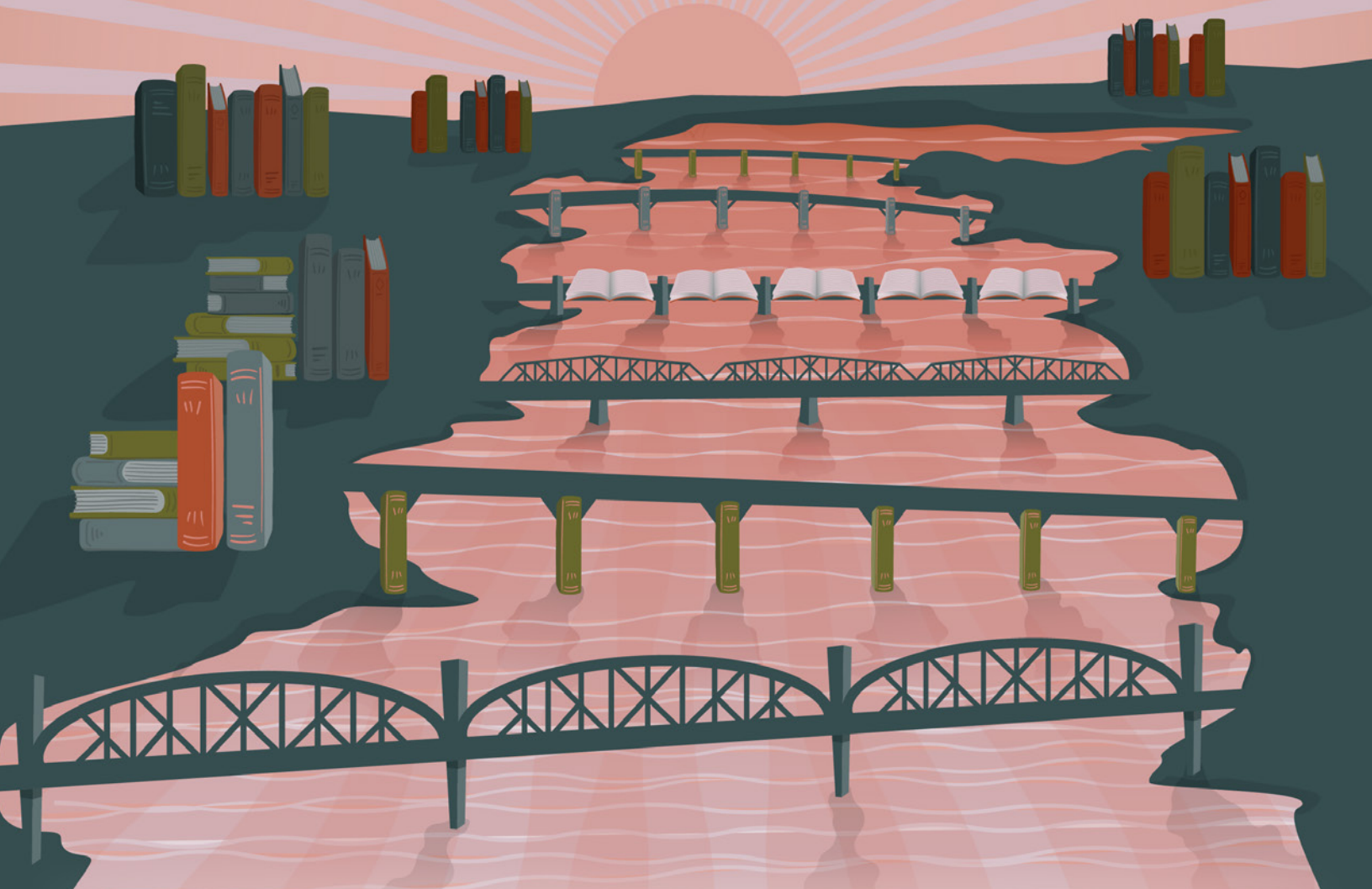


# SIX BRIDGES BOOK FESTIVAL

SEPTEMBER 22-29, 2024



View the full schedule at  
[SixBridgesBookFestival.org](https://SixBridgesBookFestival.org)

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# 2024 SIX BRIDGES BOOK FESTIVAL SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

## SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

**2-4:30pm** **A Celebration of Local Authors**  
Terry Library  
Join us for readings and signings from local authors including Frank Thurmond, Melissa Clark Bacon, Steve Rousseau, T.L. Simpson, Jason Pederson, Jennifer Case, Maria Hoskins, and Shamim Okolloh.

**6:30-7:30pm** **Manisha Sinha, *The Rise and Fall of the Second American Republic: Reconstruction, 1860-1920***  
Virtual  
Moderator: Vaughn Scribner

## MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

**5:30-6:30pm** **Danielle Bayard Jackson, *Fighting for Our Friendships: The Science and Art of Conflict and Connection in Women's Relationships***  
Fletcher Library and Virtual  
Moderator: Jessica McDaniel

**5:30-6:30pm** **Kevin Brockmeier, *The Ghost Variations: One Hundred Stories***  
Ron Robinson Theater  
Moderator: Steve Straessle

**7-8pm** **Toluse Olorunnipa, *His Name Is George Floyd: One Man's Life and the Struggle for Racial Justice***  
Ron Robinson Theater  
Moderator: Nate Coulter  
*This program is part of the CALS Speaker Series and honors Fred K. Darragh.*

**7-8pm** **Peter Hoey and Maria Hoey, *In Perpetuity***  
Virtual  
Moderator: Emily Roberson

## TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

**6:30-8pm** **Creative Writing Workshop 1**  
Thompson Library  
Facilitator: Deb Moore

**6:30-8pm** **Creative Writing Workshop 2**  
Nixon Library  
Facilitator: Alex Vernon

## WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

**4:30-5:30pm** **Ayana Gray, *Beasts of War***  
Williams Library  
Moderator: Tameka Lee

**SOLD OUT** **6-7pm** **Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns and Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents***  
Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts  
Moderator: Robin White  
*Presented by Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site*

## THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

**12-1pm** **Regina Porter, *The Rich People Have Gone Away***  
Virtual  
Moderator: Sonia Brown

**5-7pm** **Vanessa Brantley-Newton Art Reception**  
Hearne Fine Art  
Exhibition: *JUST LIKE ME! Dolls, Drawings, Digital Illustrations & Prints*  
Sponsored by Hearne Fine Art/Pyramid Art, Books & Custom Framing

**6-7pm** **Jasmin Graham, *Sharks Don't Sink: Adventures of a Rogue Shark Scientist***  
Ron Robinson Theater  
**Carrie Sun, *Private Equity***  
Moderator: Karama Neal  
Sponsored by Dr. Elizabeth Fletcher Dishongh Charitable Trust

**7:30-8:30pm** **Sally Nixon, *Let's Go to the Mall: An '80s Seek-and-Find***  
Ron Robinson Theater  
**Nate Powell, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: A Graphic Adaptation and Fall Through***  
Moderator: Omayya Jones  
Sponsored by Arkansas Times

## FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

**6:30-8:30pm** **Kickoff Party**  
Ron Robinson Theater  
Sponsored by Arkansas Democrat-Gazette and ProSmart Printing

## SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

**10-11am** **Jess H. Gutierrez, *A Product of Genetics (and Day Drinking): A Never-Coming-of-Age Story***  
UA Little Rock Downtown  
**Gwenna Lathland, *Momma Cusses: A Field Guide to Responsive Parenting & Trying Not to Be the Reason Your Kid Needs Therapy***  
Moderator: Alison McKeever

**10-11am** **Cooking Workshop**  
Williams Library  
**Anne Byrn, *Baking in the American South: 200 Recipes and Their Untold Stories***  
Moderator: Kelli Marks

**10-11am** **Garrard Conley, *All the World Beside***  
Rock It! Lab  
Moderator: Seth Pennington

**10-11am** **Alice Driver, *Life and Death of the American Worker: The Immigrants Taking on America's Largest Meatpacking Company***  
Ron Robinson Theater  
**Boyce Upholt, *The Great River: The Making and Unmaking of the Mississippi***  
Moderator: Michael Hibblen  
Sponsored by Little Rock Public Radio

**11:30am-12:30pm** **Cooking Workshop**  
Williams Library  
**Crystal Wilkinson, *Praisesong for the Kitchen Ghosts: Stories and Recipes from Five Generations of Black Country Cooks***  
Moderator: Latina Sheard

### Books Available for Purchase



- 11:30am-12:30pm** **Susie Dumond**, *Looking for a Sign*  
 UA Little Rock Downtown  
**Myah Ariel**, *When I Think of You*  
 Moderator: Regina Black  
 Sponsored by CALS Used Book Sale
- 11:30am-12:30pm** **Jedediah Berry**, *The Naming Song*  
 Rock It! Lab  
**Debbie Urbanski**, *After World*  
 Moderator: Carl Napolitano
- 11:30am-12:30pm** **Samuel G. Freedman**, *Into the Bright Sunshine: Young Hubert Humphrey and the Fight for Civil Rights*  
 Ron Robinson Theater  
**Randall Woods**, *John Quincy Adams: A Man for the Whole People*  
 Moderator: Jay Barth  
 Sponsored by John David Coulter Memorial Fund and the Clinton Presidential Center
- 1-2pm** **Gardening Workshop**  
 UA Little Rock Downtown  
**Lana Williams**, *The Container Garden Recipe Book: 57 Designs for Pots, Window Boxes, Hanging Baskets, and More*  
 Moderator: Patrice O'Donoghue  
 Sponsored by At Home in Arkansas
- 1-2pm** **Phyllis R. Dixon**, *A Taste for More*  
 Rock It! Lab  
**Jen Fawkes**, *Daughters of Chaos*  
**Margot Livesey**, *The Road from Belhaven*  
 Moderator: Rebekah Lewis  
 Sponsored by University of Arkansas at Little Rock School of Literary and Performing Arts
- 1-2pm** **Bettina L. Love**, *Punished for Dreaming: How School Reform Harms Black Children and How We Heal*  
 Ron Robinson Theater  
 Moderator: Ryan D. Davis  
 Sponsored by Rebsamen Fund
- 2:30-3:30pm** **John Vercher**, *Devil Is Fine*  
 Rock It! Lab  
**Phillip B. Williams**, *Ours*  
 Moderator: Frederick McKindra  
 Sponsored by Oxford American

- 2:30-3:30pm** **Eli Cranor**, *Broiler*  
 Ron Robinson Theater  
**Gabino Iglesias**, *House of Bone and Rain*  
 Moderator: Jonathan Portis  
 Sponsored by CALS Foundation
- 2:30-3:30pm** **Elliott West**, *Continental Reckoning: The American West in the Age of Expansion*  
 UA Little Rock Downtown  
 Moderator: Thomas A. DeBlack  
 Sponsored by HumanitiesAR
- 4-5pm** **Marcela Fuentes**, *Malas*  
 Rock It! Lab  
**Santiago Jose Sanchez**, *Hombrecito*  
 Moderator: Lupe Peña de Martínez
- 4-5pm** **Brian Fairbanks**, *Willie, Waylon, and the Boys: How Nashville Outsiders Changed Country Music Forever*  
 Ron Robinson Theater  
**Stephen Koch**, *From Almeda to Zilphia: Arkansas Women Who Transformed American Popular Song*  
 Moderator: Erin Enderlin  
 Sponsored by ESSE Museum & Store
- 4-5pm** **Kamilah Cole**, *So Let Them Burn*  
 UA Little Rock Downtown  
 Moderator: Gabrielle Edwards
- 5:30-6:30pm** **Ilyon Woo**, *Master Slave Husband Wife: An Epic Journey from Slavery to Freedom*  
 Ron Robinson Theater  
 Moderator: Eric Darnell Pritchard  
 Sponsored by the Brown Chair in English Literacy at the University of Arkansas and the Community Literacies Collaboratory

## SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

- 1-4pm** **Little Readers Rock** | Children's Library  
 Presented by the Junior League of Little Rock.  
 Outdoor fair sponsored by Roby Brock
- 2-4pm** **Pie Contest** | The Root Café
- 5-8:30pm** **An Evening with Ann Patchett and Robin Preiss Glasser: A Special Fundraising Event**  
 Ron Robinson Theater  
 Host Committee: Marian and Craig Berry, Best Ever Book Club, Robin and Susan Borné, Lynne and Dr. Paul Phillips, Read Between the Wines Book Club, "Who Picked This Book?" Book Club



# SIX BRIDGES BOOK FESTIVAL SEPTEMBER 22-29, 2024

Register to attend sessions at  
[SixBridgesBookFestival.org](https://SixBridgesBookFestival.org)

# ABOUT THE FESTIVAL

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Now in its twenty-first year, the Six Bridges Book Festival continues to thrive, growing stronger and more vibrant each year! This year, we are excited to welcome more than 50 authors, most appearing in person, as we come together once again to celebrate the joy of literature.

The Festival will continue to feature beloved programs such as **Little Readers Rock**, the Festival's signature youth program, in partnership with the Junior League; the always popular **Pie Contest at The Root Cafe**; our **Writers in the Schools (WITS)** program; and an array of **writing and cooking workshops**. And, of course, we hope you'll make plans to come to the **Kickoff Party** on Friday, September 27, and welcome many of our **visiting authors** to Little Rock!

This year, we're also introducing exciting new events. Don't miss **A Celebration of Local Authors** on September 22, where we'll spotlight talented local authors. Additionally, join us for a **gardening workshop** with California-based plant shop owner Lana Williams and discover **special events** hosted at our local branches, including Terry Library, Fletcher Library, Williams Library, Thompson Library, and Nixon Library. To cap it all off, we will conclude this year's Festival with a **fundraiser** featuring beloved talents Ann Patchett and Robin Preiss Glasser.

We hope every reader will find something that inspires them at this year's Festival, which showcases three **Pulitzer Prize winners**: Toluse Olorunnipa (Sept. 23.), Isabel Wilkerson (Sept. 25), and Ilyon Woo (Sept. 28). Other featured presenters include a shark scientist, distinguished history professors, talented cookbook authors, a National Book Award-winning graphic novelist, and many more. You'll hear fascinating stories about Willie Nelson, learn how to be a better friend, get lost in fantasy realms, and perhaps even master the art of making Praisesong biscuits. From author talks on education reform to deep dives on compelling historical figures, from romance panels to conversations with suspense novelists, the roster offers a fascinating mix of programs.

