

2021
SPEAKER
PROGRAM

THE EUGENE &
MARILYN GLICK

Indiana
Authors
Awards

Gabrielle Balkan, Middle Grade Shortlist Honoree



Gabrielle Balkan uses her background in education and as a former book buyer to write non-fiction that delights readers ages 0-10 with curious and essential facts about the United States, animals, and foundational tools, like maps!

Her books have been honored on state and national reading lists and received starred reviews from industry journals.

Gabrielle grew up across from the Indiana State Fair and now lives in New York's Hudson Valley where she enjoys reading detective novels, cooking soup, and hiding geocaches for other outdoor enthusiasts to find. She loves to lug her prop box full of dinosaur poop and homemade crystals to schools across the nation. It's the best way to get ideas for more books! Teachers say: "Gabrielle's presentation was rooted in student friendly, fun, and rigorous material!"

Visit her online: www.gabriellebalkan.com and @gabriellebalkan.

Available for **virtual** and limited **in-person** events within 60 miles of Indianapolis or 30 miles of South Bend.

Contact: gabrielle.s.balkan@gmail.com

Jennifer Blackmer, Drama Award Winner



Jennifer Blackmer's plays have been seen in productions across the country and include *Predictor*, *I Carry Your Heart with Me*, Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace*, *Borrowed Babies*, *Delicate Particle Logic*, *Human Terrain*, and *Unraveled*. She is the recipient of the PEN/Laura Pels International Foundation for Theatre Award for Emerging American Playwright, the 2024 Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust/ATCA Citation for *I Carry your Heart with Me*, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation/Tribeca Film Institute prize for her screenplay version of *Human Terrain*, the Joseph Jefferson Award for Best Adaptation for *Alias Grace*, the David Mark Cohen

National Playwriting Award, the 2020 Indiana Women of Achievement Award, and the Gold Medallion from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. Jennifer is an Indiana native from New Palestine and currently serves as Professor of Theatre at Ball State University in Muncie, where she teaches classes in playwriting, storytelling, feminist theatre and others. Visit her online at www.jenniferblackmer.com.

Available for **virtual** and **in-person** events.

Contact: jsblackmer@bsu.edu

Agata Izabela Brewer, Debut Shortlist Honoree



Agata Izabela Brewer was born and raised in Poland. She came to the U.S. as an MFA student and graduated with a Ph.D. in English from the University of South Carolina. Her publications include an award-winning memoir, *The Hunger Book*, scholarly books on 20th-century literature, as well as essays and short stories in *Guernica*, *Black Warrior Review*, *Contrary Magazine*, *River Poets Journal*, *Entropy*, *Hektoen International: A Journal of Medical Humanities*, and *Wabash Magazine*. She is the winner of the 2022 Gournay Prize and the 2019 Black Warrior Review Nonfiction Prize. *The Hunger Book* has been shortlisted for the William Saroyan International

Prize for Writing and nominated for the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award.

Agata lives in Indiana, where she teaches at [Wabash College](#) and volunteers as a Court Appointed Special Advocate. She is the founder of [Immigrant Allies](#).

Available for virtual and in-person events.

Contact: brewera@wabash.edu

Maurice Broaddus, Middle Grade Award Winner and Genre Shortlist Honoree



A community Afrofuturist, librarian, and teacher, Maurice Broaddus's award-winning work has appeared in places like *Lightspeed Magazine*, *Black Panther: Tales from Wakanda*, *Out There Screaming*, *Asimov's Magazine*, *Weird Tales*, *Magazine of F&SF*, and *Uncanny Magazine*.

His books include the sci-fi novels *Sweep of Stars* and *Breath of Oblivion*; the steampunk works, *Buffalo Soldier* and *Pimp My Airship*; and the middle grade detective novels, *The Usual Suspects* and *Unfadeable*. His project, *Sorcerers*, is being adapted as a television show for AMC. He's an editor at *Apex Magazine*. Learn more at MauriceBroaddus.com.

Available for in-person events.

