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## 46th Annual Fay B. Kaigler Children's Book Festival

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## 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Fay B. Kaigler Children's Book Festival

By Karen Rowell & Preston Salisbury

Planning is well underway for the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Fay B. Kaigler Children's Book Festival, to be held April 10-12, 2013, at the Southern Miss Thad Cochran Center. It looks to be another exciting year as the highlights will include awarding of the 2013 Southern Miss Medallion to recipient Jon Scieszka and a musical performance by four-time Grammy nominated folk-rock children's music group *Trout Fishing in America* that will be open to the public.

Sadly, Children's Book Festival namesake Fay B. Kaigler passed away in May 2012. Miss Kaigler, a longtime supporter of the festival, taught in the public schools of California and Mississippi for 33 years. She first attended the festival at the invitation of her friend Ruth Lamont, a children's librarian from Baton Rouge.



Image: Fay B. Kaigler

In 1998, Miss Fay B. Kaigler generously funded the Kaigler-Lamont Award to be given for distinguished service to children by a librarian or teacher and on December 5, 2001, the festival was renamed in honor of Miss Kaigler, who contributed a planned gift to the festival. Her gift will continue the festival's tradition of encouraging writers to strive for excellence in

children's literature and of providing information to teachers and librarians.

This marks the second year of hosting the Ezra Jack Keats Book Awards, co-presented by the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation and the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection. The Ezra Jack Keats New Writer and New Illustrator Awards for Children's Books recognizes the contributions and influences of Keats' works and highlights the scope of the de Grummond Children's Collection as a repository for Ezra Keats works. Known collectively as the Ezra Jack Keats Book Award, the New Writer Award was established in 1985, and the New Illustrator Award in 2001, to recognize and encourage authors and illustrators starting out in the field of children's books. Many past winners of the EJK Book Award have gone on to distinguished careers creating books beloved by parents, children, librarians and teachers across the country. For more information on this award visit <http://www.ezra-jack-keats.org/>.

As for the festival keynotes, 2013 Southern Miss Medallion recipient Jon Scieszka graduated from Albion College in 1976 and obtained his MFA from Columbia in 1980. His first book, *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*, was published in 1989. This book, as well as *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*, *Math Curse*, and *Robot Zot* has won multiple awards. Mr. Scieszka is the founder of Guys Read, a literacy program designed to help boys become self-motivated, lifelong readers. He was named the first National Ambassador for Young People's Literature by the Library of Congress in 2008. He lives in Brooklyn, NY with his wife Jeri and two children, Casey and Jake.

Other outstanding authors and illustrators scheduled to appear include:

- Candace Fleming awarded herself the Newbery Medal in fifth grade after scraping the gold sticker off the class copy of *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* and pasting it onto her first novel—a 10-page, 10-chapter mystery called *Who Done It?* She's been collecting awards (her own, not Elizabeth George Speare's) ever since. Today, Fleming is the

acclaimed author of numerous books for children, including *Ben Franklin's Almanac*, an ALA Notable Book and an ALA Best Book for Young Adults, as well as *Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!*, *Gabriella's Song*, and *When Agnes Caws*, all ALA Notable Books. She lives in a suburb of Chicago.

- Kathleen T. Horning is the director of the Cooperative Children's Book Center of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She is the author of *From Cover to Cover: Evaluating and Reviewing Children's Books* (revised edition: HarperCollins, 2010). With Ginny Moore Kruse, she coauthored *Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults*, 1980–1990, and with Ginny Moore Kruse and Megan Schliesman, *Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults*, 1991–1996. Horning is a past-president of the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) of the American Library Association (ALA), and a past president of the United States Board on Books for Young People (USBYP).
- Ted & Betsy Lewin are a husband and wife team of writers and illustrators, who have collaborated on a number of books based upon their travels. The first, *Gorilla Walk*, was named a Smithsonian Notable Book. Since then, they have collaborated on four other books, including the award-winning *Horse Song*. Each is also independently the author and/or illustrator of a number of books. Betsy Lewin's most recent books include *You Can Do It!* and *Where Is Tippy Toes?* and has illustrated a number of books for other authors, including the *Click, Clack, Moo* series by Darlene Cronin. Ted Lewin recently authored *Look!* and *Stable* and illustrated *The World's Greatest Lion* (Ralph Helfer) and *The Longest Night* (Marion Dane Bauer) among many others.
- Grace Lin is the author and illustrator of picture books, early readers and middle grade novels. Lin's 2010 Newbery Honor book *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* was chosen for Al Roker's Today Show Kid's Book Club and was a *New York Times* Bestseller. *Ling & Ting*, Grace's first early reader, was honored with the Theodor Geisel Honor in 2011. *Starry River of the Sky* was released in October 2012. Her newest title is its companion novel, *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*. An Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award nominee for the U.S., most of Lin's books are about the Asian-

American experience because she believes, "Books erase bias, they make the uncommon every day and the mundane exotic. A book makes all cultures universal."

- Wendell Minor is the illustrator of many award-winning picture books for children, such as *Mojave* by Diane Siebert, *Abe Lincoln Remembers* by Ann Turner, *The Seashore Book* by Charlotte Zolotow, and *Reaching for the Moon* by Buzz Aldrin, as well as numerous books about the outdoors with his frequent collaborator, Jean Craighead George, including *Luck: The Story of a Sandhill Crane*. The Minors live in Connecticut, where they share their home, and studio, with their cats Sofie and Cindercat. Minor's latest title is *If You Spent a Day with Thoreau at Walden Pond*.
- Eric Rohmann received a Caldecott Honor in 1999 for *Time Flies* and the 2003 Caldecott Medal for *My Friend Rabbit*. Besides being an author, Rohmann is also a painter and a former teacher. When asked why he writes and illustrates children's books, Rohmann answers, "Children are the best audience: they are curious, enthusiastic, impulsive, generous, and pleased by simple joys. They laugh easily at the ridiculous and are willing to believe the absurd." Rohmann lives in Chicago, Illinois.
- Trout Fishing in America has more than 30 years of unique musical experience, capped by their most recent release, a children's book/CD combo entitled *Chicken Joe Forgets Something Important*. Over their musical career, they have been nominated for four Grammys, as well as being nominated for numerous other awards. They have been featured on *The Today Show*, NPR's *All Things Considered*, and *The Dr. Demento Show*, among others.

We hope to see you at the 2013 Fay B. Kaigler Children's Book Festival! For more information, please visit [www.usm.edu/childrens-book-festival](http://www.usm.edu/childrens-book-festival).



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- K.T. Horning
- Ted and Betsy Lewin
- Grace Lin
- Wendell Minor
- Eric Rohmann
- Trout Fishing in America

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Book Festival is proud to host the  
Ezra Jack Keats Book Awards.

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