# Freeman authors join lineup at 2026 New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University

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Freeman School of Business faculty members Mara Baumgarten Force, Rob Lalka and Peter Ricchiuti are among the more than 250 authors, artists and thought leaders who will participate in the 2026 New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University.

The festival returns to Tulane's uptown campus March 12–15 for its fifth chapter. This year’s event features 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 festival is free and open to the public.

Force, Lalka and Ricchiuti will be participating in the following sessions:

**When a Cookbook Becomes a Book: Rescuing Recipes, Preserving Stories, March 14, 11-11:45 a.m., Stibbs, LBC**



Mara Force, Seymour S. Goodman Professor of Business Administration and director of the Schwartz Family Center for Experiential Business Learning, joins award-winning chef Alon Shaya for a discussion of Rescued Recipes, their project to bring to life the handwritten Holocaust-era cookbook preserved by survivor Steven Fenves, who rebuilt his life in the United States, illuminating how a family recipe book became part of the American Jewish story.

**The Power of Community & Connection in Times of Uncertainty & Change, March 13, 4-4:45 p.m., Stibbs, LBC**



Rob Lalka, Albert R. Lepage Professor in Business and executive director of the Lepage Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, moderates a conversation with Dr. Michelle K. Johnston (*The Seismic Shift in You*) and Nicholas Lalla (*Reinventing the Heartland*) about transformation at every scale — within ourselves, our

organizations and our cities. The session will explore how personal growth, values-based leadership and intentional reinvention can shape more inclusive and resilient futures.

**How to Make Money in Any Market, March 14, 10-10:45 a.m., Kendall Cram Lecture Hall, LBC**



Peter Ricchiuti, William B. Burkenroad Jr. Professor in Equity Research and research director of Burkenroad Reports, interviews financial expert, CNBC host and author Jim Cramer about strategies for navigating today's markets. Drawing on decades of investing experience and reflecting on his book *How to Make Money in Any Market*, Cramer will offer insights on spotting opportunities, managing risk, and making smart decisions in both bullish and bearish economic environments.

In addition to Freeman School faculty, alumni Matt Forte, Ti Martin and Bruce Spizer and student Zachary Warter (BSM '26) are also among this year's participants.

Click on the links for the full schedule, author lineup and family day author lineup. Registration is encouraged but not required.

In partnership with *The Atlantic*, the festival will open on Thursday, March 12, with a special keynote evening honoring the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America. The evening will bring 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 will examine 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 returns 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 Vilkhu and Bronwen Wyatt, as well as restaurateur Cathy Whims.

Food offerings have 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 will feature 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 will conclude with a musical celebration featuring Big Chief Bo Dollis Jr. and the Wild Magnolias beginning at 5 p.m.

Family Day at the Fest now has its own day and will take 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 will also feature programming in Tulane’s Navy ROTC Building and Author Alley, a new meet-and-greet area where children and families can interact with authors and discover new stories up close.

New Orleans Saints head coach Kellen Moore and his wife, Julie, will serve 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 will emcee 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 will be available for purchase online and on-site during the festival. Posters are $45, and art prints are

$15; proceeds support the festival’s free public programming, including literacy initiatives and Family Day activities.

Author book signings, merchandise and book sales will take place on the Berger Family Lawn. Author signings will follow the conclusion of most panel sessions.

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