caldecott, Newbery, Sibert, Coretta Scott King, Pura Belprè, National Book Award, etc.) are not eligible for the Magnolia Award, but honor books are, and either the author or illustrator must be living. Nominations may be done by the public and by committees, but final selection of the titles is determined by the committee.

The winning titles in each category are announced at the Fay B. Kaigler Children's Book Festival.

Congratulations to the 2025 Magnolia Award Winners

- **GRADES 9-12: Winner:** *Promise Boys* by Nick Brooks
Honor: *Abuela, Don't Forget Me* by Rex Ogle
- **GRADES 6-8 (tie): Winner:** *The Spirit Glass Book* by Roshani Chokshi and *Global* by Eoin Colfer
Honor (tie): *Confessions of a Candy Snatcher* by Phoebe Sinclair and *Chilling with Ghosts* by Insha Fitzpatrick
- **GRADES 3-5: Winner:** *It Found Us* by Lindsay Currie
Honor: *Where the Water Takes Us* by Alan Barillaro
- **GRADES PRE-K-2: Winner:** *This Book Is Banned* by Raj Halidar Gibson
Honor: *Somewhere in the Bayou* by Jarrett Pumphrey and Jerome Pumphrey

For more information:
mschildrensmuseum.org/parent-community-resources/magnolia-book-awards



THE GIVERNY AWARD FOR THE BEST CHILDREN'S SCIENCE PICTURE BOOK

The Giverny Award is awarded annually to the best children's science picture book that serves our youngest readers, ages 4-8. Each year, the 15° Laboratory chooses one science picture book, published in the English language in the previous five years, that teaches young readers at least one important scientific principle or promotes science-related attitudes, pursuits or inquiries. Artwork, illustrations and graphics must work in harmony with the story's text; hence, both the author and illustrator receive the award. The award's name alludes to the renowned French village that provided the setting and inspiration for Monet's famous impressionist paintings. Molly Bang, the first Giverny Award recipient, designed the award's seal.

PAST RECIPIENTS OF THE GIVERNY AWARD

1998 <i>Common Ground</i> , Molly Bang	2008 <i>The Prince of Butterflies</i> , Bruce Covile and John Clapp	2018 <i>Bat Count</i> , Anna Forrester and Susan Detwiler
1999 <i>Sam Plants a Sunflower</i> , Kate Petty and Axel Scheffler	2009 <i>Forest Bright/Forest Night</i> , Jennifer Ward and Jamichael Henterly	2019 <i>Counting on Katherine</i> , Helaine Becker and Dow Phumiruk
2000 <i>A Log's Life</i> , Wendy Pfeffer and Robin Brickman	2010 <i>Redwoods</i> , Jason Chin	2020 <i>They All Saw a Cat</i> , Brendan Wenzel
2001 <i>Henry Hikes to Fitchburg</i> , D.B. Johnson	2011 <i>A Tree for Emmy</i> , Mary Ann Rodman and Tatjana Mai-Wyss	2021 <i>Little Turtle and the Changing Sea</i> , Becky Davies and Jennie Poh
2002 <i>Rare Treasure</i> , Don Brown	2012 <i>Eliza's Cherry Trees</i> , Andrea Zimmerman and Ju-Hong Chen	2022 <i>Old Rock</i> , Deb Pilutti
2003 <i>The Hidden Forest</i> , Jeannie Baker	2013 <i>Green</i> , Laura Vaccaro Seeger	2023 <i>The River That Wolves Moved</i> , Mary Kay Carson and David Hohn
2004 <i>Lonesome George The Giant Tortoise</i> , Francine Jacobs and Jean Cassels	2014 <i>Maple</i> , Lori Nichols	2024 <i>Little Tree and the Wood Wide Web</i> , Lucy Brownridge and Hannah Abbo
2005 <i>Squirrel and John Muir</i> , Emily Arnold McCully	2015 <i>Up in the Garden, Down in the Dirt</i> , Kate Messner and Christopher Silas Neal	
2006 <i>Daniel and His Walking Stick</i> , Wendy McCormick and Constance Rummel Bergum	2016 <i>Frog in the House</i> , David Mather and Stephanie Mirocha	
2007 <i>The Snail and the Whale</i> , Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler	2017 <i>The Tree Lady</i> , H. Joseph Hopkins and Jill McElmurry	

2025 CONCURRENT SESSION PRESENTERS

AIMEE ARDONNE is a Branch Librarian within the Ascension Parish Library system in Louisiana. She has several years of experience creating and running library programming for children of all ages (but the little ones are her favorites!) Her favorite library programming focuses on hands-on exploration, STEAM activities, and the ability to learn while having fun. In her free time, she enjoys participating in trivia with her librarian friends (Go Dewey Decimators!), playing board games, and snuggling her dog Jack.

ALEXANDER J. BARRON is a PYP IB Chinese teacher at Wesley International Academy. He is a graduate student at the University of Georgia, studying in the Mary Frances Early College of Education; his current research focuses on practical pedagogical approaches of shaping social imagination through literacy. He has lectured at his Chinese alma mater Heilongjiang University in the Business English Department, translated for Harbin Bank, a financial player in the Sino-Russian sphere, and worked in several tech roles from Fortune 1000 companies to California startups. He hopes to bring his broad background to continue his studies at the doctoral level.

DR. GLORIA J. MCEWEN BURGESS is an author, educator, poet, and executive advisor. A life-long champion for youth and education, Gloria's focus is singular--to inspire and equip people to sit at the Welcome Table--a safe, courageous space to engage in conversations about belonging, inclusion, equity, and diversity. Dr. Burgess's books include *Pass It On!*, a graphic biography about the intertwined legacies of her father, Earnest McEwen, Jr., and Nobel Laureate William Faulkner. A Mississippi native, she now lives in North Carolina and enjoys experiencing and learning about new cultures.

RAMONA CAPONEGRO is a professor in the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alabama, where she specializes in children's literature and youth services. She is the chair of the 2026 Newbery Committee and has chaired or served on the Caldecott, Pura Belpré, and Phoenix Picture Book Award Committees. She researches children's books about the legal system, diverse youth literature, book awards, and early readers.

