

New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University announces opening night headliners, featuring The Atlantic, plus expanded culinary and musical offerings

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Chef Edgar "Dook" Chase IV shares a moment with an attendee while signing books at the 2024 New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University.

The [New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University](#) has unveiled an opening night lineup that promises to deliver dynamic conversations that will extend far beyond the stage.

In collaboration with *The Atlantic*, the festival's first two sessions on Thursday, March 27, will showcase an unprecedented gathering of journalistic luminaries, including *The Atlantic's* Editor-in-Chief Jeffrey Goldberg and staff writers, including Pulitzer Prize-winner Anne Applebaum, along with award-winning writers and bestselling authors McKay Coppins, Elaina Plott Calabro and Adam Serwer.

The night's grand finale promises to be a can't-miss conversation with Bryan Stevenson, author of *Just Mercy*, which recently released its 10th-anniversary edition. He is also the founder and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative. On Friday, March 28, *The Atlantic* will also present a discussion exploring the American idea through the lens of literature, led by *Atlantic* senior editor Vann R. Newkirk II and featuring author Sarah Broom, with additional panelists to be announced.

"*The Atlantic* is thrilled to return to the New Orleans Book Festival. We're bringing together some of our most acclaimed writers for a series of conversations that will unpack the future of democracy and the American idea," Goldberg said.

The fourth annual New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University will occur March 27-29 on Tulane's uptown campus. The festival is free and open to the public, and attendees can register on the festival [website](#). A schedule of events will be released in early March. The complete 2025 festival lineup can be [found here](#).

Additional authors, illustrators and panelists joining the festival lineup include Biruk Alemayehu, Jonathan Alter, Danielle Arceneaux, Carolyn Barber-Pierre, Dean Baquet, Marcelle Bienvenue, Keith Calhoun, Cebo Campbell, Edgar "Dook" Chase, IV, Maureen Dowd, Freddi Williams Evans, Katherine Fausset, Gabe Feldman, Tara Francolini, Rein Fertel, Sarah Gelman, Jeffrey Goldberg, Kathe Hambrick, Virginia Hanusik, Cherice Harrison-Nelson, Megan Holt, Sarah LaBrie, Dennis Lauscha, Oliver Luck, Cooper Manning, Amanda Maples, Serigne Mbaye, Chandra McCormick, Gen. Mark A. Milley, Tumelo Mosaka, Vann R. Newkirk II, Tamara Payne, Elaina Plott Calabro, Lawrence Powell, Joy-Ann Reid, Nicole Richie, Cristina Rivera Garza, Adam Sandel, Michael Sandel, Kim Scott, Ana Clara Silva, Katy Simpson Smith, Dan Stein, Jon Sumrall, Chris Thomas King, Doug Thornton, Darren Walker, Eric Waters, Michael White, Erika Witt, Joe Yonan and Renée Zuckerbrot.

"The New Orleans Book Festival is more than an event—it's a literary odyssey that celebrates the power of storytelling," said Walter Isaacson, festival co-chair and the Leonard A. Lauder Professor of American History and Values in Tulane's School of Liberal Arts. "We're crafting a transformative experience that bridges generations, disciplines and perspectives. From our youngest readers to our most seasoned scholars, we're creating vibrant discussions where

diverse voices converge, and imagination knows no boundaries. The written word becomes a catalyst for understanding, empathy and profound human connection.”

The popular culinary track returns and will feature four separate panels from a distinguished lineup of national and local chefs, restaurateurs and food critics including Biruk Alemayehu, Kevin Belton, Marcelle Bienvenue, Edgar “Dook” Chase, IV, Nina Compton, Eric Cook, Tara Francolini, Dwight Garner, E.J. Lagasse, Donald Link, Serigne Mbaye, Nini Nguyen, Alexander Smalls, Dan Stein, Julie Vaucresson and Joe Yonan.

Louisiana Music Hall of Fame member and New Orleans legendary rhythm and blues singer Deacon John will close out the festival with a musical celebration on Saturday afternoon in the Hyatt Regency Festival Tent from 4:45-6:15 p.m.

“Our 2025 lineup is an abundance of talent, featuring a diverse array of gifted and imaginative writers. We're thrilled to share this incredible group of authors with the New Orleans community and families across the state and the Gulf Coast region. Family Day, in particular, offers a fantastic mix of local and national award-winning authors whose stories will ignite imaginations and inspire a lifelong love of literature,” said festival co-chair Cheryl Landrieu.

Family Day at the Festival will occur from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 29, in the Avron B. Fogelman Arena in the Devlin Fieldhouse. Scholastic will return to the festival with K.A. Leigh and Derek Roberts, the Family Day favorite author/illustrator team of the beloved Brudders books for young readers. Mia Araujo, author of the upcoming *Afia in the Land of Wonders*, will join “Mystery, Magic, Myth and the Power of Imagination,” a special Family Day panel. To ensure all kids who attend Family Day can take the excitement of the festival home with them, Scholastic will be offering every child the opportunity to select up to three books of their choosing, free of charge, thanks to a generous donation from the children’s book company.

“We love to watch kids come up to the table and choose books they want to read and own and add to their home libraries,” says Judy Newman, Scholastic’s Chief Impact Officer. “It’s an exciting opportunity to bring home the message of Family Day at the Book Festival and make sure all kids who come have books they’ll be excited to read and own.”

The festival is free and open to the public thanks to the generous support of donors, media partners and friends of the festival. Current sponsors and partners for the New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University are available on the [festival website](#).

All events will take place on Tulane's uptown campus, including the Avron B. Fogelman Arena in the Devlin Fieldhouse, the Berger Family Lawn, Dixon Hall, the Goldring/Woldenberg Business Complex, the Lavin-Bernick Center for University Life, the Malkin Sacks Commons, McAlister Auditorium and the Navy ROTC Building.

For more information on the New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University, please visit ? bookfest.tulane.edu or follow us on [Facebook](#), [X](#) and [Instagram](#).

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