



TEXAS BOOK FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES FEATURED PRESENTERS AT FIRST EDITION LITERARY GALA ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25

Presenter Lineup Includes Renowned Authors Sarah M. Broom, Stephen Harrigan, Sharon Robinson, and Alexander McCall Smith, Along with Emcee Carrie Fountain

AUSTIN, TEXAS (September 5, 2019) – The **Texas Book Festival** is thrilled to host an exciting lineup of presenters at the 2019 First Edition Literary Gala, including **Sarah M. Broom**, author of the immediate *New York Times* bestselling *The Yellow House*; **Stephen Harrigan**, novelist, journalist, historian, screenwriter, and author of *Big Wonderful Thing*; **Sharon Robinson**, daughter of legendary baseball player Jackie Robinson and award-winning author of *Child of the Dream: A Memoir of 1963*; and **Alexander McCall Smith**, the international bestselling author who will present the newest installment of his “The No. 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency” series. **Carrie Fountain**, poet, novelist, and the 2019 Texas Poet Laureate, will emcee this year’s gala on Friday, October 25 at the Four Seasons Hotel - Austin.

“We feel fortunate that the Texas philanthropic community has embraced our gala as a not-to-be-missed annual event,” says TBF Board Chair Sarah Queen. “The opportunity to hear incredible authors while supporting literature and literacy is a winning combination, and the funds we raise are so important to fulfilling our mission to connect authors and readers.”

A popular and elegant prelude to the Festival Weekend, the First Edition Literary Gala draws literary luminaries, dignitaries, and cultural arts patrons in support of the TBF Festival Weekend and the statewide literacy programs the nonprofit organization offers throughout the year. Anna Near and Annie Downing are this year’s Gala co-chairs.

Last year’s gala, held October 26 at the Four Seasons Hotel, raised more than \$675,000 for the Texas Book Festival. Through the funds raised, the annual Festival Weekend and Texas Teen Book Festival remain free and open to the public. In addition, TBF gave more than \$100,000 in grants to Texas public libraries, and through its Reading Rock Stars Literacy Program, provided more than 12,000 books to students in Title I schools.

The year’s featured authors include the following:

Sarah M. Broom: Broom's memoir, *The Yellow House*, arrived on shelves in August and was an immediate *New York Times* bestseller. It was featured on *Good Morning America* and received accolades from many outlets, including the *New York Times*, NPR, *Kirkus Reviews*, *Publisher's Weekly*, and more. Broom shares the deeply researched, intimately told story of her East New Orleans family and the house in which she was raised. A Whiting Award winner, Broom has written for *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Oxford American*, and *O, The Oprah Magazine*.

Stephen Harrigan: Novelist, journalist, historian, and screenwriter, Stephen Harrigan is one of the most celebrated and accomplished writers in Texas. It's only fitting that the University of Texas Press would turn to Harrigan to write a masterwork, a definitive new history of Texas. Weighing in at nearly 1,000 pages, *Big Wonderful Thing* is a thorough, riveting record of Texas, told with a novelist's eye for detail and including the stories of all of the people who have defined Texas over the centuries.

Sharon Robinson: Daughter of legendary baseball player Jackie Robinson, Sharon Robinson has published multiple award-winning books for young readers. She's also an educational consultant for Major League Baseball and co-manager of *Breaking Barriers: In Sports, In Life* a baseball-themed national character education curriculum designed to empower students to face obstacles in their lives. In her new book, *Child of the Dream: A Memoir of 1963*, she shares her own inspiring story of the year she turned thirteen, when the unique opportunities of being her father's daughter (going backstage at the Apollo Theater, attending the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom) met the realities of her isolation as one of few black people at her Connecticut high school and her struggle to find her place in the Civil Rights movement.

Alexander McCall Smith: Known for his warmth, wit, and signature style that highlights the humanity of his beloved characters and settings, Alexander McCall Smith became a household name with his "The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency" series, first launched into the world in 1999. Twenty years later, Smith is an internationally bestselling author whose work has expanded to fill multiple bestselling series, stand-alone novels, and even children's books. A new installment in "The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency" series is always a major event, and we're honored Smith will share it with us here in Texas.

Carrie Fountain: Emcee for the evening, Carrie Fountain is a poet and novelist and serves as the 2019 Texas Poet Laureate. Fountain is the author of two poetry collections, *Instant Winner* and *Burn Lake*, winner of the 2009 National Poetry Series Award, and the YA novel *I'm Not Missing*. Her poems have appeared in *Tin House*, *Poetry*, and *The New Yorker*, among many others. She is the host of KUT's *This Is Just to Say*, a radio show and podcast where she has intimate conversations on the writing life with other poets and writers.

For more information on the Texas Book Festival, please visit www.texasbookfestival.org and follow along on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @texasbookfest.

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ABOUT TEXAS BOOK FESTIVAL

With a vision to inspire all Texans to love reading, the Texas Book Festival connects authors and readers through experiences that celebrate the culture of literacy, ideas, and imagination. Founded in 1995 by former First Lady Laura Bush, Mary Margaret Farabee, and a group of volunteers, the nonprofit Texas Book Festival promotes the joys of reading and writing through its annual Festival Weekend, the Texas Teen Book Festival, the Reading Rock Stars Title I elementary school program, the Real Reads Title I middle and high school program, grants to Texas libraries, and year-round literary programming. The Festival is held on the grounds of the Texas Capitol each fall and features more than 275 renowned authors, panels, book signings, cooking demonstrations, and children's activities. The 2019 Texas Book Festival Weekend will take place October 26 - 27. Thanks to generous donors, sponsors, and 1,000 volunteers, the Festival remains free and open to the public. Visit www.texasbookfestival.org for more information, and join the conversation using the hashtag #txbookfest on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @texasbookfest.