Contact: mauricebroaddus@gmail.com

Curtis L. Crisler, Poetry Shortlist Honoree



Curtis L. Crisler was born and raised in Gary, Indiana. Crisler, an award-winning poet/author, has a new book called *Doing Drive-bys on How to Love in the Midwest*. He has six poetry books, two YA books, and five poetry chapbooks. He's been published in a variety of magazines, journals, and anthologies. He's co-editor of poetry for *the museum of americana*. He created the Indiana Chitlin Circuit and the poetry form called the *sonastic*. He's the Indiana Poet Laureate and Professor of English at Purdue University Fort Wayne (PFW). He can be contacted at www.poetcrisler.com.

Available for virtual and in-person events.

Contact: crislerc33@gmail.com

Troy Cummings, Children's Shortlist Honoree



As a kid, *New York Times* bestselling author Troy Cummings spent all his time writing stories, drawing pictures, and keeping an eye out for monsters. As a grown-up, he pretty much does the same thing. Except now his bedtime is 9:15.

Troy has written and illustrated more than 40 children's books, including *The Notebook of Doom* series, *The Binder of Doom* series, *Can I Be Your Dog?*, and *The Eensy Weensy Spider Freaks Out (Big-Time!)* He has also illustrated books by other authors, including *Caring for Your Lion* (by Tammi Sauer), *Little*

Red Gliding Hood (by Tara Lazar), *Mighty Truck* (by Chris Barton), and *Vroom Vroom Garbage Truck* (by Asia Citro).

His illustrations have appeared in newspapers, magazines, greeting cards, board games, jigsaw puzzles, a French opera, and on the back of a box of fish sticks.

Troy is a native Hoosier. He was born in Greencastle, Indiana, and still lives there today, stealing jokes from his kids, cats, and hamsters.

Available for virtual and in-person events.

Contact: troycummings@gmail.com

Edward E. Curtis IV, Nonfiction Shortlist Honoree



[Edward E. Curtis IV](#) is William M. and Gail M. Plater Chair of the Liberal Arts and Professor of World Languages & Cultures at the [Indiana University School of Liberal Arts](#) in Indianapolis, where he also directs the [Arabic and Islamic studies minor](#). Raised in Southern Illinois, where his Syrian-Lebanese family settled in the late 1800s, Curtis also lived in Evansville during his teenage years and has made Indianapolis his home since 2005. His Indiana connections run deep—Curtis' first paid job was as a gardener in historic New Harmony. That sense of connection has inspired Curtis to explore the Arab and Muslim history of Indiana in a variety of

publications and in other ways, too. From researching the late nineteenth-century Syrian peddlers of Fort Wayne and Indianapolis' first Arabic-speaking neighborhood to Indiana's first permanent mosque in Michigan City, Curtis has sought to show how Arabs and Muslims are part and parcel of the Hoosier state's history. Curtis has written or edited a total of fourteen books about Africana religions, Islam, Arab American history, and Muslim American studies. [Muslims in America: A Short History](#) (Oxford University Press) was named one of the best 100 books of 2009 by *Publishers Weekly*, and [Muslims of the Heartland: How Syrian Immigrants Made a Home in the American Midwest](#) (New York University Press) won the 2023 Evelyn Shakir Book Award from the Arab American National Museum.

In his talk, Curtis can address the history of Arab Americans, both Christians and Muslims in Indiana as well as the history of Muslims, including African Americans, Arab Americans, and South Asian Americans.

Available for virtual and in-person events.

Contact: ecurtis4@iupui.edu

Nicole Cushing, Genre Shortlist Honoree



Nicole Cushing is a writer of dark, weird fiction (often accompanied with a side dish of humor). Based in southeastern Indiana, many of her books evoke the grim strangeness of Midwestern life.

Her debut *Mr. Suicide* (2015) won the Bram Stoker Award for Superior Achievement in a First Novel. Her novellas *Children of No One* (2012) and *The Sadist's Bible* (2016) received nominations for the Shirley Jackson Award. Her novel *A Sick Gray Laugh* (2019) was named to *LitReactor's* Ten Best Horror Novels of the Last Decade list and the *Locus* Recommended Reading List. Her work has been

translated into Czech, German, and Italian.

Available for virtual and in-person events.