For families, Sunday's **Little Readers Rock** promises to be a highlight, featuring outdoor games, crafts, snacks, and giveaways that young readers will love – including an opportunity to meet author/illustrator Vanessa Brantley-Newton, whose artwork will also be on view in an exhibition at Hearne Fine Art.

The Six Bridges Book Festival would not be possible without the collective effort of many at our library and in our community. To our sponsors, thank you for your generous support of this program. To our incredible volunteers, from the Talent Committee to the WITS team to the panel moderators to the Festival guides, we appreciate your dedication and countless hours of hard work. To the CALS staff, you make magic happen every year, and we are grateful. To the authors, thank you for sharing your stories and making this event so special. And finally, to you, our attendees: Your passion for the Fest over the past twenty-one years is what makes it unique and so much fun. Here's to another fantastic year of celebrating literature.

Happy reading,  
Drew Herget  
2024 Six Bridges Book Festival Coordinator

For virtual and in-person sessions, please register at [SixBridgesBookFestival.org](https://SixBridgesBookFestival.org).

# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

## A Celebration of Local Authors

2-4:30 PM | Terry Library

The Six Bridges Book Festival is proud to host dozens of visiting writers. We also celebrate the community of writers based in Central Arkansas. Join us for readings and signings from local authors including **Frank Thurmond**, **Melissa Clark Bacon**, **Steve Rousseau**, **T.L. Simpson**, **Jason Pederson**, **Jennifer Case**, **Maria Hoskins**, and **Shamim Okolloh**.

## Manisha Sinha

*The Rise and Fall of the Second American Republic: Reconstruction, 1860–1920*

6:30 PM | Virtual



Award-winning author **Manisha Sinha** is the James L. and Shirley A. Draper Chair in American History at the University of Connecticut and the president-elect of the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic. *The Rise and Fall of the Second American Republic: Reconstruction, 1860–1920* gives a startlingly original account that expands our view beyond the accepted temporal and spatial bounds of Reconstruction.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

## Danielle Bayard Jackson

*Fighting for Our Friendships: The Science and Art of Conflict and Connection in Women's Relationships*

5:30 PM | Fletcher Library and Virtual



CALS Community Engagement Coordinator **Jessica McDaniel** invites you to mingle with friends old and new, enjoy festive refreshments, and learn from friendship coach and educator **Danielle Bayard Jackson**, author of *Fighting for Our Friendships: The Science and Art of Conflict and Connection in Women's Relationships*. Jackson will be speaking virtually. Audience members may choose to attend this program in person at John Gould Fletcher Library or may register to participate via Zoom.

Jackson is a friendship educator who studies what the research has to say about women's cooperation, communication, and conflict. *Fighting for Our Friendships* uses tangible strategies and technical insights to equip women to enjoy more satisfaction in their platonic relationships with other women.

## Kevin Brockmeier

*The Ghost Variations: One Hundred Stories*

5:30 PM | Ron Robinson Theater



2024 marks the twenty-first Six Bridges Book Festival and also **Kevin Brockmeier's** twenty-first appearance on the roster. This year, he will be reading an essay about animals and literature from a collection of essays-in-progress, then chatting with moderator **Steve Straessle**, taking questions, and signing books.

Kevin Brockmeier, an award-winning novelist and short-story writer who has been called one of America's

best practitioners of fabulist fiction, has participated in the Six Bridges Book Festival each year since its inception. Brockmeier's most recent book is *The Ghost Variations: One Hundred Stories*, a collection of very short flash fiction pieces addressing themes of souls, haunting, ghostliness, and the afterlife.

## Banned Books Week Featured Program

### Toluse Olorunnipa

*His Name Is George Floyd*

7 PM | Ron Robinson Theater



The mission of Banned Books Week (September 22-28, 2024) is to highlight "the value of free and open access to information." The Central Arkansas Library System's 2024 featured Banned Books Week speaker is **Toluse Olorunnipa**, who is White House Bureau Chief of the *Washington Post*. Winner of the 2023 Pulitzer Prize in General Nonfiction for his book *His Name Is George Floyd: One Man's Life and the Struggle for Racial Justice*, co-written

with **Robert Samuels**, Olorunnipa will reflect on his experience of censorship. A book signing will follow. **Moderator: CALS Executive Director Nate Coulter**. This program is part of the CALS Speaker Series and honors **Fred K. Darragh**.

## Peter Hoey and Maria Hoey | *In Perpetuity*

7 PM | Virtual



Trading back and forth from their studios in Northern California and New York, the brother-sister artist team of **Peter and Maria Hoey** draws for publications of all kinds. The Hoey's third graphic novel, the savvy noir thriller *In Perpetuity*, is a surreal smuggling operation across the boundaries of life and death, set in the land of the dead.

# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

## Creative Writing Workshop 1

6:30 | Thompson Library

Whether you're an aspiring writer or just interested in how the writing process works, you are invited for a writing workshop hosted by **Deb Moore**, programmer with the CALS Writing Circle.

## Creative Writing Workshop 2

6:30 PM | Nixon Library

**Alex Vernon**, the M.E. and Ima Graves Peace Distinguished Professor of English at Hendrix College, leads an introductory workshop on writing memoirs and personal essays. Vernon is the author of a memoir, an essay collection, and two biographical works. Much of his personal writing draws on his military days.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

## Ayana Gray | *Beasts of War*

4:30 PM | Williams Library



**Ayana Gray**, who now lives in Arkansas, is a *New York Times* bestselling novelist whose critically acclaimed works have been translated into eleven languages across five continents. *Beasts of War*, the epic conclusion to her bestselling series, is a heart-pounding fantasy adventure filled with mythos, monsters, and mortal heroes who are astoundingly human.

SOLD OUT

## Isabel Wilkerson

*The Warmth of Other Suns* and *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*

6 PM | Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts



Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site and its partners are proud to announce a special event featuring Pulitzer Prize-winning and *New York Times* bestselling author **Isabel Wilkerson** as part of the 67th-anniversary commemoration of the desegregation of Little Rock Central High School. Tickets are free but require advance registration through the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts' website due to limited seating.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

## Regina Porter | *The Rich People Have Gone Away*

Noon | Virtual



**Regina Porter**, a graduate of the MFA fiction program at the Iowa Writers' Workshop, is an award-winning playwright and the author of *The Travelers*, which was a finalist for the PEN/Hemingway Award for Debut Novel and longlisted for the Orwell Political Fiction Prize. A novel set in Brooklyn in 2020 against the pulse of an ever-changing city, *The Rich People Have Gone Away* connects the lives of ordinary New Yorkers to tell a powerful story of hope, love, and inequity in our times.

## Vanessa Brantley-Newton

*Shake It Off!* (Art Reception)

5 PM | Hearne Fine Art



This reception celebrates the opening of **Vanessa Brantley-Newton's** exhibition, *JUST LIKE ME! Dolls, Drawings, Digital Illustrations & Prints*. The exhibition runs through October 19, 2024.

Sponsored by Hearne Fine Art/Pyramid Art, Books & Custom Framing.

