

Faulkner for All, 2025
Presented By:
The Pirate's Alley Faulkner Society, Inc.
&
The English Speaking Union, Inc.

Thursday, September 25th, Faulkner's Birthday

1:00 - 3:00 p. m. — *Master Class for Students*, featuring

Justin Torres, whose latest novel, **Blackouts**, captured the 2023 National Book Award for Fiction. **Blackouts** also was a finalist for the *LA Times* Book Prize, the National Book Critics Circle Award, the Lambda Literary award, and the Southern California Book Award. A 2024 Guggenheim Fellow, he also has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard, and the New York Public Library's Cullman Center. His debut novel, **We the Animals**, became a national bestseller and was adapted into a feature film. The Faulkner Society was among the first to recognize him as a major literary talent and we are thrilled for him that his literary career has soared since he appeared with us in 2011 when his debut novel **We the Animals** was released. He lives in Los Angeles and is an associate professor of English at the University of California Los Angeles. *Free and Open to the general reading public as well as students.*

6:00 - 8:00 p. m. — *Welcome party. Venue to be Announced.*

Remembering William Faulkner on His Birthday and honoring special guests of the Faulkner Society in town to present at *Faulkner for All*. Special guests of honor will be UK's glamorous **Countess of Derby**, historian, art curator, and exceptional story teller; National Book Award winner **Justin Torres**; Pulitzer Prize winner **Robert Olen Butler**; and others.

By invitation with advance reservation, number of guests determined by size of venue.

Friday, September 26th — Hotel Provincial Meeting Room.

8:00 a. m. — *Continental Breakfast hotel.*

8:30 a. m. — *Keynote session for writers.*

Publishing in 2025 This year marks 100 years after William Faulkner completed his first novel, **Soldiers' Pay**, while he was living on Pirate's Alley in the Vieux Carre of New Orleans. Mentors, such as then famous American novelist Sherwood Anderson, supported Faulkner enormously during creation of the novel and then helped him get it published. What are the trials writers are faced with while striving for publication today and how best to overcome these hurdles.

Speakers will be **Jeff Kleinman** and other noted New York literary agents and editors.

9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a. m. *Manuscript critiques begin.* One-on-one sessions with professional agents and editors for writers registered for the festival who have submitted work to be critiqued in advance of *Faulkner for All*.

Beauregard – Keyes House, Main floor.

Noon— *Registration, Light lunch & Odes to New Orleans and William Faulkner.*

1:00 p. m. — *New Orleans, Mon Amour*, a regular feature of *Faulkner for All*, is named after an essay by famous author Walker Percy, an essay frequently referred to as the perfect summing up of our city. This year's session will star **Dalt Wonk**—journalist, playwright, actor, poet, and

fabulist—and his wife, **Josephine Sacabo**, internationally noted art photographer, writer, and former actress. They are co-creators of the marvelous new book, *New Orleans: 1970 – 2020, A Portrait of the City*. The book is composed of essays by Dalt about New Orleans and photographs by Josephine. **Ellis Anderson**, publisher of the *French Quarter Journal* is invited to interview the couple.

2:15 p.m. — *Faulkner and New Orleans*. 2025 is 100th anniversary of the completion of William Faulkner's first novel **Soldiers' Pay**.

Introduced by Faulkner Society Co-Founder Rosemary James, and featuring Faulkner-oriented programming in three segments and book signings. The three segments include:

— *Spratling and Faulkner*. Faulkner's relationship with his New Orleans landlord and cultural mentor, **William Spratling**, the famous artist and silver designer, who jump-started the rebirth of Mexico's silver industry. With Faulkner, Spratling co-authored **Sherwood Anderson and Other Famous Creoles**, a spoof on the literary and arts crowd they ran in. When **Soldiers' Pay** sold, Faulkner used the advance money to travel to France with Spratling. This segment will feature **John Shelton Reed**, author of **Dixie Bohemia** and other works, and **Penny Morrill**, an expert in the life and work of Spratling.

— *The Enduring characters of William Faulkner*. Why is it so easy to call to mind one of the characters created by William Faulkner to populate his created world of Yoknapatawpha County. The session will feature **Robin Sinclair**, whose specialty is the recurring characters of Faulkner's works, such as Gavin Stephens

— *The Legacy and tragedy of the Nobel Prize winning author's life*.

Faulkner scholar and literary historian **Lisa C. Hickman, Ph.D.**, whose new book is **Between Grief and Nothing**, will examine Faulkner's behind the scenes life as a troubled man entangled in a complex marriage, seeking solace through serial sexual and romantic affairs, perilous pastimes, and chronic alcohol abuse.

4:15 p.m. — *Book Signings*.

5:00 p. m. — *Break*.

6:00 p. m. to 8:30 p.m. — *An Evening with National Book Award winner, Justin Torres*. followed by Cocktail party in his honor and book signing. His concept revolves around marginalization, censorship of the marginalized and erasure of their artistic creations. His multi-prize-winning novel **Blackouts** is a story of marginalized literary artists whose work is blacked out, completely erased, or who have passages of their work redacted without permission because the Powers-that-be are against them due to ethnicity, sexual persuasion, or other factors these powers deem unacceptable.

8:30 p. m. - *Evening Free for out of town participants to enjoy the city's food and music*.

Saturday, September 27th. Hotel Provincial Meeting Room

8:00 a. m. — *Continental Breakfast hotel*.

8:30 a. m. — *Advice Session for writers: That peculiar thing called a Novella*.

9:30 to 10:30 a.m. — *Manuscript critiques begin*.

Beauregard - Keyes House

11:00 a. m. — *Mining the Past to Understand the Present and Create Contemporary Literature*.

The session partners two cultural historians who are master storytellers:

— **Peter M. Wolf**, an American non-fiction author, cultural historian, land planning and urban policy authority, investment manager, and philanthropist. He lives in New York and New Orleans. His remarkable new book, **The Etruscans and the Jews: New Orleans Echoes, Sardinian Shadows, Roman Shame**, illuminates never before recognized links between the culturally vibrant Etruscan people and long forgotten Jewish communities. No one has previously suggested an enduring and intimate link between these two dynamic cultures. The book is written as an adventure story that expands our understanding of both the lost Etruscan people and the Jewish diaspora. The Etruscans created a world class civilization between 900 BCE and 100 CE replete with forward thinkers, skilled writers, and talented artists. The Etruscans eventually were systematically obliterated in a deliberate genocide by the Roman Empire. The civilization they created, however, flourished alongside beleaguered Jews for over a thousand years. In Turkey, Sardinia, Etruria, and Italy, Etruscans and Jews inhabited the same regions, the same neighborhoods, enduring similar tribulations: invasions, expulsions, discriminatory rules, culture cancellations, and forced immigration. Wolf's other critically acclaimed books include His memoir, **My New Orleans Gone Away**, attracted feature reviews in *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post* before it reached the *New York Times* e-book Best Seller list. His recent biography, **The Sugar King: Leon Godchaux, A New Orleans Legend, His Creole Slave, and His Jewish Roots**.

— **Karen Essex**, an award-winning novelist, journalist, and screenwriter. A self-described "history nerd," her critically acclaimed novels all deal with female power brokers of the past, instrumental in influencing the course of history. They include **Leonardo's Swans**, about the muses of Leonardo daVinci; **Stealing Athena**, the story of the controversial Elgin Marbles; **Dracula in Love**, a retelling of the original vampire tale; two acclaimed biographical novels, **Kleopatra** and **Pharoah**. Her novels are published in 29 languages. **Leonardo's Swans**, a runaway bestseller in Italy, won the prestigious Premio Roma Prize for foreign fiction. Essex adapted **Kleopatra** and **Pharoah** into a screenplay for Warner Bros. Lionsgate Entertainment. Most recently Netflix also has developed the books for television, with Essex co-writing a pilot. Essex adapted Anne Rice's novel **The Mummy** or **Ramses the Damned** into a screenplay for **Avatar** director James Cameron and 20th Century Fox, and has written a script about the first King of Hawaii for Columbia/Tristar and Dwayne Johnson. She wrote a dance movie for Jennifer Lopez Entertainment and Paramount Pictures, a pilot for Fox TV, and continues to develop a variety of film and television projects. Essex's articles and essays have been published in periodicals such as *Vogue*, *Playboy*, *L.A. Weekly*, and *L.A. Style*. She was awarded highest honors from the Los Angeles Press Club for her thought-provoking story about the missing 1950s pinup icon Bettie Page, Essex then co-authored the biography, **Bettie Page: Life of a Pinup Legend**. Her electronic media appearances include *The Today Show* and several PBS and NPR programs and she has lectured extensively. A New Orleans native, Essex was graduated from Tulane University, did post graduate work at Vanderbilt University, received an MFA in Writing from Goddard College, and lived in London, Europe, and Los Angeles before returning home recently to claim New Orleans as her permanent residence once again.

11:45 a. m. — *Book signings.*

12:15 p.m. — *Light luncheon and a very special, Special Interest book.*

Scrambling Around With Scrim will feature publisher **Susan Schadt**, owner of the boutique publishing firm, Susan Schadt Press, and noted New Orleans attorney **Kaye Courington**, author of **Scrim**, a tale of courage, love of place, resilience, and daring-do action in the face of daunting

adversity, will appear with rescue heroine, **Michelle Cheramie**, the owner of animal rescue nonprofit Zeus Rescues, who led the weeks long mission to find Scrim, safely capture him, and bring Scrim finally to a caring, loving new home. Cheramie, a former information technology professional has devoted her life to caring for animals since losing her home during 2005's Hurricane Katrina. She believes she was "born to rescue." And we believe she was, too. Other special interest book authors will join them.

1:45 p. m. — *Book signing.*

2:15 p. m — *The Literature of War and Forced Immigration*

One hundred years ago in the wake of WWI, the world had undergone a massive social revolution and enjoyed a period of hope and a rebirth of creative energy with dramatic departures from tradition in art, architecture, fashion, music, manners, and a body of literature reflecting all of these changes and giving voice to the lasting trauma of the war. In fact, the most important positive aspect of war, is generation of important literature. Given that the U. S. is embroiled at least tangentially in hot spots all over the world now, a discussion of war and the valuable, lasting literature it produces is timely. Invited to participate in this session are authors **Robert Olen Butler**, a Vietnam veteran who served in military intelligence, and returns to Vietnam regularly to visit. His collection of short stories about Vietnam refugees in Louisiana, **A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain**, won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. And one of his 16 novels, **Perfume River**, is set there. He was also a charter recipient of the Tu Do Chinh Kien Award given by the Vietnam Veterans of America for "outstanding contributions to American culture by a Vietnam veteran." He will partner in this discussion with **Andrew Lam** and **Thomas Mallon**. Lam fled Vietnam with his family when Saigon fell. He is a prize-winning fiction writer and journalist, long time NPR commentator, and author of the new book of short fiction receiving rave critical reviews, **Stories from the Edge of the Sea**. Bestselling political novelist Mallon, who charmed festival audiences last year, is invited to return. Earlier this year, Mallon travelled to Vietnam, where he gave lectures on the literature of war. The discussion will be led by **Randy Fertel**, a philanthropist and writer, who has delved deep into every aspect of improvisation and whose new book is **Winging It: Improv's Power and Peril in the Time of Trump**. A long-time anti-war activist, Fertel is Creator of the Ridenhour Prizes. Established by the Fertel Foundation and The Nation Institute, the prizes recognize and encourage those who persevere in acts of truth-telling to protect the public interest, promote social justice or illuminate a more just vision of society. The prizes memorialize the spirit of Ron Ridenhour, a Vietnam veteran who wrote a letter to Congress and the Pentagon in 1969 describing the horrific events at My Lai, the infamous massacre of the Vietnam War, bringing the scandal to the attention of the American public and the world.

3:45 p. m. — *Book signings.*

4:30 p. m. — *Break, Manuscript critiques*

6:00 to 8:30 p.m. — *An Evening with the Countess of Derby*

This session, which will examine national heritage and ancestry as inspiration for literature, will be introduced by Dr. E. Quinn Peeper, who leads both the Pirate's Alley Faulkner Society and the national English Speaking Union. **Caroline Derby** is a glamorous English historian, curator, and storyteller whose own family and her husband's family have encompassed British movers and shakers for 600 years of English history. Born a Neville, she married a Stanley and grew up on the Audley End Estate before studying History and History of Art at London University. After college, she worked for nearly a decade in all the royal palaces as Exhibitions Assistant to the Surveyor of

The Queen's Paintings of the Royal Collection. Convinced that education and knowledge of history have the power to change lives, Lady Derby is using her own education, time, talent, and insider knowledge to illuminate English history with books based on the adventures, achievements, exploits, and escapades of her own ancestors and those of the man she married in 1995 and the father of her three children, the 19th Earl of Derby. Her latest book is **The American Journal of Edward Geoffrey Stanley, 14th Earl of Derby**. This 19th Century ancestor, who later became Prime Minister of England, arrived in New York City in July of 1824, after a voyage of nearly five weeks at sea from Liverpool. Then a young Member of Parliament and future Earl of Derby, he departed England under something of a cloud. His political career was off to a rough start and he had fallen in love with a young lady he was forbidden to marry. A lengthy tour, or as Stanley termed it, a "banishment," had been imposed upon him. From July 1824 into March 1825, Stanley travelled extensively throughout the eastern half of North America. He crossed mountains and lakes, journeyed up and down rivers, and trekked through pine barrens, swamps, and marshes. He travelled by stage, steamboat, canoe, horseback and sometimes on foot, studying every aspect of the towns and countryside he passed through. Stanley was sometimes surprised, and sometimes shocked, by what he saw. Complicated interactions between the Catholic French and their Protestant British neighbors in Canada, the horrifying lives of those enslaved in the U.S. South, the poverty of Irish immigrants in the north, the degradation of Native Americans everywhere. All of these left deep impressions on Stanley. Everything he learned during this journey shaped his future career as a political reformer and distinguished statesman as Prime Minister.

Book Signing.

Sunday, September 28th - Hotel Provincial Meeting Room

8:00 a. m. — *Continental Breakfast.*

8:30 a. m. — *Advice Session for writers: The Art of Non-Fiction*

9:30 a.m. — 10:30 a. m. — Manuscript critiques.

11:00 a. m. — **Beauregard - Keyes House**

12:15 p. m.

1:30 p .m. — Light lunch and

3:00 p.m. —

Book signings

4:00 p. m. — Break, Manuscript Critiques

7:00 p. m. — St. Mary's Chapel, Ursulines Convent

35th black tie annual meeting of the Faulkner Society.