Contact: nicolecushingwriter@gmail.com

John F. Duffy, Fiction Shortlist Honoree



A native of Chicago and current resident of Bloomington, Ind., **John F. Duffy** spent his twenties and thirties exploring America, and his travels now greatly inform his writing. His short fiction has earned him a Pushcart Nomination, and his debut novel, *A Ballroom for Ghost Dancing*, was a National Indie Excellence Award finalist and a Gold Medal winner for Best Midwest Fiction from the Independent Publishers Book Award. His second novel, *Where When it Rains*, will be available in December 2024 from Picket Fire Press.

Available for **virtual** and **in-person** events.

Contact: duffy.contact@gmail.com

Helen Frost, Children's Shortlist Honoree



Helen Frost, poet, anthologist, playwright, and author of books for children and teens, has lived in Fort Wayne for more than thirty years. She has received several awards and fellowships from Indiana Humanities and the Indiana Arts Commission.

Her eleven novels-in-poems for young readers have won numerous awards, including: for *Keesha's House*, a Michael L. Printz honor from the American Library Association; for *Diamond Willow*, the Lee Bennett Hopkins Award for Children's Poetry; for *Salt*, the New York Historical Society's Children's History Book Prize; for *Hidden*, the

William Allen White Award; and for *All He Knew*, the Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction and a Midland Authors Award as well as an Indiana Author Award.

Wait— and See, her sixth collaboration with photographer Rick Lieder, celebrates the life of a praying mantis, while encouraging children to be patient in their observations of the natural world. In addition to her collaborations with Lieder, she is the author of *Monarch and Milkweed*, illustrated by Leonid Gore, now in its 18th printing.

Born in Brookings, South Dakota, Helen lived there until she was eleven, then moved to Massachusetts, and later graduated from Syracuse University with a degree in Elementary Education and a concentration in English. She received her Masters degree in English from Indiana University.

Helen is married and has two sons and a grandson. She enjoys travel, hiking, crocheting, and gardening.

Available for **virtual** and **in-person** events.

Contact: helenfrost@comcast.net

Edward Fujawa, Nonfiction Award Winner



Ed Fujawa was born in Boulder, Colorado, but spent his formative years in Greenwood, Indiana and graduated from Greenwood Community High School. He then attended Indiana University – Bloomington and graduated in 2004 before leaving the state for law school. Returning to Indiana in 2007, he and his wife Ashlee lived in downtown Indianapolis before moving to the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood in 2008.

Professionally, Ed is an attorney with the Indiana Department of Insurance, where he specializes in medical malpractice litigation. In his spare time, he is also an Indianapolis historian and authors a blog dedicated to the history of the Indianapolis area, www.class900indy.com. His first history book about the city, *Vanished Indianapolis*, was published in 2023 and explores the history of lost sites across Indianapolis. When he is not researching and exploring the history of Indianapolis and surrounding areas, Ed enjoys being a subpar fisherman, photography, and kayaking on the waterways of Indiana, including the White River and Fall Creek in Marion County.

Available for virtual and in-person events.

Contact: efujawa@gmail.com

Dori Graham, Children's Shortlist Honoree



Dori Graham is a writer and librarian in Fort Wayne, Indiana where she was born and raised to climb trees, skip rope, and ride bikes until the streetlights came on. Dori has an MFA in Creative Writing for Children and Young Adults from Hamline University, and her debut book, *Brave Miss Muffet*, was star-reviewed by School Library Journal Xpress. Dori lives happily in a cozy cottage-of-a-house with her family and their many hundred books.

Available for virtual and in-person events.

Contact: dorigraham47@gmail.com

Donna Griffin, Middle Grade Shortlist Honoree



Donna Griffin is an author and Master Journalism Educator who is passionate about bringing people together through the power of books. She weaves written words and printed pages, and collaborates with celebrated illustrators to create powerful stories!