HALLIE CHRISTENSEN is a children's author who loves to write books full of adventure and hope. Her middle grade fantasy *Enchanted Misadventures with Great-Aunt Poppy* was published in 2021 (Sweetwater Books). She's an active member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) and loves connecting with other readers and writers on social media. When she isn't writing, she enjoys going on walks, attending rock concerts from musicians her parents' age, reading, and spending time with her husband and their cats in northern Alabama.

WENDY DAUGHDRILL serves as Vice President of the Magnolia Book Awards Executive Board. Wendy is the school librarian at Oxford Intermediate School. Before coming to the Oxford School District fourteen years ago, she taught middle and high school English and has also worked with children and youth in the public library system. She thinks spending every day with kids and books is the best job in the world.

KANDICE EVANS is the Children's Services Supervisor at Laurel-Jones County Library System. She was born and currently resides in Laurel, MS. With five young kids of her own, she has a wide range of experience in children's literacy and programming! Kandice considers herself lucky to be a para-librarian at the same library she grew up in. She's been at the Laurel Library for nine years and has enjoyed watching and helping her community grow and thrive.

ETHAN GLENN is the Trolley Manager in the Laurel-Jones County Library System, in which he has been librarian for going on 5 years. He graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi with a master's in library and information science and Certificate in Youth Services and Literature in 2023. He has lived in the small town of Stringer, MS., just outside of Laurel, his whole life, but beginning to find Petal home with his partner.

KATIE GRICE is the Children's Services Assistant at Laurel-Jones County Library System. She is from Ellisville, MS. She has been in this role for 3 years. All of the children love seeing Ms. Katie each week at Storytime! She enjoys gardening, reading, and crafting. She is passionate about children's literacy and learning about new authors and books!

JO WATSON HACKL is the national best-selling author of *SMACK DAB IN THE MIDDLE OF MAYBE* (Random House Children's Books/Yearling Adventure), which won the Southern Book Prize and is an Amazon Teacher's Pick and was selected to represent the state of Mississippi in "Read Across America." A first-generation college graduate (Millsaps College and Yale Law School), Jo has worked with educators to develop a "Writing and Revision Toolkit" and a "Building Grit Kit" to help students reading and writing skills as well as skills to enhance social and emotional learning and promote grit and resiliency. Jo is a Liberty Fellow, a Riley Fellow, and a member of the Aspen Global Leadership Network. Jo has extensive free resources for educators including lesson plans and reader activities at <https://JoHackl.com>

DEE HARE is the Director of the Northeast Regional Library and has worked in library services for over 25 years. She holds a B.A. in English with a minor in Journalism from Delta State University and a Master's degree in Library and Information Science with a certificate in Youth Services from the University of Southern Mississippi.

BRETT HARRIS is the creator and host of *God Knows Where*, an award-winning weekly podcast for those wandering and wondering about faith, and "Drawing Out Advent," a seasonal podcast aimed at helping families enter the Christmas season more fully. He formerly served as Director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at The University of Southern Mississippi and as Pastor at University Baptist Church in Hattiesburg. He lives in Laurel with his wife and young sons.

TORI HOPPER, MLIS is the Children's and Teen Librarian at the Columbus-Lowndes Public Library System. She received her MLIS at the University of North Carolina Greensboro and her BA in English at the University of Alabama. She enjoys long walks with her anarchist terrier, a good book, and efficient air conditioning. The amount of caffeine she has consumed in her lifetime has led her full circle, to where water is the only thing that keeps her awake, much like a potted plant.

KE HONES worked in K-12 San Francisco school libraries 1987-2020. In 2013 she became the librarian at three San Francisco county high schools and established the first libraries at Civic Center and Hilltop. She supported teachers & counselors & librarians who were National Board Candidates. She tutored new teachers taking required state credentialing tests. She currently mentors school librarians at Montana State University. She also volunteers every week at Hilltop Pregnant Minor High School. KE presents workshops locally, at state, national library & teacher conferences & internationally with IASL.

LEIGH HOOD is the Administrative Assistant and Branch Services Coordinator for Northeast Regional Library. She has over 18 years of library services experience with 14 of those at a branch level.

2025 CONCURRENT SESSION PRESENTERS

LINDA WILLIAMS JACKSON is the author of *Midnight Without a Moon*, which was an American Library Association Notable Children's Book, a Jane Addams Honor Book for Peace and Social Justice, and a Washington Post Summer Book Club Selection. Her second book, *A Sky Full of Stars*, received a Malka Penn Honor for an outstanding children's book addressing human rights issues and was a Bank Street College Best Book of the Year. Her third book, *The Lucky Ones*, also a Bank Street College Best Book of the Year—among other award nominations—was inspired by Robert Kennedy's 1967 Poverty Tour of the Mississippi Delta and is loosely based on Linda's own family's experiences in the Delta. *Good Housekeeping* magazine recognized *The Lucky Ones* as one of the best 50 kids' books of all time, and author Kate DiCamillo recommended it as one of her top five books for kids. Born and raised in Rosedale, Mississippi, Linda Williams Jackson lives in Southaven, Mississippi, with her family.

KIM JOHNSON, ED.D., is the District Literacy Specialist for Pike County Schools in Zebulon, Georgia. She is a frequent contributor and host at www.ethicalela.com's Open Write and Verse Love, and is the author of *Father, Forgive Me: Confessions of a Southern Baptist Preacher's Kid*, and contributing author of *Words That Mend: The Transformative Power of Writing Poetry for Teachers, Students, and Community Wellbeing*, as well as several poetry anthologies. She blogs regularly at www.kimhaynesjohnson.com.

KAREN KONNERTH - Based in New Orleans, Karen Konnerth's background as world traveling, professional puppeteer became the foundation for her specialization in arts integrated teaching, as well as visual storytelling through writing and illustration for children. She has shared extensive classroom experience developing and implementing arts integrated projects for educators regionally and internationally for the U.S. Embassy English Language Specialist Program in Central America, Asia, the Middle East, and South Africa. She has three published books.

