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Virginia Festival of the Book Announces New Partnerships with National Book Foundation and the Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards

December 5, 2017—Charlottesville, Va.—A program of Virginia Foundation for the Humanities (VFH), the twenty-fourth annual Virginia Festival of the Book announced **two additional headlining programs** for the 2018 Festival, each a **unique partnership with a nationally acclaimed literary award**.

Working with the **National Book Foundation** (NBF), the Festival will present finalists and longlisted authors from the 2017 National Book Awards at a public program that will take place on **Saturday, March 24, 2018, at 8:00 PM** at The Paramount Theater. Titled “**In Pursuit of Truth: An Evening with the National Book Awards**” and moderated by NBF executive director Lisa Lucas, the program will feature the following authors:

- **Erica Armstrong Dunbar**, author of *Never Caught: The Washingtons’ Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge*, a finalist for the 2017 National Book Award in Nonfiction;
- **David Grann**, author of *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI*, a finalist for the 2017 National Book Award in Nonfiction; and
- **Kevin Young**, author of *Bunk: The Rise of Hoaxes, Humbug, Plagiarists, Phonies, Post-Facts, and Fake News*, a selection for the 2017 National Book Award in Nonfiction longlist

Tickets for this program cost \$17.50 (\$10 for students) and are now available to purchase at VaBook.org.

In an equally prestigious partnership, the Festival will present **2017 recipients of the Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards**, accompanied in conversation by Award jury member Rita Dove, who will share their writing and insights about **race and culture, with particular focus on the August 2017 events that took place in Charlottesville**. This conversation will take place at a public program on **Sunday, March 25, 2018, at 3:00 PM** at the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center. Titled “**Writing the American Story: Diverse Voices in Distinguished Books**,” the program will feature the following authors in a discussion of their work, reflections on obstacles to racial justice, and writing that helps make the American story a complete story:

- **Peter Ho Davies**, author of *The Fortunes* and recipient of the 2017 Chautauqua Prize
- **Tyehimba Jess**, author of *Olio* and recipient of the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry
- **Margot Lee Shetterly**, author of *Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race* and winner of the NAACP Image Award for Nonfiction

“Writing the American Story” is the **official closing program of the Festival**, and seeks to support and celebrate diversity while **working towards understanding the invasive and structural roots of racism**. **This program will be FREE and open to the public**. Following the discussion, speakers will welcome audience questions.

Virginia Festival of the Book director Jane Kulow says, “**Now, more than ever, it is of critical importance to amplify stories like these** and to celebrate the work of critically acclaimed writers whose work grapples with topics of race, identity, truth, equity, and America’s hidden pasts. We are honored to have the chance to launch partnerships with both the National Book Foundation and the Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards in order to do so.”

Tickets for other select Festival programs are available at VaBook.org. Additional details, speakers, and programs will be announced as they are confirmed.

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About the Speakers:

Peter Ho Davies, author of *The Welsh Girl*, was long-listed for the Booker Prize, and his most recent work, *The Fortunes* won The Anisfield-Wolf Award and the Chautauqua Prize. Born in Britain to Welsh and Chinese parents, Davies teaches at the University of Michigan.

Rita Dove is a former U.S. Poet Laureate (1993-1995) and recipient of the 1987 Pulitzer Prize in poetry. Her most recent poetry collections are *Collected Poems: 1974-2004* and *Sonata Mulattica*. She is Commonwealth Professor of English at the University of Virginia.

Erica Armstrong Dunbar, author of *Never Caught: The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave Ona Judge*, is the Charles and Mary Beard Professor of History at Rutgers University. She also serves as director of the Program in African American History at the Library Company of Philadelphia.

David Grann, author of *Killers of the Flower Moon*, is a staff writer at the *New Yorker* and the best-selling author of *The Lost City of Z*. He is also the author of *The Devil and Sherlock Holmes*. His work has garnered several honors for outstanding journalism, including a George Polk Award.

Tyehimba Jess is the author of *Olio*, which won the 2017 Pulitzer Prize, the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award, The Midland Society Author's Award in Poetry, and received an Outstanding Contribution to Publishing Citation from the Black Caucus of the American Library Association. His first collection, *Leadbelly*, was a winner of the 2004 National Poetry Series. The recipient of numerous fellowships, Jess is a professor of English at College of Staten Island.

Lisa Lucas is the executive director of the National Book Foundation. Prior to joining the Foundation, she served as the publisher of Guernica, director of education at the Tribeca Film Institute, and on the development team at Steppenwolf Theatre Company. Lucas also serves on the literary council of the Brooklyn Book Festival.

Margot Lee Shetterly, author of *Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Who Helped Win the Space Race*, grew up in Hampton, Va., where she knew many of the women in her book. She is an Alfred P. Sloan Foundation fellow and the recipient of a Virginia Foundation for the Humanities grant for her research on the history of women in computing.

Kevin Young, author of *Bunk: The Rise of Hoaxes, Humbug, Plagiarists, Phonies, Post-Facts, and Fake News*, is the author of a previous book of nonfiction, *The Grey Album*, and eleven books of poetry, including *Blue Lams* and *Jelly Roll*, both recognized (longlist and finalist, respectively) for the National Book Award. He is the director of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem and poetry editor for *The New Yorker*.

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About the National Book Foundation: The mission of the National Book Foundation and the National Book Awards is to celebrate the best of American literature, to expand its audience, and to enhance the cultural value of great writing in America. More than sixty years since its creation, the National Book Awards continues to recognize the best of American literature, raise the cultural appreciation of great writing, promote the enduring value of reading, and advance the careers of established and emerging writers. To learn more, visit NationalBook.org.

About the Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards: The Anisfield-Wolf Awards recognize books that have made important contributions to our understanding of racism and human diversity. For 83 years, the distinguished books earning Anisfield-Wolf prizes have opened and challenged our minds. Cleveland poet and philanthropist Edith Anisfield Wolf established the book awards in 1935, in honor of her father, John Anisfield, and husband, Eugene Wolf, to reflect her family's passion for social justice. Presented by the Cleveland Foundation, it remains the only American book prize focusing on works that address racism and diversity. To learn more, visit Anisfield-Wolf.org.

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About the Virginia Festival of the Book: A signature program of Virginia Foundation for the Humanities (VFH) and the Virginia Center for the Book, the Virginia Festival of the Book brings readers and writers together for a five-day program of mostly free events including author readings, book signings, panel discussions, programs for children, and more. **The 24th annual Festival will be held March 21-25, 2018**, in Charlottesville and Albemarle County, Virginia. The Festival has consistently attracted audiences of more than 20,000 from more than forty states each year, with an estimated local economic impact of about \$4 million annually. To learn more, visit VaBook.org.

About VFH: The mission of Virginia Foundation for the Humanities (VFH) is to connect people and ideas to explore the human experience and inspire cultural engagement. VFH reaches an estimated annual audience of 23 million through Community Programs, Digital Initiatives, Scholarship, and the Virginia Center for the Book. For more information, visit VirginiaHumanities.org.