

Virginia Festival of the Book Announces 2020 Line-up and Headliners

Featuring Hundreds of Acclaimed Speakers, Including NAACP Image Award Winners, Newbery Medalists, National Book Award Recipients, Internationally-Renowned Scholars, and Many More

November 14, 2019—Charlottesville, Va.—A program of Virginia Humanities, **the 26th annual Virginia Festival of the Book will be held March 18-22, 2020**, in various locations across Charlottesville and Albemarle County. Announced at an event sponsored by the Miller School of Albemarle at the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center on Thursday, **the 2020 Festival will feature the following headliners**, representing some of today's **most beloved and respected writers across genres**:

- **Jonathan Eig**, author of *Ali: A Life*, has written five books, three of them *New York Times* bestsellers. He was born in Brooklyn and graduated from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism. A former staff writer for *The Wall Street Journal*, Eig has also written for *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker* online, and *The Washington Post*, among other publications. His first book, *Luckiest Man: The Life and Death of Lou Gehrig*, won the Casey Award for best baseball book of the year. *Ali* was named winner of PEN/ESPN Award for Literary Sportswriting. **Eig will speak at the 2020 Read & Lead Lunch on March 18, 2020, at the Omni Hotel Charlottesville. Tickets to this program will be available for purchase beginning November 15 at 12:00 PM on VaBook.org.**
- **Vashti Harrison**, author of *Little Legends*, earned her MFA in film/video from CalArts and her BA from the University of Virginia. Her experimental films and documentaries have shown around the world at film festivals. After a brief stint in television as a production coordinator, she is now a freelance graphic designer and a picture-book illustrator. She lives in Brooklyn, N.Y. **Harrison will speak at two multi-school assemblies for public and private elementary school students on March 19, 2020, at the St. Anne's Belfield-School Convocation Center.**
- **Ian Rankin**, author of *In A House of Lies* and dozens of other bestselling novels in the John Rebus series and others, has received the Chandler-Fulbright Award; four [British] Crime Writers' Association Dagger Awards, including the prestigious Diamond Dagger; the Mystery Writers of America Edgar Award, Denmark's Palle Rosenkrantz prize, the French Grand Prix du Roman Noir; and Germany's Deutscher Krimipreis. Rankin has received an OBE for services to literature, in addition to a number of honorary university degrees. **Rankin will speak at the 2020 Crime Wave Brunch on March 21, 2020, at the Omni Hotel Charlottesville. Tickets to this program will be available for purchase beginning November 15 at 12:00 PM on VaBook.org.**
- **Jacqueline Woodson**, author of *Red at the Bone*, is the 2018-2019 National Ambassador for Young People's Literature. She received the 2018 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award and the 2018 Children's Literature Legacy Award, and is the 2014 National Book Award Winner for her *New York Times* bestselling memoir *Brown Girl Dreaming*, which was also a recipient of the Coretta Scott King Award, a Newbery Honor, the NAACP Image Award and a Sibert Honor. She is the author of more than two dozen award-winning books; among her many accolades, she is a four-time Newbery Honor winner, a four-time National Book Award finalist, and a two-time Coretta Scott King Award winner. She lives with her family in Brooklyn, New York. **Woodson will speak at the 2020 Literary Luncheon on March 19,**

2020, at the Omni Hotel Charlottesville. Tickets to this program will be available for purchase beginning November 15 at 12:00 PM on VaBook.org.

In making these announcements, **Virginia Festival of the Book director Jane Kulow** said, “We are thrilled to announce our 2020 authors, whose work will encourage conversations and inspire a love of reading for all ages. Each author writes **books that are engaging and that broaden one’s thinking**, whether it’s through beautifully illustrated brief biographies of African American leaders; the over-sized biography of America’s most celebrated athlete of the twentieth century; the complex characters, moral, and societal issues found in an excellent detective story; or the quietly told tale of family legacy and love surrounding an unexpected child—a tale that includes issues of class, race, ambition, mother-daughter love, and much more. We work all year to bring some of the best contemporary writing to our community, and we are proud to present this early look for our 26th annual Festival. Banquet tickets go on sale this week, yet the vast majority of Festival programs are completely free to attend.”

In addition to announcing these headlining authors, the Festival also announced the line-up of speakers for the 2020 Festival, including **more than 250 writers, illustrators, and publishing professionals. Some highlights include:**

- **Jaquira Díaz**, author of *Ordinary Girls*, was born in Puerto Rico. Her work has been published in *Rolling Stone*, *the Guardian*, *the Fader*, and *T: The New York Times Style Magazine*, and included in *The Best American Essays 2016*. She is the recipient of two Pushcart Prizes, and lives in Miami Beach.
- **Ilya Kaminsky**, author of *Deaf Republic*, was born in the former Soviet Union, and came to the United States when his family was granted asylum by the U.S. government. He was a 2014 finalist for the Neustadt International Prize for Literature, and is a finalist for the 2019 National Book Award.
- **Kenn Kaufman**, author of *A Season on the Wind: Inside the World of Spring Migration*, has observed bird migration on all continents. He is editor and co-author of seven titles in the Kaufman Field Guide series, and his memoir was designated an Outdoor Classic by the National Outdoor Book Awards.
- **Pamela Paul**, author of *How to Raise a Reader*, is editor of *The New York Times Book Review* and oversees books coverage at *The New York Times*, which she joined in 2011 as the children’s books editor. She is also the host of the weekly *Book Review* podcast for the *Times*.
- **Rachel Louise Snyder**, author of *No Visible Bruises*, is a journalist. Her other books include *Fugitive Denim: A Moving Story of People and Pants in the Borderless World of Global Trade*, and the novel, *What We’ve Lost is Nothing*.
- **Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor**, author of *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership*, is assistant professor of African American studies at Princeton University and the author of *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* and *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective*.

The list of 2020 speakers is available at VaBook.org and searchable by genre (fiction, nonfiction, poetry, children/youth, and crime fiction). Additional details, speakers, and programs will be announced on VaBook.org as they are confirmed. **The complete 2020 Festival schedule, including times and locations for Festival programs, will be announced on January 15, 2020.**

Accompanying hi-res images for Festival headliners are available for download at:
<https://virginia.box.com/s/zxdydl5sfwo0ipixd1cv1rmibkff9lxb>

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About the Virginia Festival of the Book: A signature program of Virginia Humanities 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 26th annual Festival will be held March 18-22, 2020, in Charlottesville and Albemarle County, Virginia. The Festival consistently attracts 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 Virginia Humanities: Virginia Humanities is the state humanities council. We aim to tell the stories of all Virginians—or, better yet, find ways for people to tell their own stories. We want to connect Virginians with their history and culture and, in doing that, help bring us all a bit closer together. To learn more, visit VirginiaHumanities.org.