ASHLYNN KOONTZ recently received her MLIS degree from the University of Alabama. She works at the Tuscaloosa Public Library in Alabama and enjoys spending time with family and friends when she isn't reading.

GWEN LEE is the author of seven picture books and a middle-grade novel. Her works have been featured by institutions such as the National Library Board of Singapore and used by schools in the US and Asia to educate children about weather science. Through the nonprofit group Society of Young Inklings, Gwen has coached an aspiring teen writer and helped him fulfil his dream of publishing a novel. During the pandemic, she also taught creative writing classes to middle-graders and teens on Outschool.com, where she earned the rating of 4.9 out of 5 stars as an instructor.

NAOMI HURTIENNE MAGOLA is a Reference/Archives Librarian at Hinds Community College in Raymond, MS. She received her master's degree in library science from the University of Southern Mississippi. She lives in Jackson, MS, with her husband, teenage daughter, and their four cats. When she's not corralling her cats or her kid, she enjoys reading fantasy (especially anything related to *The Lord of the Rings*), writing, and crocheting yet another blanket.

ANNALIESE MELVIN, she/they, is a children's librarian with DC Public Libraries. Prior to working as a librarian, Annaliese worked as a special education teacher just outside of Washington, DC. By hosting inclusive and sensory friendly events, she is able to combine her two passions to make the library a more welcoming environment for all.



2025 CONCURRENT SESSION PRESENTERS

KATIE MOLPUS - Hattiesburg native Katie Molpus joined the Mississippi Humanities Council team in September 2023. She received a B.A. in Psychology from Mississippi State University and an M.A in English from the College of Charleston. Since returning to Mississippi in 2019, Katie has worked with the Mississippi Book Festival, the Mississippi Historical Society, and Lemuria Bookstore. As program officer, Katie oversees and develops council-conducted programs, such as the Family Reading Project, Luciérnagas, Museum on Main Street, the Great Stories Club and Speakers Bureau.

HEATHER C. MORRIS is the grateful author of multiple stories for kids, including *Trunk Goes Thunk!* (Gnome Road Publishing, 2024), a ghost story in the *Haunted States of America Anthology* (Godwin Books/Macmillan, 2024), and multiple leveled readers for the educational market. She is an active member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI), the Middle Grade Hub, and the 12x12 picture book challenge. When Heather's not reading, typing, or doodling, you'll find her hiking the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains with her husband, their three kids, and their rescued border collie.

TONJA MURPHY is a published author, motivational speaker, and podcast host. In 2004, she founded The Ladybug Club for girls and their mothers in the greater Jackson area. The Ladybug Club is a beacon of positive self-esteem, family, and the value of education and community service. Currently, Tonja serves as Community Engagement Director for the Mississippi Book Festival where she coordinates Turn the Page, a young readers' initiative to bring authors and engaging experiences with books to school districts throughout Mississippi.

EMILEE NORRIS is a current MLIS student at USM. She is also the outreach librarian for the Lamar County Library System. She is passionate about library outreach and speaking to the community about library services.

DR. ERIN PARKER has been an educator for 22 years and an Elementary librarian for the past ten years. In addition to her duties as library media specialist, she teaches science and art, and loves to find ways to inspire kids to read through other subjects they are studying.

MARSHALL RAMSEY is prolific visual storyteller. He's a two-time Pulitzer Finalist for his editorial cartoons and is also a Southeastern Emmy Winner for illustrations created for WJTV's Christmas Special. Ramsey's work appears in *Mississippi Today*, a non-profit online newsite, and is syndicated nationally by Creators Syndicate. Ramsey has illustrated and written numerous books including *Fried Chicken & Wine*, *Chainsaw's and Casseroles*, *Banjo's Dream* and *Saving Sam! A Banjo the Dog Story*. Ramsey also hosts a weekly radio show for Mississippi Public Broadcasting. He also paints realistic portraits of aircraft. Ramsey is a creative a prolific artist who has created nearly 9,000 cartoons while living in Mississippi. He and his wife Amy live in Madison, Mississippi with their youngest son and dog Pip.

ASHLEY RICH has been an educator for 13 years. Between Physical Education, Library, Sped, and now PreK, she has experienced many challenges and has had to come up with an array of solutions. She sees teaching as one of her creative outlets and hopes to see students enjoying what they do in her classroom.

ELISABETH SCOTT is a Reference Librarian for the Mississippi Library Commission. After spending a decade in health care, she found her true calling in libraries and has spent the past 20 years serving Mississippians. She loves picture books and StoryWalks. She enjoys life outside the library by relaxing with her husband and four cats and squeezing in all the books and games she possibly can.

2025 CONCURRENT SESSION PRESENTERS

BETH SHAMLEY is the First Regional Library's Youth Services Coordinator. She has taught young children for 18 years, worked as a Youth Specialist for three years, and now carries on her work as a Youth Services Coordinator. She has an MLIS from the University of Southern Mississippi. When she has time, she enjoys playing video games, reading books, and spending time with her family and pets.

MARGARET SIMON lives on the Bayou Teche in New Iberia, Louisiana. Margaret is a National Board Certified Teacher and has been an elementary school teacher for 36 years. She's the author of Bayou Song: Creative Explorations of the South Louisiana Landscape. Margaret has contributed to poetry anthologies including The Poetry of US by National Geographic and Words that Mend: The Transformative Power of Writing Poetry for Teachers, Students, and Community Wellbeing. Margaret writes a blog regularly at <http://reflectionsoutheteche.com>.

CHARLIE SIMPKINS is the Special Collections Coordinator for the Mississippi Library Commission. He has worked as an elementary teacher, a student worker in an academic library, and a public librarian. He likes to spend his spare time with his wife, who is a school librarian, and their dog, who is not a librarian.

ADAM TREST is an artist with a passion for all things Southern. His work evokes the heart of Southern folklore and traditions. A New York Times bestselling illustrator, Trest's work can be found in the illustrations of children's books, hanging in the homes of his collectors worldwide, and in multiple home decor lines available nationwide. Regardless of the application, Trest's work focuses on telling the story of life in the South.

FAWN USSERY is the Director of Library Services at Delta State University. She graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi's MLIS program and loves to visit when she can. As the mother of a special needs child, she advocates for ensuring accessibility in our libraries.

KARYN WALSH is the director of the Laurel-Jones County Library System. She lives on a small farm in Jones County with her family and lots of animals. She enjoys reading science fiction and mysteries, archery and quilting. Karyn is a graduate of Arizona State University and The University of Southern Mississippi, completing the Master of Library Science program. She got to be trained in the largest public library in Arizona, after graduating from ASU. Karyn has a love of working with children, and when she moved home to Mississippi, she found a job working as a teacher/librarian for 14 years at Sacred Heart Catholic School in Hattiesburg while completing her master's degree. Though she loved teaching her students, she felt it was time to go back to a public library when, 3 years ago, the position of director of the Laurel-Jones County Library System became available.

MERIDITH WULFF is Head Librarian for Lafayette County and Oxford Public Library. A champion for community programming and outreach, she has served as Regional Youth Specialist and Youth Specialist and has led, worked, and volunteered with a diverse range of organizations, including the Lafayette County Literacy Council, LOU Reads, Excel by 5, and Oxford School District Foundation. Meridith earned her Master of Information and Library Science degree from the University of Southern Mississippi and has lived in Lafayette County for almost 30 years.

DAWN ZIMMERER is the Administrative Librarian for the McLendon Library at the Raymond Campus of Hinds Community College. She received her master's degree in library science from Southern Connecticut State University. Dawn lives in Clinton with her husband Mac, a retired librarian. They enjoy playing competitive trivia with their team the Dewey Decimators, and watching college football.

2025 CONCURRENT SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

A FORMULA FOR CENTER CREATION

Students love to rotate through centers, but it's often hard for teachers/librarians to come up with enough independent activities to hold their attention. In this session we will look at a formula to make center creation easier and faster. Come ready to pair your favorite children's book with 4 creative centers your students will enjoy.

AI IN EDUCATION: A SALON-STYLE

Join us for an engaging salon-style discussion on the role of AI in education, where educators, tech enthusiasts, and students come together to share insights and experiences. Participants will explore topics like personalized learning, equity, and ethical considerations, fostering a vibrant exchange of ideas. This informal setting encourages open dialogue and collaboration, making it the perfect space to discuss both the potential and challenges of AI in the classroom. Come ready to contribute and be inspired by diverse perspectives! (This description was created by ChatGPT on 9/18/2024)

BEYOND THE DESK: EXPANDING LIBRARY REACH WITH PASSIVE PROGRAMMING AT YOUR PATRON'S PACE

This session will explore ways to expand your library services to reach patrons on their time and their schedule by providing examples of various passive programming ideas. Presenters will cover in-house passive programs such as grab and go packets and craft projects, puzzles, art displays, Scavenger Hunts, and more. Ideas for passive programming outside the library and within your community will also be discussed, such as Story Walks, Community Wide Scavenger Hunts, as well as virtual passive programs such as recorded stories, craft demonstrations, and art tutorials.

CANVA FOR LIBRARIANS

Are you clueless about creating eye-catching graphics for your library? Canva can help! Join us to learn how to use the free platform to create visual content such as flyers, social media posts, and desktop backgrounds!

COME TOGETHER! HOSTING CREATIVE WRITING GROUPS FOR TWEENS AND TEENS

It is often hard for aspiring writers to get feedback on their work or find like-minded peers who they can write with. Learn how you can run writing groups for your youth community, even if you're not a writer or a creative writing instructor. This session will equip you with ideas on session structure, writing prompts, and critique techniques used by published writers.

DESIGNING DIVERSE, DISABILITY-FRIENDLY SPACES: CRAFTING ACCESSIBLE STUDY AND COMPUTER ROOMS FOR ALL

This presentation focuses on ensuring library spaces are inclusive, user-friendly, and meet accessibility standards for all users, including those with disabilities. It equips participants with actionable steps to make library spaces more accessible, supporting a diverse range of users in an inclusive academic environment. By the end of the workshop, participants will understand the key principles of universal design and accessibility standards, learn how to evaluate and arrange study and computer rooms to meet ADA guidelines, gain insight into the technology, furniture, and spatial configurations that support users with disabilities, and learn how to collaborate with campus partners such as IT and disability services to enhance accessibility.

2025 CONCURRENT SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

DIVERSITY IN MANGA: HELPING PATRONS SEE THEMSELVES IN A DIFFERENT FORMAT

Keeping Manga on a library's shelves can be a struggle and thinking about expanding the collection for a more inclusive representation is essential in this genre beloved by a wide range of ages. Manga publishers like Saturday AM are working to close the racial gaps in manga, while other series highlight a wide range of abilities and cultures that libraries should prioritize for their collections to create a more accurate representation of the communities they serve. This session will discuss various communities to include to expand representation efforts within manga offerings. Collection development resources will also be highlighted to assist libraries find the manga that is ideal for their communities.

DRAWING THE LINE: ONE CARTOONIST'S JOURNEY INTO VISUAL STORYTELLING

Marshall Ramsey, an award-winning editorial cartoonist and creator of the new book *Saving Sam! A Banjo the Dog Story*, shares a workshop that will teach participants how to storyboard (from a 3rd-grade exercise he credits for teaching him how to create visual stories from the written word). He also will take participants through an exercise that even Harold and his purple crayon would appreciate: audience members draw a line and Ramsey turns it into a cartoon. This fun and educational program has been a part of the *Saving Sam!* booksigning tour. To quote Dr. Kathleen Grigsby, Assistant Superintendent JPS, "The interactive elements, including a brief Q&A, encouraged the children to think critically and express their thoughts on the book's themes. Overall, the event was an enriching experience and left a lasting impact on the children, who walked away with valuable lessons, a love for reading, and their very own signed book."