Donna Griffin is mostly known as Nana and Mrs. Griffin. She's been a journalist, teacher, and writer for-ev-er and continues to help kids go for their dreams through media creation. She has written children's books about Christmas, a goat named Old Whiskers, First Amendment superheroes, the Ultimate Sibling Showdown, an epic online poetry slam, and a SUPER story about her hometown, Indianapolis! She lives in Greenfield, Indiana, with her husband and goes on adventures, big and small with her grandchildren and students of all ages. She is an independent author and educator who connects kids and teens to their communities with her 501c3 non-profit, Dani's Dreams Innovation in Education Corp and Student Voices @ Butler University. She teaches English and Media at Zion Lutheran School in New Palestine.

She loves bringing fun, hands-on educational activities to schools, after-school programs or nonprofits. Log onto to donnaauthor.com to learn more.

Available for virtual and in-person events.

Contact: dgriffins96@gmail.com

Tess Gunty, Fiction Award Winner



Tess Gunty is the author of the *New York Times* bestselling novel *The Rabbit Hutch*, which won the 2022 National Book Award for Fiction. The novel also received the Waterstones Debut Fiction Prize, the Barnes and Noble Discover Prize, and the VCU Cabell First Novelist Award. It was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle John Leonard Prize, the Open Bank Vanity Fair Award for Best New Author in Spain, the British Book Award for Debut Fiction, and the Mark Twain American Voice Award. Named one of twelve Essential Reads by *The New Yorker* and a best book of the year by *The New York Times*, NPR, *Oprah Daily*, *TIME*, and others, the novel

is currently a finalist for the inaugural Inside Literary Prize, the first literary award in America to be determined by a panel of incarcerated judges. *The Rabbit Hutch* has been translated into twelve languages and optioned for film adaptation.

Born and raised in South Bend, Indiana, Tess studied English with an honors concentration in creative writing at the University of Notre Dame, where she won a theater award for her play and the Ernest Sandeen Award for her poetry collection. She left Indiana at the age of twenty-two to pursue a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing at New York University, where she was a Lillian Vernon Fellow. There, she began working on *The Rabbit Hutch*, a polyphonic

ode to postindustrial Indiana. She is currently a Writer in Residence at New York University, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate students. Her fiction has appeared in *The Atlantic*, *Freeman's*, *Joyland*, *The Iowa Review*, *Granta*, and other publications. She now lives between Brooklyn and upstate New York.

Available for virtual events.

Contact: tessguntty@gmail.com

Elisabeth Hegmann, Genre Shortlist Honoree



Elisabeth Hegmann is a speculative fiction writer who introduces her readers to characters who resonate deeply with their most outrageous vulnerabilities and their most transcendent yearnings, and who come to be like family with whom they want to go on a long journey together. She grew up in a family of classically trained musicians, and her work has always been informed richly and powerfully by music. She has a B.A. in creative writing from IU and an MFA in fiction from NCSU. Her work has been published in a variety of journals, produced on regional stages, and won several awards. Her book of linked short stories, *Modus Perfectus*, was published by Paper Angel Press in 2023. She's currently working on a series of novels, *The Last-Lorn Ship on the Brimful Puddle*. In 2024, she was one of 30 creatives from around the state accepted into Indiana Arts Commission's On-Ramp Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator program, in connection with which she will be carrying out a year-long fellowship project aimed towards reader and community engagement. She lives in her hometown of North Vernon, Indiana, where she works diligently to be worthy of the love of her dog, and teaches every imaginable kind of writing to tolerant college students. She also teaches creative writing classes at Perceptions Yoga, Mindfulness & Art in Vernon, IN. Visit her website eahegmann.com to sign up for her mailing list and learn more about her current projects.

Available for virtual and in-person events.

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Katherine Higgs-Coulthard, Young Adult Shortlist Honoree



Katherine Higgs-Coulthard is a middle grade and young adult author whose work has been praised by Publisher's weekly and Kirkus as "emotionally-nuanced" and "viseral." She is an Associate Professor of Education at Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, where she prepares preservice teachers in literacy and writing instruction. A member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, the National Writing Project, and the National Council of Teachers of English, Kat is frequently invited to speak at state and national conferences.