**Brantley-Newton will appear at Little Readers Rock at Children's Library on Sunday, Sept. 29, at 3 PM.**

Vanessa Brantley-Newton, a *New York Times* bestselling illustrator,

is the author-illustrator of several critically acclaimed picture books. Born during the civil rights movement, she learned the importance of acceptance and empowerment in shaping a young person's life. In *Shake It Off!*, meet a sweet, curious little goat who loves to sing and climb on everything. When she falls in a well, it seems that she is doomed—until she takes advantage of her precarious predicament to win the day!

Sponsored by Hearne Fine Art/Pyramid Art, Books & Custom Framing

This program is presented in partnership with the City of Little Rock, Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts, Jefferson National Parks Association, and the Central Arkansas Library System.

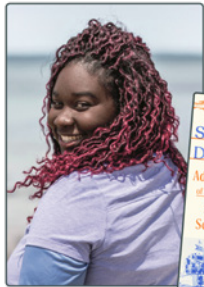
Isabel Wilkerson is a trailblazing journalist and author whose work has earned her numerous accolades, including the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award. She is best known for her books *The Warmth of Other Suns* and *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*, both of which have garnered widespread acclaim and have been recognized as significant contributions to understanding America's social history. For more information on Isabel Wilkerson, please visit [www.prhspk.com](http://www.prhspk.com).

Presented by Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site

**Jasmin Graham** | *Sharks Don't Sink*

**Carrie Sun** | *Private Equity: A Memoir*

6 PM | Ron Robinson Theater



**Jasmin Graham** is a marine biologist in the field of elasmobranch ecology and evolution, specializing in smalltooth sawfish and hammerhead sharks. She is the co-founder of Minorities in Shark Sciences (MISS), which fosters greater diversity in marine science. The riveting, uplifting memoir *Sharks Don't Sink* is the story of a young Black scientist's challenging journey to flourish outside the traditional confines of academia, inspired by her innate connection to nature's most misunderstood animal—the shark.



**Carrie Sun**, who was born in China and raised in Michigan but now lives in Jersey City, holds an MFA in creative writing from the New School. The debut memoir *Private Equity* offers a searing examination of our relationship to work, illuminating the struggle for balance in a world of extremes: efficiency and excess, status and aspiration, power and fortune.

Sponsored by Dr. Elizabeth Fletcher Dishong Charitable Trust

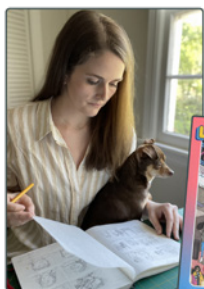
**Sally Nixon**

*Let's Go to the Mall: An '80s Seek-and-Find*

**Nate Powell**

*Lies My Teacher Told Me: A Graphic Adaptation / Fall Through*

7:30 PM | Ron Robinson Theater



**Sally Nixon**, who lives in Little Rock, is an illustrator and the author of *Houseplants and Hot Sauce: A Seek-and-Find Book for Grown-Ups*. In *Let's Go to the Mall: An '80s Seek-and-Find*, join Jess, her little sister, and her best friend for a nostalgic '80s weekend.

**Nate Powell**, who lives in Bloomington, Indiana, is a National Book Award-winning cartoonist and North Little Rock native whose work includes civil rights icon John Lewis's *March* trilogy. The full comics adaptation of James Loewen's influential *Lies My Teacher Told Me* recenters multiple issues at the core of today's crisis of democracy, from multigenerational misunderstandings of American history to the pitfalls of mythologizing our historical figures. The new graphic novel *Fall Through* is an interdimensional 1990s Southern punk drama following the changing relationships in an underground Arkansas band locked into an endless tour.



Sponsored by Arkansas Times

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27**

**Kickoff Party**

6:30PM | Ron Robinson Theater



The Six Bridges Book Festival Kickoff Party has all the essentials for a great time—delicious food from Cache, a signature drink from Rock Town Distillery, live music from Bijoux in the loft, and karaoke on the big screen! Plus, you'll get the special CALS touch with authors mingling and joining in the fun.

Sponsored by the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette and ProSmart Printing

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28**

**Jess H. Gutierrez**

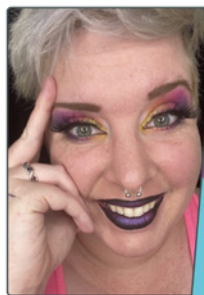
*A Product of Genetics (and Day Drinking)*

**Gwenna Laithland** | *Momma Cusses*

10 AM | UA Little Rock Downtown



**Jess H. Gutierrez**, who lives in Northwest Arkansas with her firefighter wife and their three wild kids, is a speaker and former journalist whose work has been published in numerous Arkansas newspapers and who has earned awards from the Arkansas Press Association. *A Product of Genetics (and Day Drinking)* is a frank, raucous, and bawdy collection of essays about coming of age through the oddest jobs, misadventures in queer love, and endearing parenting fails.



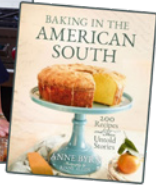
Parenting “unexpert” **Gwenna Laithland** was born and raised in Oklahoma, where she got her start as a writer at the age of eighteen. Accessible, digestible, and rooted in reality, debut book *Momma Cusses* helps readers with navigating family dynamics and cultivating emotional resilience for adults, children, and everyone in between.

# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

## Anne Byrn

*Baking in the American South* | Cooking Workshop

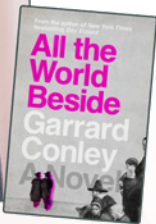
10 AM | Williams Library



Anne Byrn is a *New York Times* bestselling food writer and cookbook author. She writes the weekly newsletter *Between the Layers*, one of the top 20 food and drink newsletters worldwide on Substack. In *Baking in the American South: 200 Recipes and Their Untold Stories (A Definitive Guide to Southern Baking)*, witness the rise of Southern baking from the humble, make-do recipes of our ancestors to its place as one of the world's richest culinary traditions.

## Garrard Conley | *All the World Beside*

10 AM | Rock It! Lab



Garrard Conley is the *New York Times* bestselling author of the memoir *Boy Erased*, as well as the creator and co-producer of the podcast *UnErased: The History of Conversion Therapy in America*. Set during the turbulent historical upheavals that shaped America's destiny and following in the tradition of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, the novel *All the World Beside* reveals the very human lives just beneath the surface of dogmatic belief.

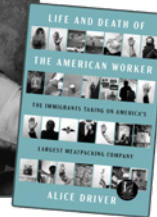
## Alice Driver

*Life and Death of the American Worker: The Immigrants Taking on America's Largest Meatpacking Company*

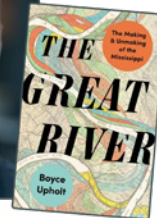
## Boyce Upholt

*The Great River: The Making and Unmaking of the Mississippi*

10 AM | Ron Robinson Theater



Alice Driver is a James Beard Award-winning writer and translator from the Ozark Mountains in Arkansas. The explosive exposé *Life and Death of the American Worker: The Immigrants Taking on America's Largest Meatpacking Company* covers over a decade in the lives of Tyson workers across several plants in Arkansas, offering an inspiring tale of the sacrifice and resilience of the immigrants who prepare our food.