DR. SEUSS AND THE MILITARY INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX: HOW TO TEACH WAR

As our world grows increasingly complex and information widely more available, teachers are left trying to help students make sense of their world and its conflicts. This workshop is a practical and scholastic case study on how to use Dr. Seuss's "The Butter Battle Book" as a means to have difficult yet meaningful conversations about war, ideological division, and even nuclear deterrence in a K-12 setting. Participants will leave this session with a clear understanding of how to implement this text to educate the children they may serve whether at home or in the classroom.

ENGAGING STUDENT CURIOSITY TO PROPEL DEVELOPMENT OF LITERACY SKILLS

This session provides an evidence-based case for leveraging student curiosity to motivate students and help them strengthen critical reading and writing skills. The session provides practical tips, techniques, and worksheets for educators to help students curate a list of topics in which they are interested. Provided activities then encourage students to use their areas of interest as a springboard to expand their reading across a variety of genres and formats, and as inspiration for every phase of the writing process.

EXPLORING THE MAGNOLIA BOOK AWARDS, MISSISSIPPI CHILDREN'S CHOICE AWARD

The Magnolia Book Awards provides the children and youth of Mississippi the opportunity to nominate, read, and vote for their favorite books. Please join us to learn more about the Magnolia Award and participate in discussion to explore integrating the Magnolia Award into school or public library settings. The Magnolia Award has four voting categories: PreK-2nd Grade, 3rd-5th Grade, 6th-8th Grade, and 9th-12th Grade. Learn about the process and help us advocate for the Magnolia Awards as we continue to offer children and youth in Mississippi opportunities to develop a lifelong love of reading.

2025 CONCURRENT SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

FUNDING, PROGRAMMING, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: HOW THE MISSISSIPPI HUMANITIES COUNCIL CAN BENEFIT LIBRARIES

The Mississippi Humanities Council has been a long-time partner of Mississippi libraries through grants and programming. In this session, the Mississippi Humanities Council will discuss funding opportunities for local libraries, as well as Council-conducted reading programs for all ages. Attendees can hear first-hand from state-wide partners about their experiences hosting Great Stories Club, Luciérnagas, and Speakers Bureau programs.

GOT PAPER?

Paper, new and recycled, is used to create for paper products for writing, notes, poetry and much more in the library! Explore ten hands on projects to engage and inspire students! Incorporate art, history, science, and games into your library programming using paper resources: candy & blackout poetry, Zen tangles, several mini books for note taking, nature journals and more!!

IMPACTED BY INCARCERATION: HOW LIBRARIES CAN SUPPORT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AFFECTED BY THE LEGAL SYSTEM

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, over 1.4 million children in the United States have a parent in prison. Find out how public and school libraries can provide resources and support to children and families impacted by incarceration through collection development, outreach, and programming. This session will highlight developmentally relevant books for K-12 readers published within the last 10 years that explore issues of incarceration and their impacts on families, as well as the increasing range of outreach efforts and programs that libraries across the country offer to children and families affected by incarceration.

INCLUSIVITY IN STORY TIME: A BEGINNER'S TOOLBOX

Have you wondered how to make your library programs more inclusive for children of different abilities? Join this session for information on inclusive library programming for ages 0-5. Learn about techniques to utilize within your programs and leave with materials and resources that you can begin using tomorrow!

LET'S WRITE A STORY!

In this engaging workshop—after a brief presentation on how her life story influenced her writing—award-winning author Linda Williams Jackson will guide participants through five steps of good storytelling. In this fun and practical workshop, participants will be given tools and tips to use with their own library patrons in order to help them write stories.

MLC'S SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND YOUR LIBRARY

MLC has a variety of non-traditional items in our Special Collections that are available for libraries to use for programming and outreach. We have book club kits, costumes, crafting items, games, puppets, STEM items, and more! Come learn about what is included in Special Collections and how you can use it.

PROGRAMMING ON THE FLY: BUILDING A PROGRAMMING TOOLKIT FOR RAINY DAYS

Let's be honest- stuff happens! Whether it's a day-of presenter cancellation, the employee in charge is out sick, the story time craft supplies aren't going to work with this group, the supplies didn't arrive in the mail in time- there has been at least once where we all needed a last-minute program idea for our patrons or students. More specifically, we need a program that we can put together quickly, relates to a book, and doesn't break the bank! In this session, we will share fun, engaging program ideas to pull out of your back pocket for your public or school library!

2025 CONCURRENT SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

PROMOTING ENGAGING READING EXPERIENCES WITH PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Keeping all young patrons interested in story times or library programs that focus on a specific read can be a feat, and incorporating physical activities can leave a lasting impression for patrons and their families. From very basic stretches to activities paired with texts, library programs become all the more engaging the moment we tell young patrons that they will need to move. This session will provide you with new ideas for physical activity, as well as remind you to dust off old favorites to keep your patrons invested in story time for long after they've left.

PROVING CONCEPT THROUGH PODCASTING

Taking the cold leap to sharing your manuscript with publishers can be intimidating, especially for those who've never published before. When Brett Harris struggled to find a daily story for his family to read in the lead up to Christmas, he wrote one. Instead of sending it blindly to publishers, he connected with an illustrator Adam Trest to produce "Drawing Out Advent," a 24-day podcast version of the story as a proof of concept to share in future conversations with publishers. Learn how the stats, downloads, and entire podcast process can help shape your story for future publication.

SENSORY PROGRAMMING AT YOUR LIBRARY: CREATING MEANINGFUL, HANDS-ON LEARNING EXPERIENCES THROUGH IMAGINATIVE (AND MESSY) PLAY

The 21st century library is innovative, loud, and... messy? In this session, explore the benefits of incorporating hands-on sensory activities and imaginative play into your public library's program offerings. We will discuss the importance of sensory play, how sensory play advances literacy initiatives, the different types of sensory play, and the skills that these activities develop. Several examples of successful hands-on, sensory-based programs will be discussed, including how to make this programming work for any budget or space.