Kat started writing as a child and uses her positions as a college professor and author to serve as an advocate for prioritizing time for creativity and effective writing instruction in schools. In 2008, she opened Michiana Writers' Center as a way to support writers of all ages through classes and workshops in the South Bend/Mishawaka area. In 2013, Kat founded the Get Inked Teen Writing Conference at Saint Mary's College, which brings together young writers and published authors.

Although, technically Kat lives 0.25 miles across the Michigan state line, she graduated from Indiana University, South Bend and has worked in Indiana all of her adult life—first as a teacher for South Bend Schools, and currently as a professor at Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame.

Kat's writing explores the core issues teens face today, especially those related to family dynamics. Her first book, *Hanging with My Peeps*, is a contemporary middle grade novel following a family about to lose their home due to the layoffs in Elkhart's RV industry and their salvation via an unlikely ally and 43 chickens. Kat's young adult novel, *Junkyard Dogs*, is also set in Indiana and addresses issues of teen poverty and homelessness. It is inspired by her own experiences growing up in poverty and also by South Bend's 2006 Manhole Murders, which made national news. Her work has also appeared in *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, *Jack and Jill Magazine*, *Cleaver*, and *Women on Writing*.

Kat is an experienced teacher and writer who can lead school visits, writing sessions, craft lectures, and share information about the publishing process, especially as it relates to writing for children and young adults.

You can find Kat online at www.writewithkat.com.

Available for virtual and in-person events.

Contact: michianawriterscenter@gmail.com

Sarah Hollowell, Young Adult Shortlist Honoree



Sarah Hollowell is a fat, queer Hoosier writer aiming to up the magic quotient of Indiana. Her books include the Locus Award-nominated *A Dark and Starless Forest* and *What Stalks Among Us*, which was selected as a Junior Library Guild Gold Standard. Her work has appeared on *The NoSleep Podcast*, *Fireside Fiction*, *Huffington Post*, and in *The (Other) F Word: A Celebration of the Fat and the Fierce*. She volunteers with teen writers through the Alpha Workshop and raises small cryptids in the shape of cats. She can be found on Twitter [@sarahhollowell](https://twitter.com/sarahhollowell) or at www.sarahhollowell.com.

Available for virtual and in-person events.

Contact: hollowell.writer@gmail.com

Anna Lee Huber, Genre Shortlist Honoree



Anna Lee Huber is the USA Today bestselling and Daphne award-winning author of more than twenty novels, including the Lady Darby Mysteries, the Verity Kent Mysteries, and the Gothic Myths series, as well as *Sisters of Fortune: A Novel of the Titanic* and the anthology *The Deadly Hours*. She is a summa cum laude graduate of Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee, where she majored in music and minored in psychology. Her novels have been translated into multiple languages, and she is a member of Mystery Writers of America, Sisters in Crime, and International Thriller Writers. She currently resides in Fort Wayne, Indiana with her family

and enjoys reading, singing, crafts, and travel when she's not hard at work on her next novel. Visit her online at www.annaleehuber.com.

Available for virtual and in-person events.

Contact: anna@annaleehuber.com

Angela Jackson-Brown, Fiction Shortlist Honoree



Angela Jackson-Brown is an award-winning writer, poet and playwright who is an Associate Professor in the creative writing program at Indiana University in Bloomington. Angela and her family moved to Indiana in 2008 and has felt at home amidst the corn fields and rural landscape that reminds her of her home in Alabama. Along with teaching at IU, Angela also teaches in the graduate program at the Naslund-Mann Graduate School of Writing at Spalding University in Louisville, KY. She is a graduate of Troy University, Auburn University and the Naslund-Mann Graduate School of Writing at Spalding University. She has published her

short fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry in journals like *The Louisville Journal* and the *Appalachian Review*. She is the author of *Drinking From a Bitter Cup*, *House Repairs*, *When Stars Rain Down* and *The Light Always Breaks*. Her novels have received starred reviews from the *Library Journal* and glowing reviews from Alabama Public Library, *Buzzfeed*, *Parade Magazine*, and *Women's Weekly*, just to name a few. *When Stars Rain Down* was named a finalist for the 2021 David J. Langum, Sr. Prize in American Historical Fiction, longlisted for the Granum Foundation Award, and shortlisted for the 2022 Indiana Authors Award. In October of 2023, Angela's novel, *Homeward*, a follow-up to *When Stars Rain Down*, was published by Harper Muse. In December of 2024, her next novel, *Untethered*, will be published by Harper Muse.

