



TEXAS BOOK FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES NEW BOARD CHAIR AND MEMBERS

The Texas Book Festival has appointed a new Board Chair and four new members to its Board of Directors.



AUSTIN, TX (March 9, 2023) - The Texas Book Festival is pleased to announce that **Gigi Edwards Bryant**, a Board member since 2014, will succeed Anna Near as Board Chair. Bryant, a fifth-generation Austinite, is focused on moving the mission and vision of the Texas Book Festival forward with the committed advocates serving on the Board of Directors.

"Books gave me the opportunity to see the world from a small table in the library," says Bryant. "Turning each page opened a new adventure. We must do all we can to get books in the hands of children and adult readers."

After more than three decades in Information Systems for the State Legislature Council, Parks and Wildlife and the Comptroller of Public Accounts, Bryant founded GMSA Management Services in 1993, building it into an award-winning, woman- and minority-owned consulting firm focused on business development, community outreach, and lobbying. She closed the firm in 2022 to focus on projects that advance systemic changes related to education, youth in the foster care system, and drug and alcohol drug rehabilitation.

Bryant has served in multiple gubernatorial appointments and received numerous awards and honors for her community service including Chair of the Department of Family Protective Services, the School Safety Center, and the Austin Community College District (ACCD), where she currently serves as a Trustee. She is President and CEO of the Write To Me Foundation, which she founded in 2004 to provide rite-to-passage experiences to youth who are in or have experienced the foster care system, a cause about which Bryant is very passionate after entering the system at age six and aging out at age eighteen.

Service organizations include the Austin Chapter of the Links Incorporated and the Douglass Club of Austin, two of the oldest African American Women's groups in the nation. Her greatest honor is being a mother, wife, and advocate for equitable access for the most vulnerable populations and communities.

The Texas Book Festival is also excited to welcome **Peniel Joseph**, **Amanda Moore**, **Katie Russell Newland**, and **Steve Stodghill** to its Board of Directors.



Peniel Joseph holds a joint professorship appointment at the LBJ School of Public Affairs and the History Department in the College of Liberal Arts at The University of Texas at Austin. He is the founding director of the LBJ School's Center for the Study of Race and Democracy (CSRD). Prior to joining the UT faculty, Dr. Joseph was a professor at Tufts University, where he founded the school's Center for the Study of Race and Democracy to promote engaged research and scholarship focused on the ways issues of race and democracy affect people's lives. A frequent commentator on issues of race, democracy, and civil rights, Dr. Joseph has also published numerous books, including *The Sword and the Shield: The Revolutionary Lives of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr.*, and the award-winning books *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* and *Dark Days, Bright Nights: From Black Power to Barack Obama*.



Amanda Moore is from Temple, Texas, and has resided in Austin for 20 years. She attended the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor and graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Spanish. She received a Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Texas School of Law. Moore is a writer, attorney, and book reviewer. Her short story, "The Corner Man," received the highest award in a statewide short story competition sponsored by the Texas Bar Journal. Moore is proud to support the Writers' League of Texas, where she serves as a board member. She frequently contributes book reviews for *Publishers Weekly* and interviews fiction and nonfiction authors for the Diverse Voices Book Review. Moore works as the General Counsel and Director of Legal Services at the Texas State Teachers Association where she represents employees at Texas public schools, colleges, and universities. She is a member of the State Bar of Texas School Law section, where she served on the Executive Committee for three years, and has been on the planning committee for the University of Texas School Law Conference since 2015. In 2021, Moore was recognized as an Up & Coming Lawyer by the Austin Black Business Journal. She was also selected as an honoree for her work as an attorney by the National Women of Achievement, Inc., Austin Metroplex Chapter. She is a member of the Austin Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc., the Travis County Women Lawyers' Association, and the Austin Black Lawyers Association.



Katie Russell Newland is an Austin, Texas-based writer with a Ph.D. in Language and Literacy from the University of Texas at Austin. She is a sports and games fanatic enchanted by travel. Katie's debut book, *A Season With Mom: Love, Loss, and the Ultimate Baseball Adventure*, tells the story of her journey to visit all 30 Major League Baseball parks in a single season to fulfill her late mother's dream and to heal from her own cancer treatment. In her latest book, she crisscrosses North America in search of Pickleball's quirky characters and unforgettable places. As a certified PPR Professional, Katie loves playing the game almost as much as introducing new converts to the popular paddle sport. On any given day, you can find Katie with her adopted pup, Charlie, watching her favorite teams play (New Orleans Saints, Chicago Cubs, and Texas Longhorns), reading and writing kid-lit, or begging her teammates on the pickleball court, "One more game!"



Steve Stodghill is a litigation partner in the firm's Dallas office, where he serves as a hiring partner, head of office business development and also serves on the firm's compensation committee. His practice emphasizes all aspects of complex litigation. Stodghill served as Team Counsel for the Dallas Mavericks from 2000 to 2002. He was a Founding Partner at Lynn, Stodghill, Melsheimer & Tillotson (which the *Texas Monthly* described in a 1998 article "Top Guns" as the "Navy Seals" of litigation), working with the firm from 1993 to 2000. He also served as a Legislative Assistant for Congressman Ralph M. Hall in 1985, as an associate with Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld from 1987 to 1993, and as a Partner at Fish & Richardson from 2000 to 2017.

In addition to being chief litigation counsel to Mark Cuban and the Dallas Mavericks for over 20 years, Stodghill has represented numerous prominent individuals, including Todd Wagner, Tom Hicks, Lamar Hunt, Trammell Crow and Phil Romano, and prominent companies, including Yahoo!, Bank One, Zurich Financial, Mary Kay Cosmetics, Alcatel, and Guaranty Federal Bank. Stodghill has traveled to 88 countries on all 7 continents. In September 2019, Governor Greg Abbott appointed him to the Texas Public Safety Commission for a term running through January 1, 2024.

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ABOUT TEXAS BOOK FESTIVAL

With a vision to inspire Texans of all ages 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, Reading Rock Stars Title I elementary school program, Real Reads Title I middle and high school program, grants to Texas libraries, and year-round literary programming.

This year's Texas Book Festival will take place November 11–12, with events taking place in downtown Austin and at the Texas Capitol, featuring renowned authors, panels, book signings, and activities. Thanks to generous donors, sponsors, and volunteers, the Festival remains free and open to the public. Visit www.texasbookfestival.org for more information, and join the conversation using the hashtags #texasbookfest and #txbookfest on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @texasbookfest.