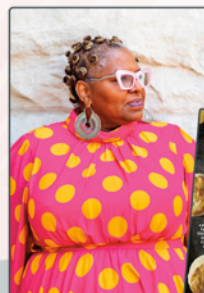
Boyce Upholt is a journalist and essayist whose writing has appeared in the *Atlantic*, *National Geographic*, the *Oxford American*, and *Virginia Quarterly Review*, among other publications. *The Great River: The Making and Unmaking of the Mississippi* is a sweeping history that tells the story of the Mississippi River—and the centuries of human meddling that have transformed both it and America.

Sponsored by Little Rock Public Radio

## Crystal Wilkinson

*Praisesong for the Kitchen Ghosts: Stories and Recipes from Five Generations of Black Country Cooks* | Cooking Workshop

11:30 AM | Williams Library



Crystal Wilkinson, Kentucky's Poet Laureate from 2021 to 2023, is the award-winning author of *Perfect Black*; *The Birds of Opulence*; *Water Street*; and *Blackberries, Blackberries*. She is the recipient of an NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Poetry, an O. Henry Prize, a USA Artists Fellowship, and an Ernest J. Gaines Prize for Literary Excellence. *Praisesong for the Kitchen Ghosts: Stories and Recipes from Five Generations of*

*Black Country Cooks* is a lyrical culinary journey that explores the hidden legacy of Black Appalachians, through powerful storytelling alongside nearly forty comforting recipes.



## Susie Dumond | *Looking for a Sign*

## Myah Ariel | *When I Think of You*

11:30 AM | UA Little Rock Downtown



Queer novelist **Susie Dumond**, who is originally from Little Rock, is a senior contributor at Book Riot and a bookseller at Loyalty Bookstore.

*Looking for a Sign* is a contemporary rom-com novel about a newly single queer woman who moves to New Orleans and tries to find her most compatible match by going on a date with someone of each of the twelve astrological signs.



**Myah Ariel's** love of movies led her from Arkansas to NYC, where she has worked across multiple roles in film, entertainment, nonprofits, and academia; as a medical

mom and a hopeless romantic, she is passionate about inclusive love stories. Debut novel *When I Think of You* is a sweeping second-chance contemporary romance in which an unexpected spark between two former flames may force them to choose between their dreams and each other.

Sponsored by CALS Used Book Sale

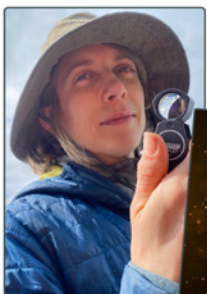
## Jedediah Berry | *The Naming Song*

## Debbie Urbanski | *After World*

11:30 AM | Rock It! Lab



**Jedediah Berry** is the author of three novels and a story in cards. He and his partner, writer Emily Houk, run Ninepin Press, an independent publisher of fiction, poetry, and games in unusual shapes. In Berry's second novel, *The Naming Song*, an unnamed courier of the Names Committee is accompanied by a patchwork ghost, a fretful monster, and a nameless animal who prowls the shadows while she searches for the truth of her past.



**Debbie Urbanski's** stories and essays have been published in *The Best American Science Fiction and Fantasy*, *The Best American Experimental Writing*, and elsewhere. In 2019, she received a Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers' Award for emerging women writers of exceptional promise. In the novel *After World*, humans have gone extinct to save the planet, and an AI storyworker is tasked with telling the story of Sen Anon, the last human on Earth.

## Samuel G. Freedman

## *Into the Bright Sunshine: Young Hubert Humphrey and the Fight for Civil Rights*

## Randall Woods

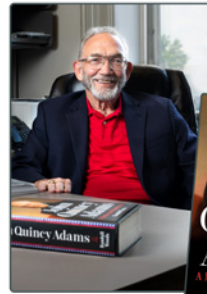
## *John Quincy Adams: A Man for the Whole People*

11:30 AM | Ron Robinson Theater



**Samuel G. Freedman** is an award-winning author, journalist, and educator who is the author of ten acclaimed books. Freedman is a professor at Columbia Journalism School and a former columnist for the *New York Times*. *Into the Bright Sunshine: Young Hubert Humphrey and the Fight for Civil Rights* illuminates the early portion of Humphrey's career and recounts the vital civil rights efforts of the 1940s, many of them inspired by the sacrifices of Black GIs who fought

for what they called "Double V"—victory over fascism abroad and then Jim Crow at home.



**Randall Woods** is Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Arkansas. He teaches American political and diplomatic history, and is the author of *Fulbright: A Biography*, *LBJ: Architect of American Ambition*, and *Shadow Warrior: William E. Colby and the CIA*. *John Quincy Adams: A Man for*

*the Whole People* chronicles the life and times of America's greatest secretary of state, the sixth president of the United States, and one of the most formidable orators of his day.

Sponsored by John David Coulter Memorial Fund and the Clinton Presidential Center

## Lana Williams

## *The Container Garden Recipe Book* Gardening Workshop

1 PM | UA Little Rock Downtown



**Lana Williams** is the owner of the Tender Gardener, a plant shop and design company that opened in 2020 in Oakland, California. She leads local workshops on container gardening, plant care basics, repotting, plant design principles, wreath making, and flower arranging. *The Container Garden Recipe Book* is a step-by-step guide to creating container gardens with foundational information on potting techniques, plant care, and choosing the right plants and containers.

Sponsored by At Home in Arkansas

# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

**Phyllis R. Dixon** | *A Taste for More*  
**Jen Fawkes** | *Daughters of Chaos*  
**Margot Livesey** | *The Road from Belhaven*  
**1 PM | Rock It! Lab**



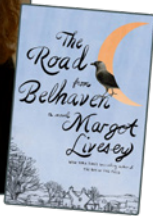
**Phyllis R. Dixon** is the author of the novels *Forty Acres*, *Down Home Blues*, and *Intermission*. In her new novel *A Taste for More*, a breathtaking saga spanning the Jim Crow South in rural midcentury Mississippi through the transformative 1970s, a single mother and culinary genius builds an unprecedented empire. But the one dream she can't stop chasing may cost her everything.



Little Rock resident **Jen Fawkes** is the author of *Mannequin and Wife*, a 2020 Shirley Jackson Award Nominee, Foreword INDIES gold medalist, and winner of the 2023 Phillip H. McMath Book Award. The queer feminist fantasy *Daughters of Chaos* is an epic, genre-bending historical novel about a Union spy in Civil War-era Nashville who discovers a secret society of “public women” spanning millennia.



Author of nine novels, **Margot Livesey** grew up in the Scottish Highlands and has taught in several writing programs. *The Road from Belhaven* follows Lizzie Craig, who is growing up in the care of her grandparents on Belhaven Farm in 1880s Scotland. She discovers that she can see into the future—but she cannot choose what she sees, and she can never change it.

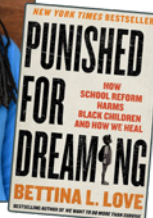


Sponsored by University of Arkansas at Little Rock School of Literary and Performing Arts

**Bettina L. Love** | *Punished for Dreaming*  
**1 PM | Ron Robinson Theater**



Award-winning author **Bettina L. Love**, who wrote the bestselling *We Want to Do More than Survive*, holds the esteemed William F. Russell Professorship at Teachers College, Columbia University and was recognized by the Kennedy Center in 2022 as one of the Next 50 Leaders dedicated to fostering inspiration, inclusivity, and compassion. In the *New York Times* bestseller *Punished for Dreaming: How School Reform Harms Black Children and How We Heal*, Love serves up a blistering account of four decades of educational reform through the lens of the people who lived it.