STEAMY LITERATURE! HOW TO PAIR YOUR FAVORITE PICTURE BOOKS WITH STEAM ACTIVITIES

In this session you will be presented with some easy, low prep STEAM activities that you can use in your classroom or school library that connect with some of the most popular Picture books. You will take home lessons to use throughout the year to integrate science, technology, engineering, art, and math into the units you are already teaching. This session will inspire you to branch out of your comfort zone without taking up more of your precious planning time.

STRANGERS INTO NEIGHBORS: ENGAGING COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS THAT MATTER

How do you engage community members in meaningful conversations? One way is by creating a safe space for thoughtful exploration and discussion, using Guided Conversations. Co-created by community engagement specialists & educators at the University of Mississippi & one of the session presenters, Guided Conversations is a simple yet powerful resource that can be used by librarians, community members, teachers, students, and parents. When used effectively, Guided Conversations can open the door to rich, rewarding dialogue. Participants will leave with new strategies for programming, insights on creating safe space, and a plan for how to use this engaging resource to turn strangers into neighbors.



2025 CONCURRENT SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

TAKING A WHOLE-SCHOOL READ TO THE NEXT LEVEL TO HELP STUDENTS CREATE CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS, BUILD EMPATHY, GRIT AND RESILIENCE, AND STRENGTHEN THE OVERALL SCHOOL COMMUNITY

One School-One Book initiatives can help build a community of readers, create a sense of belonging within the school building and bridge the home-school connection, but how do you create a program to maximize benefits to students and staff? In this interactive session, the presenter shares first-hand experience and works collaboratively with attendees to share best practices and identify pitfalls to avoid.

TEACHING STORY STRUCTURE LIKE AN AUTHOR

Every story has a beginning, middle, and end, but there are so many different ways to tell one. Come learn about story types from those whose life calling is to write - authors! Join us for an educational and interactive workshop as we show you how to teach different types of story structures to your students.

TEEN TAKEOVER: TRENDY PROGRAMS FOR TEEN AUDIENCES

Join us for a presentation showcasing fun and trendy programs tailored to teen audiences. We will share ideas, strategies, and success stories. There will be time at the end for questions and answers.

THIS IS HOW WE ROLL: HOW A TROLLEY GOT A SECOND LIFE TO TAKE THE LIBRARY TO ITS COMMUNITY

Are you a Mrs. Frizzle or a Mr. Rogers? Whichever one you are, you can learn how L.O.T.T.I.E (Library Outreach Technology Trolley for Interlibrary Engagement) the Library Trolley came to life. Lottie is a unique bookmobile, a fully functioning mobile library that brings library resources to its community. This presentation will guide librarians through what is needed to get a bookmobile up and rolling and

the pitfalls and successes one experiences when bringing outside-the-box thinking to Outreach Services. From the planning process, looking at what your community needs and wants, bookmobile funding options, design challenges, and partnership dos and don'ts, librarians will walk away with the resources needed to begin taking their library beyond its walls and into the hands of its community.

WALKING WITHIN THE PAGES: USING STORYWALKS TO ENHANCE LITERACY ENGAGEMENT

Since the onset of the Covid pandemic, MLC has embraced passive programs that have a lasting impact on literacy in our state... especially StoryWalks. Join us for a fun-filled session where we talk about everything StoryWalk: its origins, best practices for creating your own, where to go if you don't have the time or effort to make your own, and additional activities that pair well with this literacy-based activity.

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH ONE BOOK?

A demonstration of the many ways one picture book can be integrated across grade, curriculum, creative medium, seasonal events, and more. When investing time in the sharing of any book with a class, why not make the most of the experience to connect the book to a variety of learning goals and grade levels? Have fun using lateral thinking to find unexpected connections to engage your students!

WORDS THAT MEND: FINDING HEART, HOPE, AND THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF WRITING POETRY

Words That Mend: Finding Heart, Hope, and the Transformative Power of Poetry is a collaborative work by teachers who write poetry together. Educators will experience poetry's transformative healing power through writing, reading poems of others, listening, and responding. The presenters offer takeaways grounded in poetic healing and ways to carry that healing into the classroom and school community.

2025 FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9

Complimentary coffee service offered from 8 a.m. to noon at the end of second floor Exhibitor's Hall.

9-10 A.M. CONCURRENT SESSIONS

A1. INCLUSIVITY IN STORY TIME: A BEGINNER'S TOOLBOX

Annaliese Melvin; DEI
ROOM 210 (.1 CEU)

A2. THIS IS HOW WE ROLL: HOW A TROLLEY GOT A SECOND LIFE TO TAKE THE LIBRARY TO ITS COMMUNITY

Karyn Walsh and Ethan Glenn;
Community Outreach
ROOM 214 (.1 CEU)

A3. WALKING WITHIN THE PAGES: USING STORYWALKS TO ENHANCE LITERACY ENGAGEMENT

Charlie Simpkins and Elisabeth Scott;
School libraries
ROOM 216 (.1 CEU)

A4. MLC'S SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND YOUR LIBRARY

Charlie Simpkins; Programming and
Public Libraries
ROOM 218 A (.1 CEU)

10:15-11:15 A.M. CONCURRENT SESSIONS

B1. WORDS THAT MEND: FINDING HEART, HOPE, AND THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF WRITING POETRY

Kim Johnson and Margaret Simon, Poetry
ROOM 210 (.1 CEU)

B2. DR. SEUSS AND THE MILITARY INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX: HOW TO TEACH WAR

Alexander J. Barron; storytelling
ROOM 214 (.1 CEU)

B3. EXPLORING THE MAGNOLIA BOOK AWARDS, MISSISSIPPI CHILDREN'S CHOICE AWARD

Wendy Daughdrill; School Libraries
ROOM 216 (.1 CEU)

B4. DESIGNING DIVERSE, DISABILITY- FRIENDLY SPACES: CRAFTING ACCESSIBLE STUDY AND COMPUTER ROOMS FOR ALL

Fawn Ussery; DEI
ROOM 218 A (.1 CEU)

B5. PROGRAMMING ON THE FLY: BUILDING A PROGRAMMING TOOLKIT FOR RAINY DAYS

Kandice Evans and Katie Grice;
Programming and Public Libraries
ROOM 218 B (.1 CEU)

11:30 A.M. WELCOME SESSION

**MAGNOLIA AWARDS, GIVERNY AWARD,
KAIGLER-LAMONT AWARD**
TCC BALLROOMS

NOON-1:30 P.M.

