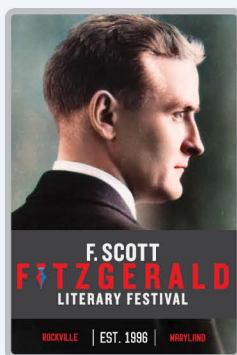


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Fitzgerald Literary Festival Announces Dynamic Lineup for 2024 Celebration

The F. Scott Fitzgerald Literary Festival Features Jesmyn Ward, Kiese Laymon, David Ignatius, and the Theme "Writing the Hard Stories"

Rockville, MD - The [F. Scott Fitzgerald Literary Festival](#) is delighted to unveil an exceptional lineup of talent for its 2024 event, centered around the theme "[Writing the Hard Stories](#)." This year's Festival promises to be an inspiring and thought-provoking celebration of literature, featuring live readings, workshops, and discussions led by some of the most distinguished voices in American letters.

The premier Festival dedicated to F. Scott Fitzgerald and contemporary literary luminaries, the F. Scott Fitzgerald Literary Festival, was inaugurated in 1996 in the city where he and his family are buried to commemorate the centenary of the iconic author's birth. Co-sponsored by the City of Rockville in Montgomery County, Maryland, and the F. Scott Fitzgerald Literary Conference, Inc., this event is a testament to Fitzgerald's enduring impact and the ongoing vitality of contemporary American literature.

"We are thrilled to welcome such a diverse and talented group of writers to this year's Festival," said Gary Berg-Cross, President of the F. Scott Fitzgerald Literary Conference, Inc. "Through their work, they confront the complexities of our world with courage and insight, embodying the spirit of F. Scott Fitzgerald's commitment to literary excellence."

Jesmyn Ward to Receive the 2024 Fitzgerald Award

The highlight of the Festival will be the presentation of the prestigious Fitzgerald Award for Achievement in American Literature to Jesmyn Ward. A two-time winner of the National Book Award for Fiction and a MacArthur Fellow, Ward's exploration of the American South has captivated readers worldwide. Her presence at the Festival will undoubtedly enrich the literary dialogue and inspire aspiring writers.

Joining Jesmyn Ward as special guests celebrating the theme "[Writing the Hard Stories](#)" are:

David Ignatius

Pulitzer Prize-nominated journalist and acclaimed novelist David Ignatius will deliver the keynote talk, offering insights into the importance of storytelling in confronting brutal truths and navigating the complexities of contemporary society.

Festival Award Recipients

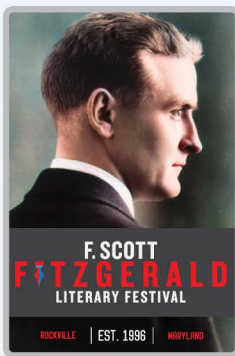
1996 William Styron
1997 John Barth
1998 Joyce Carol Oates
1999 E.L. Doctorow
2000 Norman Mailer
2001 Ernest J. Gaines
2002 John Updike
2003 Edward Albee
2004 Grace Paley

2005 Pat Conroy
2006 Jane Smiley
2007 William Kennedy
2008 Elmore Leonard
2009 Julia Alvarez
2010 Alice McDermott
2011 Maxine Hong Kingston
2013 Robert Olen Butler
2014 James Salter
2015 Richard Ford

2016 Garrison Keillor
2017 Annie Proulx
2018 Richard Russo
2019 Amy Tan
2020 Barbara Kingsolver
2021 John Edgar Wideman
2022 Richard Powers
2023 Jonathan Franzen
2024 Jesmyn Ward



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Kiese Laymon

Renowned writer and professor Kiese Laymon, as special invited guest, will share his unique perspective on writing to grapple with personal and societal challenges. He will encourage attendees to embrace vulnerability and authenticity in their own creative endeavors.

One of the festival's founders and former conference president, Jackson R. Bryer, stated, "In a time when storytelling has never been more vital, it is an honor to celebrate writers who fearlessly tackle the hard stories. Their voices remind us of the power of literature to illuminate human experience and provoke meaningful dialogue."

The 2024 F. Scott Fitzgerald Literary Festival promises to be a memorable and enriching experience for literature enthusiasts, writers, and scholars alike. Members of the media are invited to attend and cover this exciting event.

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ABOUT THE FESTIVAL

At the heart of the Literary Festival is the F. Scott Fitzgerald Award for Achievement in American Literature, an honor bestowed upon an eminent American writer. Since its inception in 1996, the festival has included twelve Pulitzer Prize winners among its recipients, honoring many of the most illustrious figures in American literature of the last eight decades.

For more info: fitzgeraldfestival.com

ABOUT JESMYN WARD

Jesmyn Ward is a critically acclaimed author and winner of the two-time National Book Award for Fiction. Her novels include *Salvage the Bones*, *Sing, Unburied, Sing*, and *Let Us Descend*. Ward's work explores racial, class, and family themes in the American South, earning her widespread recognition and accolades, including a MacArthur Fellowship. Jesmyn Ward will engage in a conversation about "The Art of Fiction and Writing the Hard Stories" with Kiese Laymon and will give a reading.

For more info: fitzgeraldfestival.com/meetjesmyward

ABOUT KIESE LAYMON:

Kiese Laymon is a distinguished American writer and professor known for his unflinching exploration of race, identity, and social justice in contemporary America. He is the author of several acclaimed works, including the memoir *Heavy: An American Memoir*, which won the Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Nonfiction. Laymon's writing deftly navigates the complexities of personal narrative and cultural critique, challenging readers to confront uncomfortable truths with courage and compassion. Kiese Laymon will engage in a

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2023 Jonathan Franzen
2024 Jesmyn Ward



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conversation with Jesmyn Ward about *“The Art of Fiction and Writing the Hard Stories”* and will introduce Jesmyn Ward for the Fitzgerald Award.

For more info: fitzgeraldfestival.com/meetkieselaymon

ABOUT DAVID IGNATIUS:

David Ignatius is a celebrated journalist and bestselling author whose work has earned him widespread acclaim and numerous awards, including the Overseas Press Club Award for Commentary and the Urbino Press Award. As a columnist for *The Washington Post* and the author of several acclaimed espionage thrillers, Ignatius brings a unique perspective to the intersection of politics, international relations, and literature. His insightful commentary and gripping storytelling have made him a leading voice in American journalism and fiction. His novels include *A Firing Offense*, *The Sun King*, *Body of Lies*, *Bloodmoney*, *The Director*, *The Paladin*, and *Phantom Orbit*. *The Sun King* is a reworking of *The Great Gatsby* set in late twentieth-century Washington. David Ignatius’s keynote talk is titled *“The Impossibility of Trying to Write a ‘Gatsbyesque’ Novel . . . and Other Lessons From a Journo-Literary Career.”*

For more info: fitzgeraldfestival.com/meetdavidignatius

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