

“Southern Festival of Books Session Track Explores Democracy”

The 30th annual Southern Festival of Books: A Celebration of the Written Word features a timely track of sessions called “Democracy and the Informed Citizen.” The track welcomes authors and scholars from around the country who are experts on voting, public policy, democracy, and the media. Each session will feature readings and conversations, including audience Q and A, that encourage citizens to share their thoughts and concerns about democracy and the media.

“Democracy and the Informed Citizen” is supported by the Mellon Foundation.

Below is a list of sessions. All are free and open to the public, with no advance registration required. All sessions take place in the main Nashville Public Library (NPL).

Friday, Oct. 12

2:00-3:00 pm NPL Conference Room 1A

Can Democracy Work?: A Short History of a Radical Idea, from Ancient Athens to Our World

James Miller is a professor of politics and liberal studies at the New School for Social Research. He is the author of the critically acclaimed *Examined Lives: From Socrates to Nietzsche*; *Flowers in the Dustbin: The Rise of Rock and Roll, 1947–1977*; and *Democracy Is in the Streets: From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago*.

Saturday, Oct. 13

11:00am-12:30 pm NPL Conference Room 1B

Grand Divisions: Tennessean Podcast Recording

Mariah Cole is Director of Program Management for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation at Meharry Medical College. Mariah also serves as the Vice President of the Urban League Young Professionals of Middle Tennessee and is committed to the mission of enabling African-Americans to secure economic self-reliance, parity, power, and civil rights. She serves on the non-profit boards of Southern Word and Preston Taylor Ministries and is a member of Olive Branch church.

Joel Ebert covered politics in Illinois, South Dakota and West Virginia before coming to The Tennessean to report on the state’s General Assembly. In 2015, he helped provide daily coverage of the trial of former Massey Energy CEO Don Blankenship, who became the first chief executive of a major corporation convicted of a workplace safety crime. A graduate of the University of Illinois at Chicago, Ebert is a student of Chicago politics whose work has been cited by national media. He’s received awards from the press associations in South Dakota and West Virginia.

Jennifer Kavanagh is a senior political scientist at the RAND Corporation and associate director of the Strategy, Doctrine, and Resources Program in RAND's Arroyo Center. Her research focuses on U.S. political institutions, political communication, public opinion, and their implications for U.S. foreign and domestic policy. She also studies defense strategy and planning and military force posture. Kavanagh is a faculty member at the Pardee RAND Graduate School. Kavanagh graduated from Harvard University with a BA in Government and a minor in the Russian language. She completed her Ph.D. in Political Science and Public Policy at University of Michigan.

Arthur Lupia is the Hal R. Varian Collegiate Professor of Political Science at the University of Michigan. He serves on advisory boards for several science communication endeavors, including the Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education at the National Academy of Science and Climate Central. He is also Chair of the American Political Science Association Task Force on Improving Public Engagement.

Saturday, Oct. 13

1:30-2:30 pm NPL Conference Room 1B

Power, Politics & Promise: Public Policy Plays out in Democracy

Loka Ashwood is assistant professor in the department of agricultural economics and rural sociology at Auburn University. She is a former award-winning journalist whose work has been published in books and sociological journals.

Katie Cahill is Associate Director of the Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, director of the Leadership and Governance Program, and Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science. She has a Ph.D. in Political Science from Purdue University.

Saturday, Oct. 13

2:00-3:00 pm NPL Conference Room 1A

HATE: Why We Should Resist It with Free Speech, Not Censorship (Inalienable Rights)

Emily Siner is the news director at Nashville Public Radio and host of the *Movers & Thinkers*, an interview podcast featuring fascinating Nashvillians. Her enterprise reporting has won two regional Edward R. Murrow Awards, and she was named the Tennessee Associated Press Radio Journalist of the Year in 2016. She also reports stories about Tennessee for NPR and Marketplace. Emily launched Nashville Public Radio's first podcast in 2015 and has since helped the station develop a whole fleet of shows with live events. Before joining the news staff at WPLN, Emily worked in print and online journalism at the *Los Angeles Times* and NPR. She was born and raised in the Chicago area, so she's not intimidated by Nashville winters. Emily is a proud graduate of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Nadine Strossen is Professor of Constitutional Law at New York Law School and the first woman national President of the American Civil Liberties Union, where she served from 1991 through 2008. A frequent speaker on constitutional and civil liberties issues, her media appearances include *60 Minutes*, *CBS Sunday Morning*, *Today*, *Good Morning America*, *The Daily Show*, and other news programs on *CNN*, *C-SPAN*, *Fox*, *Al-Jazeera*, and in Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. Her op-eds have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Washington Times*, and *USA Today*, among others.