COLEEN SALLEY LUNCHEON | \$25
Jos N. Holman
TCC BALLROOMS (.1 CEU)

1:45-2:45 P.M.

DE GRUMMOND LECTURE
Will Hillenbrand
TCC BALLROOMS (.1 CEU)

3-4 P.M.

KEYNOTE SESSION
Carmen Agra Deedy
TCC BALLROOMS (.1 CEU)

4:15-5:30 P.M.

AUTOGRAPHING
BARNES AND NOBLE

4:30-5:30 P.M. CONCURRENT SESSIONS

C1. IMPACTED BY INCARCERATION: HOW LIBRARIES CAN SUPPORT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AFFECTED BY THE LEGAL SYSTEM

Ramona Caponegro and Ashlynn Koontz;
Community Outreach
ROOM 218 B (.1 CEU)

C2. BEYOND THE DESK: EXPANDING LIBRARY REACH WITH PASSIVE PROGRAMMING AT YOUR PATRON'S PACE

Dee Hare and Leigh Hood;
Programming and Public Libraries
ROOM 214 (.1 CEU)

C3. STRANGERS INTO NEIGHBORS: ENGAGING COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS THAT MATTER

Gloria McEwen Burgess and Meridith
Wulff; Programming and Public Libraries
ROOM 216 (.1 CEU)

C4. LET'S WRITE A STORY!

Linda Williams Jackson; Storytelling
ROOM 218 A (.1 CEU)

C5. TELL ME ANOTHER STORY SCREENING AND Q&A PANEL

ROOM 210 (.1 CEU)

2025 FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, APRIL 10

Complimentary coffee service offered from 8 a.m. to noon at the end of 2nd floor exhibitor's hall.

8-8:45 A.M.

**USM SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND
INFORMATION SCIENCE
BREAKFAST SOCIAL**
ROOM 218 A

9-10 A.M.

KEYNOTE SESSION
Susan Campbell Bartoletti
TCC BALLROOMS (.1 CEU)

10:15-11:15 A.M.

**MEDALLION SESSION WITH
LEUYEN PHAM**
TCC BALLROOMS (.1 CEU)

11:30 A.M.-1 P.M.

**EZRA JACK KEATS AWARD
LUNCHEON | \$25**
TCC BALLROOMS (.1 CEU)

1:15-2:15 P.M.

EZRA JACK KEATS PANEL
TCC BALLROOMS (.1 CEU)

2:30-4 P.M.

AUTOGRAPHING
BARNES AND NOBLE

3-4 P.M. CONCURRENT SESSIONS

D1. A FORMULA FOR CENTER CREATION
Ashley Rich; Programming and
Public Libraries
ROOM 210 (.1 CEU)

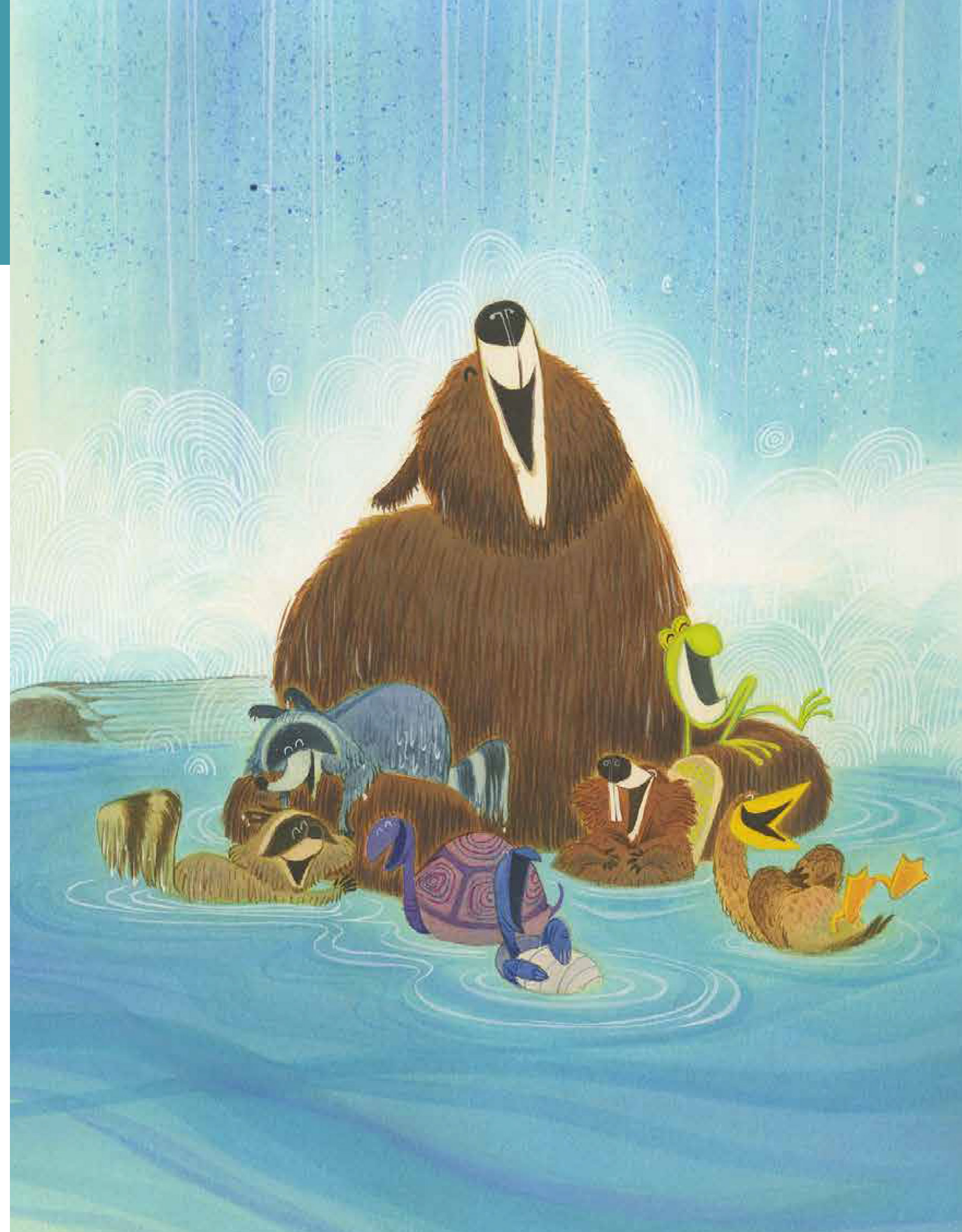
**D2. DRAWING THE LINE: ONE
CARTOONIST'S JOURNEY INTO
VISUAL STORYTELLING**
Marshall Ramsey; Creativity, storytelling
ROOM 214 (.1 CEU)