Sponsored by Rebsamen Fund

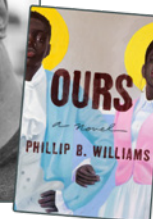
**John Vercher** | *Devil Is Fine*  
**Phillip B. Williams** | *Ours*  
**2:30 PM | Rock It! Lab**



**John Vercher**, who lives in the Philadelphia region, is an assistant teaching professor in the Department of English and Philosophy at Drexel University and has written three novels. *Devil Is Fine* is a profoundly moving novel about a struggling biracial writer forced to confront a dark family history while simultaneously reeling from the sudden death of his son.



Chicago native **Phillip B. Williams** is the author two full-length poetry collections and serves as a faculty member at the New York University and Randolph College MFA programs. An ingenious, sweeping, and much anticipated debut novel, *Ours* introduces readers to an enigmatic woman named Saint, a fearsome conjuror who, in the 1830s, annihilates plantations all over Arkansas to rescue the people enslaved there.



Sponsored by Oxford American

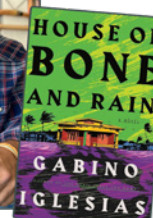
**Eli Cranor** | *Broiler*  
**Gabino Iglesias** | *House of Bone and Rain*  
**2:30 PM | Ron Robinson Theater**



Nationally bestselling, Edgar Award-winning author **Eli Cranor** lives and writes from the banks of Lake Dardanelle in Russellville, where he is the writer in residence at Arkansas Tech University. In the new thriller *Broiler*, the troubles of two desperate families—one white, one Mexican American—converge in the ruthless underworld of an Arkansas chicken processing plant.



An award-winning novelist, journalist, professor, and literary critic living in Austin, Texas, **Gabino Iglesias** is the horror columnist for the *New York Times Book Review*. In *House of Bone and Rain*, a Latinx *Stand by Me* with a haunted, obsidianly dark heart, five childhood friends—now teenagers—take advantage of the chaos and darkness a hurricane brings to Puerto Rico to seek vengeance after the mother of one of the young men is murdered.



Sponsored by CALS Foundation

## Elliott West

*Continental Reckoning: The American West in the Age of Expansion*

2:30 PM | UA Little Rock Downtown



**Elliott West**, Alumni Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Arkansas, is a specialist in the social and environmental history of the American West and of western Native peoples. *Continental Reckoning: The American West in the Age of Expansion* describes the birth of the place we call the American West, roughly a third of the contiguous states, between our expansion to the Pacific in the 1840s to around 1880.

Sponsored by CALS Foundation

## Marcela Fuentes | *Malas*

**Santiago Jose Sanchez | *Hombrecito***

4 PM | Rock It! Lab



**Marcela Fuentes**, who was born and raised in Del Rio, Texas, is a Pushcart Prize-winning fiction writer and essayist. She is a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop and was the 2016-2017 James C. McCreight Fiction Fellow at the Wisconsin Institute for Creative Writing. The debut novel *Malas* follows one family living on the Texas-Mexico border and a curse that reverberates across generations.



**Santiago Jose Sanchez**, a Grinnell College assistant professor of English and a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, is a queer Colombian American writer. They are the recipient of a Truman Capote Fellowship from the University of Iowa and an Emerging LGBTQ Voices Fellowship from Lambda Literary. A queer coming-of-age story, *Hombrecito* reimagines the American immigrant narrative for

a new generation, following a boy whose mother takes him and his brother from Colombia to America, leaving their absent father behind but essentially disappearing herself once they get to Miami.

## Brian Fairbanks

*Willie, Waylon, and the Boys: How Nashville Outsiders Changed Country Music Forever*

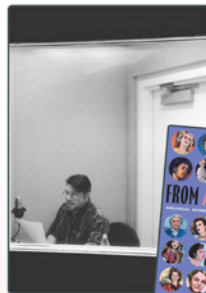
## Stephen Koch

*From Almeda to Zilphia: Arkansas Women Who Transformed American Popular Song (illustrated by Katherine Strause)*

4 PM | Ron Robinson Theater



**Brian Fairbanks** worked as an investigative reporter at Gawker and the *Consumerist* and has written for the *Guardian* and many more outlets. *Willie, Waylon, and the Boys: How Nashville Outsiders Changed Country Music Forever* is the tragic and inspiring story of the leaders of outlaw country and their influence on today's alt-country and Americana superstars.



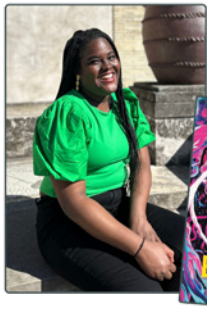
**Stephen Koch**, host of *Arkansongs* on public radio, is a musician, author, cartoonist, and award-winning journalist in both broadcast media and print. Illustrator Katherine Strause is retired chair of the art department and professor of painting at Henderson State University. *From Almeda to Zilphia: Arkansas Women Who Transformed American Popular Song* profiles thirty artists who have impacted music worldwide and spread their influence in ways we're still discovering.

Sponsored by ESSE Museum & Store

# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

## Kamilah Cole | *So Let Them Burn*

4 PM | UA Little Rock Downtown



A graduate of New York University, **Kamilah Cole** worked as a writer and entertainment editor at *Bustle* for four years, and her nonfiction work has appeared in *Marie Claire* and *Seventeen*. Whip-smart and immersive, *So Let Them Burn* is a Jamaican-inspired fantasy novel that follows a goddess-blessed heroine who's forced to choose between saving her sister or protecting her homeland.

## Ilyon Woo

### *Master Slave Husband Wife: An Epic Journey from Slavery to Freedom*

5:30 PM | Ron Robinson Theater



**Ilyon Woo** is a Pulitzer Prize-winning, *New York Times* bestselling author whose writing has appeared in the *Boston Globe*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Time Magazine*, and the *New York Times* and who has received support for her research from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Antiquarian Society. *Master Slave Husband Wife: An Epic Journey from Slavery to Freedom*, one of the

*New York Times*'s "10 Best Books of 2023" and *People Magazine*'s "Top Ten Books of 2023," is the true story of William and Ellen Craft, a couple who escaped slavery through daring, determination, and disguise, with Ellen passing as a wealthy, disabled white man and William posing as "his" slave.

Sponsored by the Brown Chair in English Literacy at the University of Arkansas and the Community Literacies Collaboratory

## Writers in the Schools (WITS) Initiative

Made possible by Arkansas Arts Council; CALS Youth Programming; Riggs Benevolent Fund; Union Pacific; and Wright, Lindsey & Jennings LLP.

The Writers in the Schools (WITS) program is a key outreach initiative of the Six Bridges Book Festival. Presenting authors are invited to visit area schools to talk with students about the writing process and their work. Thanks to our generous WITS sponsors, students receive free books for their home libraries.

This initiative transcends the confines of traditional classrooms, making the magic of storytelling accessible to young minds.

This year's participating authors include **Debbie Urbanski, Phillip B. Williams, Santiago Jose Sanchez, Robin Preiss Glasser, Jen Fawkes, Alice Driver, Eli Cranor, Jasmin Graham, Carrie Sun, Vanessa Brantley-Newton, Lana Williams, Sally Nixon, Nate Powell, Kamilah Cole, Kevin Brockmeier, Myah Ariel, Marcela Fuentes, Stephen Koch, Brian Fairbanks, Margot Livesey, Gwenna Laithland.**

WITS is about more than just teaching writing skills. Students encounter diverse literary genres, styles, and voices, witnessing the creative process up close. Workshops and interactions with authors encourage them to explore their own creativity, fostering a lifelong love for writing and literature. The program instills confidence and self-expression, empowering students to share their unique stories with the world. It champions diversity and celebrates the transformative power of words.

Writers are often inspired by the imagination and passion of the young people they meet in Central Arkansas and report that their WITS visit was a highlight of their time in our community.

## SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

### Little Readers Rock

1-4 PM | Children's Library

Outdoor fair featuring games, inflatables, crafts, roving characters, face painting, music, and special appearances. *The outdoor fair is sponsored by Roby Brock.*

Indoor book giveaways, crafts, snacks, and activities are presented by the Junior League of Little Rock.

#### Featured sessions:

1 PM | **If You Give a Mouse a Cookie**

Mouse- and cookie-themed games and activities

1:30 PM | **Bead Art Reading Journals with Vicente Yañez**

Artist **Vicente Yañez** will lead a workshop guiding children through the process of creating a reading journal with a beaded cover. The bead art has roots in the Wixárika/Huichol people from Mexico. This is a traditional folk art that is characterized for the vibrancy of colors and intricacy of the designs, which are made from symbols that represent spiritual and natural elements of their culture.

Vicente Yañez is a Mexican artist and systems engineer who lives in Springdale, AR. Cultural integration can be found at the heart of his artwork which is deeply influenced by his heritage. He loves to showcase aspects of Mexican history and culture that may not be as known in the US but which were present for him growing up, aiming to discover shared opportunities to build better communities for everyone.

2 PM | **Sleepy the Goodnight Buddy**

Make your own goodnight buddy.

2:30 PM | **Camping-Themed Snacks**

3 PM | **Shake It Off!**

Talk with author and illustrator **Vanessa Brantley-Newton** (see page 6).

3:30 PM | **Dragons!**

Learn more about the Reading Dragons program and make a fire-breathing craft!

### Pie Contest

2-4 PM | The Root Café



To participate in the **Traditional Pie Bake-Off and Recipe Swap Competition**, entrants should be at The Root Café at 1:45 p.m. with their best pie and copies of the recipe. Monetary and other prizes will be awarded, and the restaurant will be open during the event as well. Pie Contest guest judges: Kelli Marks, Alice Driver, Kat Robinson, and Chris Jones. *Sponsored by The Root Café.*

## An Evening with Ann Patchett and Robin Preiss Glasser: A Special Fundraising Event

5-8:30 PM | Ron Robinson Theater



On the final evening of the 2024 Fest, **Ann Patchett**, the bestselling novelist and author of essays and children's books, will be joined by **Robin Preiss Glasser**, illustrator of the Fancy Nancy series, for a conversation about creativity and collaboration. Patchett and Glasser have collaborated on several picture books, including most recently, *The Verts: A Story of Introverts and Extroverts*.



This ticketed event will raise critical funding so the Fest can continue providing free public events to the Central Arkansas community. Festive drinks and bites will be included in the ticket price, and Patchett and Glasser will be available to sign books. We are grateful to Ann Patchett and Robin Preiss Glasser for donating their time so that all proceeds raised from this event will directly support Festival programming.

### Event Schedule:

5-6:30 PM | **Cocktail hour with heavy hors d'oeuvres**

6:30-7:30 PM | **Presentation with Ann Patchett and Robin Preiss Glasser**

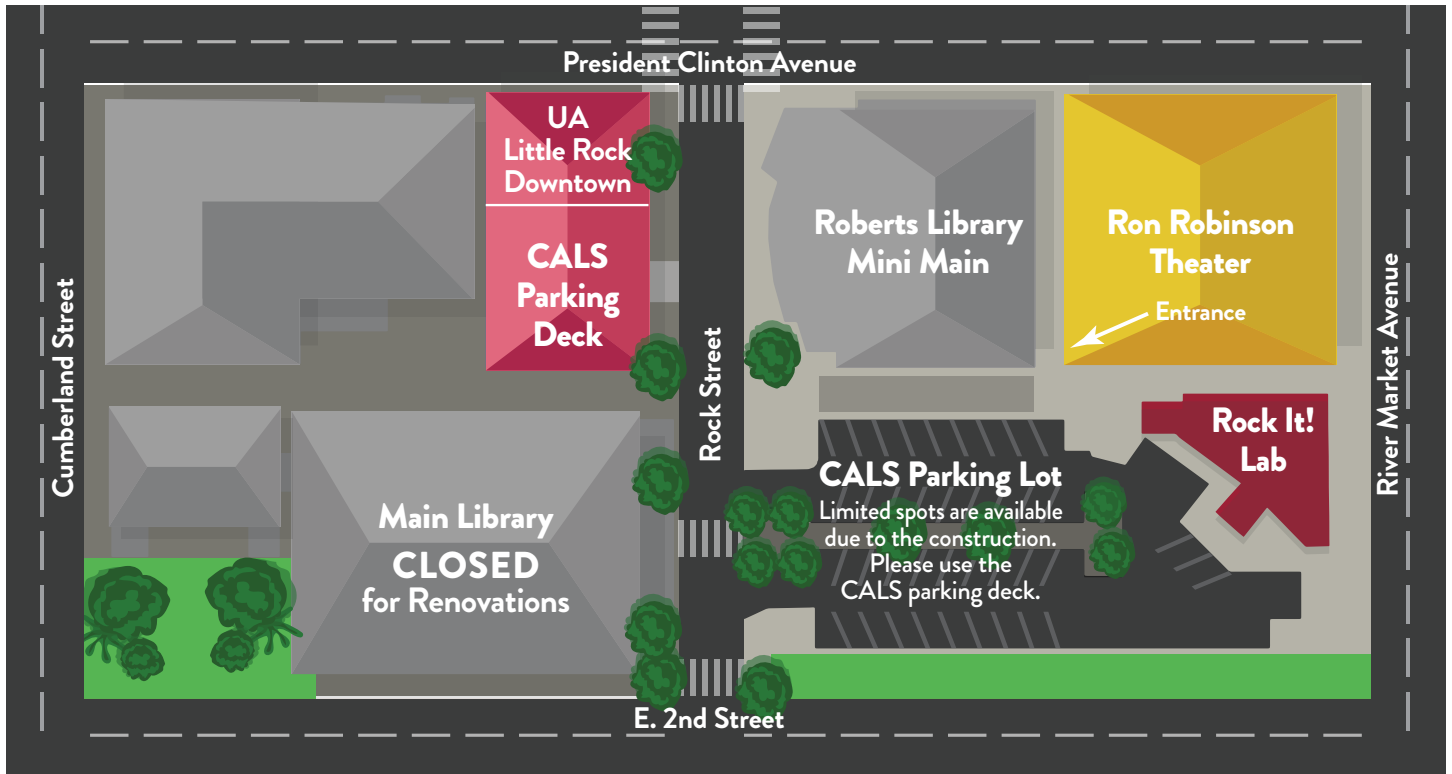
7:30-8:30 PM | **Book signing**

**Host Committee:** Marian and Craig Berry, Best Ever Book Club, Robin and Susan Borné, Lynne and Dr. Paul Phillips, Read Between the Wines Book Club, "Who Picked This Book?" Book Club