Saturday, Oct. 13

2:30-3:30 pm NPL Conference Room 1B

Beautiful Country Burn Again: Democracy, Rebellion, and Revolution

Ben Fountain was born in Chapel Hill and grew up in the tobacco country of eastern North Carolina. A former practicing attorney, he is the author of *Brief Encounters with Che Guevara*, which won the PEN/Hemingway Award and the Barnes & Noble Discover Award for Fiction, and the novel *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk*, winner of the National Book Critics' Circle Award and a finalist for the National Book Award. *Billy Lynn* was adapted into a feature film directed by three-time Oscar winner Ang Lee, and his work has been translated into over twenty languages. His series of essays published in *The Guardian* on the 2016 U.S. presidential election was subsequently nominated by the editors of *The Guardian* for the Pulitzer Prize in Commentary. He lives in Dallas, Texas with his wife of 32 years, Sharon Fountain.

Saturday Oct. 13

3:00-4:00 pm NPL Conference Room 1A

Voting in the Volunteer State

Eric Barnes is the author of two previous novels and has published more than forty short stories in *Prairie Schooner*, *North American Review*, the *Literary Review* and other publications. By day, he is a publisher of newspapers in Memphis, Knoxville, Nashville, and Chattanooga that cover business, politics, the arts, and more. On Fridays, he hosts a news talk show on his local PBS station. He lives in Memphis.

Charlane Oliver is Community Liaison and Community Staff person for Congressman Jim Cooper, and the Founder and Board President of of The Equity Alliance-a nonprofit organization focused on nonpartisan civic engagement in communities of color-and serves on the board of the Metro Nashville Emergency 911 Communications District Board, Purpose Preparatory Academy and the Urban Enterprise Group. She is a tnAchieves mentor and a member of the Public Relations Society of America, Nashville Women of Color in Communications, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Charlane graduated from Vanderbilt University with a B.S. in human and organizational development and holds a Master of Public Administration from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville.

Dawn Schluckebier worked in Washington DC as a Principal Associate at the National League of Cities on the Institute for Youth, Education, and Families' Economic Opportunity and Financial Empowerment team. She worked closely with city leaders and staff across the country to implement programs and projects designed to improve access to benefits (e.g. Medicaid and CHIP and federally funded out-of-school time meal programs) and financial empowerment for their children and families.

Saturday, Oct. 13

3:30-4:30 pm Artober Performing Arts Stage

Citizen Illegal

Jose Olivarez is the son of Mexican immigrants. He is a co-host of the podcast, *The Poetry Gods*. A winner of fellowships from Poets House, The Bronx Council On The Arts, The Poetry Foundation, and The Conversation Literary Festival, his work has been published in *The BreakBeat Poets* and elsewhere. He is the Marketing Manager at Young Chicago Authors.

SUNDAY, Oct. 14

1:00-2:00 pm, NPL Conference Room 1B

The Art and Science of Polling

John Geer is the Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Professor of Political Science and Dean of the College of Arts and Science at Vanderbilt University. Geer earned his PhD from Princeton University, securing his BA from Franklin and Marshall College. Geer has published five books and more than 20 articles on presidential politics and elections, and recently served as Editor of *The Journal of Politics* (2005-2009). His most recent book is *In Defense of Negativity: Attacks Ads in Presidential Campaigns* published by the University of Chicago Press, which won the Goldsmith Book prize from Harvard University. He has provided extensive commentary in the news media on politics, including live nation wide interviews for FOX, CNN, NBC, CBS, MSNBC, ABC, and NPR. Geer is currently working on a series of projects that looks at the news media's coverage of attack advertising and how negativity may help voters make better choices.

Marc Hetherington is the Raymond Dawson Professor of Political Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the author of three previous books, including *Authoritarianism and Polarization in American Politics* (co-authored with Jonathan Weiler) and *Why Washington Won't Work: Polarization, Political Trust, and the Governing Crisis* (with Thomas J. Rudolph), which won the Alexander George Award from the International Society of Political Psychology. Also winner of the Emerging Scholar Award from the Elections, Public Opinion, and Voting Behavior section of the American Political Science Association, he and his work have been widely cited in mainstream media, including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and elsewhere. He lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

SUNDAY, Oct. 14

3:00-4:00 pm NPL Conference Room 1A

The Power of We the People: Practicing Democracy and Balancing Power

Dana Nelson is Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Professor of English at Vanderbilt University. She is the author of *Bad for Democracy: How the Presidency Undermines the Power of the People* and *National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men*.

Alan Wiseman is Cornelius Vanderbilt Chair and Professor of Law at Vanderbilt University in Nashville. He is the author of *The Internet Economy: Access, Taxes, and Market Structure*. Prior to joining the faculty of Vanderbilt University, he served on the faculty of The Ohio State University, where he directed the undergraduate public policy minor in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. He has also been a visiting Associate Professor at Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management; and before entering the academy he served as a visiting economic scholar with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission.