

# Calvin Duncan, Blake Bertuccelli-Booth represented the School of Professional Advancement at the 2026 New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University

March 16, 2026 4:30 PM Tulane News staff  
news@tulane.edu



The [New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University](#) returned March 12–15 for its fifth chapter, bringing more than 250 acclaimed authors, artists and thought leaders to Tulane’s uptown campus. This year’s festival featured 100-plus panels, book signings, the popular culinary symposium, an expanded Family Day, music performances throughout the event, including the closing musical celebration and free crawfish, in partnership with the Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board. The book festival was free and open to the public.

Authors and panelists representing the **School of Professional Advancement** included adjunct instructor and alumnus **Calvin Duncan** and alumnus **Blake Bertuccelli-Booth**.

In partnership with *The Atlantic*, the festival opened on Thursday, March 12, with a special keynote evening honoring the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America. The evening brought together *The Atlantic's* Editor-in-Chief Jeffrey Goldberg (moderator), bestselling biographer Walter Isaacson, acclaimed filmmaker and storyteller Ken Burns, *Atlantic* Staff Writer and bestselling author Clint Smith and Annette Gordon-Reed, author and Pulitzer Prize-winning historian.

Together, these distinguished voices examined the evolution of the American experience — our ideals, our challenges and our shared pursuit of progress—while reflecting on the enduring power of storytelling, history and journalism to define who we are and where we are headed.

The crowd-pleasing culinary track returned on Friday with panels featuring national and local chefs, writers and food leaders, including Edgar “Dook” Chase IV, John Currence, Kelly Jacques, Emeril Lagasse, E.J. Lagasse, Ti Martin, Ian McNulty, Jordan Salcito, Alon Shaya, Arvinder Vilkhur and Bronwen Wyatt, as well as restaurateur Cathy Whims.

Food offerings expanded, with local favorites including Barracuda Taco Stand, Coops Burgers, Crepes à la Cart, Francolini's, French Truck Coffee, PJ's Coffee and Saba contributing to a lively and welcoming festival atmosphere.

Expanded programming in the Hyatt Regency Festival Tent featured live music throughout Friday and Saturday, including Brooks Drost Band, Da Lovebirds with Robin Barnes and Pat Casey, Kristin Diable and Jon Cleary. Saturday's festivities concluded with a musical celebration featuring Big Chief Bo Dollis Jr. and the Wild Magnolias beginning at 5 p.m.

Family Day at the Fest had its own day and took place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, March 15, giving families dedicated time to enjoy the festival. In addition to the main stage at Avron B. Fogelman Arena in the Devlin Fieldhouse, Family Day featured programming in Tulane's Navy ROTC Building and Author Alley, a new meet-and-greet area where children and families interacted with authors and discover new stories up close.

New Orleans Saints head coach Kellen Moore and his wife, Julie, served as co-chairs of Family Day, welcoming children and their families from the New Orleans area for a joyful day exploring the magic of books and stories. FOX 8 morning news anchor Kelsey Davis emceed the day's activities.

The official 2026 festival poster is an original work by renowned Louisiana artist Francis X. Pavy. Known for a vivid, narrative-driven style, Pavy is one of the region's most celebrated visual storytellers. Posters and art prints were available for purchase [online](#) and on-site during the festival. Posters were \$45, and art prints were \$15; proceeds supported the festival's free public programming, including literacy initiatives and Family Day activities.

Author book signings, merchandise and book sales took place on the Berger Family Lawn. Author signings followed the conclusion of most panel sessions.

For more information on the New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University, please visit [bookfest.tulane.edu](http://bookfest.tulane.edu) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [X](#).