Lalka to discuss new book on Big Tech at 2024 New Orleans Book Festival

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Rob Lalka

Rob Lalka, Albert Lepage Professor in Business and executive director of the Lepage Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, will discuss his forthcoming book The Venture Alchemists: How Big Tech Turned Profits into Power as part of the 2024 New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University, a free, three-day event that will bring more than 150 acclaimed authors and thought leaders to Tulane's uptown campus for panel discussions, book signings and entertainment.

Scheduled to be released in May by Columbia Business School Publishing, the book details how tech entrepreneurs built empires that made trillions, highlighting the adversities they overcame, the tradeoffs they made and the tremendous power they

now wield. Lalka will discuss the book with Peter Ricchiuti, senior professor of practice and founder of Burkenroad Reports, on Saturday, March 16, at12 p.m. on the Tulane Alumni Stage, Stibbs 203, in the Lavin-Bernick Center.

In addition to Lalka, this year's fest will also feature Freeman alumnus Steve Gleason (MBA '11), co-author of A Life Impossible: Living with ALS: Finding Peace and Wisdom Within a Fragile Existence, and alumna Ti Martin (MBA '84), co-author of Miss Ella of Commander's Palace, who will discuss bringing the 2016 documentary *Ella Brennan: Commanding the Table* to the screen.

The festival kicks off with a star-studded lineup on Thursday, March 14, at 5 p.m. in collaboration with *The Atlantic*. The session will feature a captivating discussion announcing its editorial initiative focused on the great novels of the last 100 years. Editors will dive into the process behind selecting these literary masterpieces while exploring their enduring impact and cultural significance.

The festival will feature a session presented in Spanish for the first time. In collaboration with the Stone Center for Latin American Studies, the conversation will feature authors Yuri Herrera and Gabriela Alemán discussing Latin Americans in New Orleans in the 19th and 20th Centuries.

The event proudly features a distinct New Orleans flavor on Friday with culinary presentations and samplings from seven of the city’s top chefs.

Family Day at the Fest will occur from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 16. It will feature children’s and family programming, including 19 talented and award-winning local and national authors. Fox 8 anchor Kelsey Davis will again serve as the emcee for the event. Scholastic, the global children’s publishing, education and media company, will host three national authors, a special screening of a new puppet musical and a free book giveaway. The local independent bookstore, Garden District Book Shop, will sell books by Family Day authors on-site and attendees can meet the authors and have their books signed.

The festival will close on Saturday with a musical performance by the “Soul Queen of New Orleans,” Irma Thomas, showcasing New Orleans' rich musical heritage.

Author book signings will follow panel sessions, with books available for purchase in the Hyatt Regency Festival Tent, where Baldwin & Co. and Octavia Books have partnered to host the official festival bookstore.

The 2024 festival poster, created by local artist Brandan “BMIKE” Odums will also be available for purchase at the festival or online in the festival’s store.

For more information on the New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University, please visit bookfest.tulane.edu or follow us on Facebook, Instagram and X.