

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **WV Book Festival Announces Headlining Authors for 2021**

The 2021 West Virginia Book Festival will be held at the Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center on Oct. 22 and 23. It will feature presentations from bestselling national authors, local and regional authors, writing workshops, family activities, a literary marketplace, and an enormous used book sale. All events and programs are free and open to the public.

This year's headlining authors will be New York Times bestselling author **Colson Whitehead**; author, singer, and mastermind behind the 2018 thriller *Bird Box*, **Josh Malerman**; Popular children's author **Jon Scieszka**; Pulitzer Prize winning reporter and author, **Eric Eyre**; and West Virginia native and author, **Denise Giardina**.

Colson Whitehead is the author of six novels, including his debut work, *The Intuitionist* and *The Underground Railroad*, for which he won the 2016 National Book Award for Fiction and 2017 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. He has also published two works of non-fiction and received a MacArthur Fellowship in 2002. He won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction again in 2020 for *The Nickel Boys*, which follows the story of two African American boys who attend a horrific reform school in Jim Crow-era Florida.

Josh Malerman is the writer of the novel, *Bird Box* and one of two singer/songwriters for the rock band The High Strung. *Bird Box* has won the Michigan Notable Book Award and was nominated for the James Herbert Award and Bram Stoker Award for Best First Novel. It has also been adapted into a Netflix Original movie. Other novels include, *Black Mad Wheel*, *Goblin*, *Unbury Carol*, and his latest, *Inspection*, a twisted fairy tale about a young student at a school deep in a forest who wonders what lies beyond the trees.

Jon Scieszka is best known for his bestselling picture books including *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs!* and *The Stinky Cheese Man*. He is also the founder of [www.guysread.com](http://www.guysread.com) and a champion force behind [www.guyslisten.com](http://www.guyslisten.com). He was also the first U.S. National Ambassador for Young People's Literature in 2008.

Eric Eyre is a former statehouse reporter for the *Charleston Gazette-Mail* newspaper. He won the 2017 Pulitzer Prize in Investigative Reporting for his work to expose the flood of opioids flowing into West Virginia counties with the highest death rates in the country. Eyre's book, *Death in Mud Lick: A Coal Country Fight Against the Drug Companies That Delivered the Opioid Epidemic* investigates further into the story of a pharmacy in Kermit, WV that distributed 12 million pain pills in three years to a population of 382 people.

Denise Giardina is an award-winning novelist and former gubernatorial candidate for the Mountain Party of West Virginia. Her book, *Storming Heaven*, received the 1987 W. D. Weatherford Award for best published work about the Appalachian South and *The Unquiet Earth* received an American Book Award and Lillian Smith Book Award for fiction. Giardina has also written columns for the *Charleston Gazette-Mail* and *The Washington Post*.

The Book Festival is now accepting program proposals and marketplace vendor applications for this year's event. Program proposals and vendor applications are due by **March 15, 2021** and are available on the West Virginia Book Festival website at [www.wvbookfestival.org](http://www.wvbookfestival.org).

The West Virginia Book Festival is made possible by its charter presenters: The Kanawha County Public Library, The Library Foundation of Kanawha County, Inc., The West Virginia Humanities Council, and The Charleston Gazette-Mail. Additional sponsors for this year's festival include West Virginia Public Broadcasting, The West Virginia Library Commission, The Center for the Book, The H. B. Wehrle Foundation, The Marshall University Foundation, The Friends of The Library, and Encova.

For more information, please visit the West Virginia Book Festival online at [www.wvbookfestival.org](http://www.wvbookfestival.org).