**D3. TEEN TAKEOVER: TRENDY
PROGRAMS FOR TEEN AUDIENCE**
Beth Shamley; Programming and
Public Libraries
ROOM 218 A (.1 CEU)

**D4. WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH
ONE BOOK?**
Karen Konnerth; School Libraries
ROOM 218 B (.1 CEU)

7 P.M.
EZRA JACK KEATS RECEPTION
HATTIESBURG TRAIN DEPOT

*Co-sponsored by the Ezra Jack Keats
Foundation and the de Grummond
Children's Literature Collection*



2025 FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, APRIL 11

Complimentary coffee service offered from 8 a.m. to noon at the end of 2nd floor exhibitor's hall.

9-10 A.M.

KEYNOTE SESSION

Kate Leth

VIRTUAL PRESENTATION IN
TCC BALLROOMS (.1 CEU)

10:15-11:30 A.M.

AUTOGRAPHING

BARNES AND NOBLE

10:30-11:30 A.M.

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

**E1. PROVING CONCEPT THROUGH
PODCASTING**

Brett Harris and Adam Trest; Storytelling
ROOM 216 (.1 CEU)

**E2. COME TOGETHER: HOSTING
CREATIVE WRITING GROUPS**

Gwen Lee; Programming and
Public Libraries
ROOM 218 A (.1 CEU)

**E3. TEACHING STORY STRUCTURE LIKE
AN AUTHOR**

Heather C. Morris and Hallie Christensen;
Other: School Curriculum
ROOM 214 (.1 CEU)

**E4. ENGAGING STUDENT CURIOSITY
TO PROPEL DEVELOPMENT OF
LITERACY SKILLS**

Jo Hackl; Critical Reading and
Writing Skills
ROOM 210 (.1 CEU)

NOON-1:30 P.M.

SLIS LECTURE LUNCHEON | \$25

Dr. Jamie Naidoo
TCC BALLROOMS (.1 CEU)

**1:45-2:45 P.M.
CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

**F1. STEAMY LITERATURE! HOW TO PAIR
YOUR FAVORITE PICTURE BOOKS WITH
STEAM ACTIVITIES**

Erin Parker; School Libraries
ROOM 216 (.1 CEU)

**F2. SENSORY PROGRAMMING
AT YOUR LIBRARY: CREATING
MEANINGFUL, HANDS-ON LEARNING
EXPERIENCES THROUGH IMAGINATIVE
(AND MESSY) PLAY**

Aimee Ardonne; Programming
and Public Libraries
ROOM 218 B (.1 CEU)

**F3. DIVERSITY IN MANGA: HELPING
PATRONS SEE THEMSELVES IN A
DIFFERENT FORMAT**

Tori Hopper; Anime, Comics and
Graphic Novels
ROOM 214 (.1 CEU)

F4. CANVA FOR LIBRARIANS

Emilee Norris; Technology
ROOM 210 (.1 CEU)

**3-4 P.M.
CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

**G1. FUNDING, PROGRAMMING, AND
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: HOW THE
MISSISSIPPI HUMANITIES COUNCIL CAN
BENEFIT LIBRARIES**

Katie Molpus and Tonja Murphy;
Community Outreach
ROOM 210 (.1 CEU)

G2. GOT PAPER?

K.E. Hones; School Libraries
ROOM 216 (.1 CEU)

G3. AI IN EDUCATION: A SALON-STYLE

Naomi Hurtienne Magola and Dawn
Zimmerer; Social Media/Technology
ROOM 218 A (.1 CEU)



DIGITAL ONLY PRESENTATIONS:

**TAKING A WHOLE-SCHOOL READ TO
THE NEXT LEVEL TO HELP STUDENTS
CREATE CROSS-CURRICULAR
CONNECTIONS, BUILD EMPATHY, GRIT
AND RESILIENCE, AND STRENGTHEN
THE OVERALL SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

Jo Watson Hackl; School Libraries

**PROMOTING ENGAGING READING
EXPERIENCES WITH PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES**

Tori Hopper; Programming
and Public Libraries

CREDITS

MEMBERS OF THE 2025 MEDALLION SELECTION COMMITTEE

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SPECIAL THANKS

The Fay B. Kaigler Children's Book Festival expresses appreciation to the following for their contributions to the success of the 2025 festival:

DR. JOSEPH S. PAUL, President, The University of Southern Mississippi

DR. LANCE NAIL, Provost, The University of Southern Mississippi

DR. TRENTON E. GOULD, Dean, College of Education and Human Sciences, The University of Mississippi

DR. STACY CREEL, Director, School of Library and Information Science, The University of Southern Mississippi

THE ESTATE OF FAY B. KAIGLER

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THE MISSISSIPPI LIBRARY COMMISSION

FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS OF THE SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE, The University of Southern Mississippi

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RALPH SAVARESE and his team with USM Catering

CATHERINE STRANGE and **THE HENNINGTON HOUSE**

FLATHAU'S FINE DINING

TWIN FORKS WINE AND PROVISIONS

VISIT HATTIESBURG



**THE FAY B. KAIGLER
CHILDREN'S BOOK FESTIVAL
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI**

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