Available for virtual and in-person events.

Contact: angelajacksonbrown@outlook.com

Tasha Jun, Debut Shortlist Honoree



Tasha Jun is a mixed race Korean American melancholy dreamer. She grew up in a multicultural and biracial home and because of that, she's spent her life navigating cultural collisions and liminal space. She sees the world best through stories and poetry. She is passionate about helping others notice beauty and embrace themselves as wholly beloved. She writes about everyday life, faith, and cultural and ethnic identity, and writing has always been the way she's found hope and shalom. She lives in the greater Indianapolis area with her family. And though she had a complicated relationship with Indiana for throughout all of high

school and college, and has left multiple times, she and her family have called Indiana home for more than the last decade. Her debut book, *Tell Me the Dream Again: Reflections on Family, and the Sacred Work of Belonging* is available now, wherever books are sold. Find her on [Instagram](#) or subscribe to receive her newsletter, [Shalomsick Notes](#).

Available for virtual and in-person events.

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George Kalamaras, Poetry Award Winner



A longtime Indiana resident, **George Kalamaras** was born on Chicago's South Side. Three of his four grandparents emigrated to the U.S. from Greece and settled in the Chicago area. George moved to northwest Indiana with his family in 1960 and grew up in the woods in Cedar Lake.

George served as Indiana's Poet Laureate during 2014 and 2015. He is Professor Emeritus of English at Purdue University Fort Wayne (formerly Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne), where he taught for thirty-two years, retiring in 2022. He is the author of

twenty-four collections of poetry—fifteen full-length books and nine chapbooks—and he has three additional full-length collections forthcoming in 2025 and 2026.

He has published numerous poems in some of the nation's leading journals and anthologies, including *AGNI*, *The Best American Poetry*, *The Bitter Oleander*, *Caliban*, *Conjunctions* (online), *The Iowa Review*, *Kenyon Review* (online), *New Letters*, *North American Review*, *Poetry* (Chicago), *Sulfur*, and many others. In addition to his publications in the United States, his poems have appeared in print journals in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America and have been translated into Bengali and Spanish.

George has also published a critical book on Western language theory and the Eastern wisdom traditions, *Reclaiming the Tacit Dimension: Symbolic Form in the Rhetoric of Silence*, as well as numerous scholarly articles. He has received several grants and awards, including an NEA Creative Writing Fellowship (1993) and two Individual Artist Fellowships from the Indiana Arts Commission (2001 and 2011). During 1994, he spent several months in India on an Indo-U.S. Advanced Research Fellowship from the Indo-U.S. Subcommittee on Education and Culture.

Having grown up in the Indiana woods, one of George's greatest loves is hound dogs! George and his wife, Mary Ann Cain (Professor Emerita at Purdue University Fort Wayne and a fellow writer) have nurtured beagles in their home for nearly thirty years, first Barney, then Bootsie, and now Blaisie.

Available for **virtual** events.

Contact: gkalamaras@comcast.net

Kenneth Kraegel, Children's Shortlist Honoree



Kenneth Kraegel grew up in Mishawaka, Indiana and is a proud Hoosier. He followed a roundabout path to becoming an author and illustrator of children's books. This included getting a degree in theology, volunteering at an agriculture school in Honduras, helping refugees find jobs and furniture in Chicago, volunteering with an NGO in Uganda, working on a construction site in Wyoming and on vegetable farms in Wisconsin, Indiana, and Ohio. He now lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan with his family. He is also a tutor for people with reading challenges such as dyslexia.

Kenneth's books include *Mermaid Lullaby* and *Mushroom Lullaby* – bedtime books, *This Is a Book of Shapes* – a board book, *Wild Honey from the Moon* – a beginning chapter book, and the picture books – *Green Pants*, *King Arthur's Very Great Grandson* and *the Song of Delphine*. His books have been awarded such distinctions as the New York Times Book Review's Notable Children's Book of the Year, the Wall Street Journal's Children's Best Book of the Year, the Parent's Choice Gold Award, the Chicago Public Library Best of the Best, Amazon's Editor's Pick and Kirkus Reviews' Best Book.