**Tickets to this event are limited and may be purchased at [bit.ly/cals\\_patchett\\_glasser](https://bit.ly/cals_patchett_glasser)**

*If you have already purchased tickets to this event, your name will be listed at check-in on September 29. Please contact [etborne@cals.org](mailto:etborne@cals.org) if you have questions about this event.*

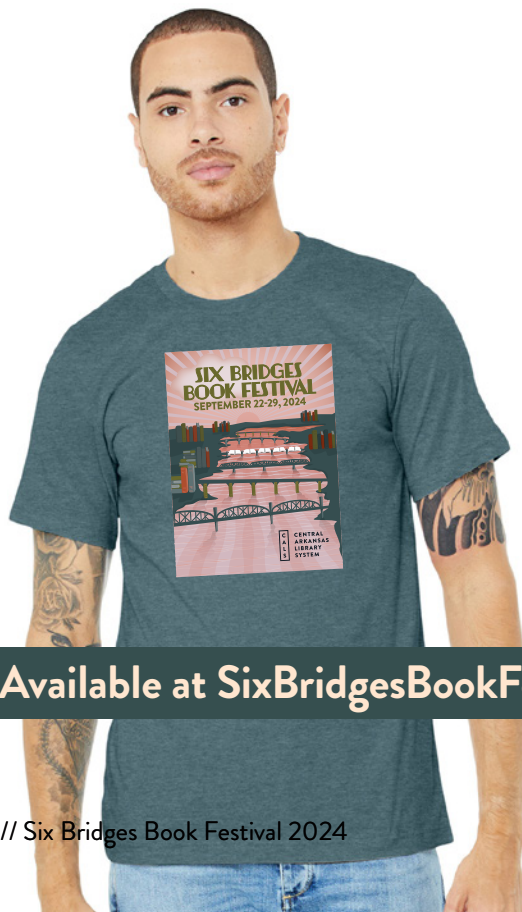
# FEST VENUES ON LIBRARY SQUARE



## Official Booksellers of the 2024 Six Bridges Book Festival

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ART, BOOKS & CUSTOM FRAMING  
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## 2024 Six Bridges Book Festival

T-shirt \$20 or  
Canvas Tote Bag \$15

Available at [SixBridgesBookFestival.org](https://SixBridgesBookFestival.org) and in person at Ron Robinson Theater.

# SPECIAL THANKS

## 2024 Six Bridges Book Festival Chairperson: Joyce Elliott

*“Books have an incredible power to unite us, to connect our diverse experiences, and to ignite our imaginations. The Six Bridges Book Festival is more than a gathering of authors and readers; it’s a celebration of our shared love for stories and the communities they create.”*

*—Senator Elliott*

Senator Joyce Elliott has been a long-time friend of the Central Arkansas Library System. We were honored when she accepted our invitation to serve as the chairperson for the 2024 Six Bridges Book Festival. Her dedication to education, unwavering support for the right to read, and commitment to bettering our community continue to inspire us. Many in our community are aware that in June 2024, Senator Elliott experienced a stroke. We wish her a speedy and full recovery.

*—CALs Executive Leadership*

**2024 Six Bridges Book Festival Coordinator:** Drew Herget

**Book Sales:** Pyramid Art, Books & Custom Framing and WordsWorth Books

**Executive Director:** Nate Coulter

**Director of Finance:** Jo Spencer

**Director of Programming:** Ellen Samples

**Director of Public Service:** Kate Matthews

**Director of Communications:** Tameka Lee

**Director of Development:** Eliza Borné

**Youth Services Coordinator:** Amanda Orgel

**Head of Adult Programming:** Mark Christ

**Zoom Squad Commander:** Nathan Smith

**Webmaster:** Jeff Matika

**Volunteer Coordinator:** Polly Deems

**WITS Chair:** Jennifer White

**Fest Guides Chairs:** Betsy Johnson, Ginger Young

**Little Readers Rock Chair:** Corrie Reaves

**Outdoor Fair:** Roby Brock

**Editor:** Ali Welky

**Program Graphic Designer:** Robin Stauffer

**Social Media:** Stewart Fuell

**Writer:** Kelli Marks

**Marketing:** Maria Aguilar, Brant Collins, LaReina Fuentes-Cook, Jessica McDaniel

**Fundraising:** Linda Ellis, Hannah Saulters, Lilyan Kauffman

**Special thanks to the CALS staff members who hosted Festival programs in their spaces:** Joey Cole (Ron Robinson Theater); Leah Patterson (Rock It! Lab); Marilyn Cash (Thompson Library); April Hicks (Nixon Library); Latina Sheard (Williams Library); Elizabeth Wooley (Fletcher Library); Jennifer Cordell (Terry Library).

**Talent Committee:** Eliza Borné, Kevin Brockmeier, Jeffrey Condran, Thomas A. DeBlack, Garbo Hearne, Frederick McKindra, Stephanie Maxwell Newton, Susan Santa Cruz, Vaughn Scribner, Latina Sheard, Kandi West.



**Come check out the  
brand-new bookmobile,  
CALs Cruiser!**

**Saturday | Sept. 28 | 10AM-5PM  
downtown at Library Square**

# 2024 SIX BRIDGES BOOK FESTIVAL

# SPONSORS, PARTNERS, AND SUPPORTERS

## BROADWAY BRIDGE



**BROWN CHAIR  
IN ENGLISH LITERACY**

## PARTNERS



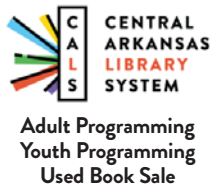
## MAIN STREET BRIDGE



## ROCK ISLAND BRIDGE



## JUNCTION BRIDGE



## BARING CROSS BRIDGE



**Six Bridges  
Permanent Fund**  
**John David Coulter  
Memorial Fund**



**Chris & Julie Keller**

**Susan Santa Cruz**

**Fred Ursery**

## I-30 BRIDGE

## ANN PATCHETT HOST COMMITTEE

**Marian and Craig Berry  
Best Ever Book Club**  
**Robin and Susan Borné**  
**Lynne and Dr. Paul Phillips**  
**Read Between the Wines Book Club**  
**“Who Picked This Book?” Book Club**

Support for the Six Bridges Book Festival is provided, in part, by the Arkansas Arts Council, an agency of the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism, and the National Endowment for the Arts. This project is also supported in part by a grant from HumanitiesAR and the National Endowment for the Humanities and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The Central Arkansas Library System gratefully acknowledges the support of the Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau; the Brown Chair in English Literacy at the University of Arkansas and the Community Literacies Collaboratory; the Rebsamen Fund; and the many other donors and partners who make this festival possible. The Junior League of Little Rock is a partner for the Little Readers Rock events.