Available for virtual and in-person events.

Contact: kennethkraegel@gmail.com

Chris Lamb, Nonfiction Shortlist Honoree



Chris Lamb is a professor of Journalism at Indiana University–Indianapolis, where he has taught courses like *Fake News; Myth, Baseball, and the Meaning of Life; Sports, Race, and the Media;* and *Feature Writing* for 12 years. He is an author, historian, lecturer, satirist, and columnist. He is the author of 12 books, including *Stolen Dreams: The Cannon Street Little League All-Stars and Little League Baseball's Civil War*. Lamb's columns and articles have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The Nation*, *New Republic*, and *Salon*. Lamb is married to his wife, and they have one son David.

Available for virtual and in-person events.

Contact: lambch@iu.edu

Sarah Layden, Fiction Shortlist Honoree



Sarah Layden is the author of *Imagine Your Life Like This*, stories; *Trip Through Your Wires*, a novel; and *The Story I Tell Myself About Myself*, winner of the Sonder Press Chapbook Competition. She is co-author with Bryan Furuness of *The Invisible Art of Literary Editing*. Her short fiction appears in *Boston Review*, *Blackbird*, *McSweeney's Internet Tendency*, *Best Microfiction 2020*, and elsewhere, with recent nonfiction in *The Washington Post*, *Poets & Writers*, *Salon*, *The Millions*, and *River Teeth*. She is an Associate Professor of English at Indiana University Indianapolis, where she serves as faculty advisor to *genesis*, the campus literary and art

magazine. After graduating from Lawrence North High School, she earned a B.S. in journalism from Syracuse University and an M.F.A. in creative writing from Purdue University. She and her family live in Indianapolis.

Available for virtual and in-person events.

Contact: salayden@gmail.com

Brian Leung, Fiction Shortlist Honoree



Brian Leung's newest book is *A Terrifying Brush with Optimism* (Sarabande, February 2025). He is the author of *Take Me Home* (HarperCollins) which was a recipient of a Willa Award for Historical Fiction, *World Famous Love Acts* (Sarabande Books), *Ivy vs Dogg: With a Cast of Thousands!* (C&R Press), *All I Should Not Tell* (C&R Press), and the well-received novel, *Lost Men* (Random House). In 2012 Lambda Literary Foundation presented him with its Mid-Career Novelist Award. Brian's fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry have appeared in numerous anthologies as well as *Story*, *Always Crashing*, *Honey Literary*, *Crazyhorse*, *Grain*, *Gulf Coast*,

Kinesis, *The Barcelona Review*, *Mid-American Review*, *Salt Hill*, *Gulf Stream*, *River City*, *Runes*, *The Bellingham Review*, *Hyphen*, *Velocity*, *The Connecticut Review*, *Blithe House Quarterly*, *Indiana Review*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Crowd*, and in the anthologies, *Who's Yer Daddy*, *The Habit of Art*, *Law and Disorder*, *A Flame Called Indiana*, and *Altered States*. He is also the co-author of the non-fiction humor title, *Not Another Feel Good Singles Book*. For six years Professor Leung worked with the U.S. Department of State Institute on Contemporary U.S. Literature where, in his final year, he served as Principal Investigator and Director. He previously served as Director of Creative Writing at Purdue University where he is a professor in the Department of English. A native of California, he received his M.F.A. in Creative Writing from Indiana University.

Available for virtual and in-person events.

Contact: brian-leung@purdue.edu

D.A. Lockhart, Poetry Shortlist Honoree



D.A. Lockhart is the author of multiple collections of poetry, lyric essays, and short fiction. His work has been shortlisted for the Trillium Book Award, Raymond Souster Award, Indiana Author's Awards, First Nations Communities READ Award, and has been a finalist for the ReLit Award. His work has appeared widely throughout Turtle Island including, The Malahat Review, Grain, CV2, TriQuarterly, The Fiddlehead, ARC Poetry Magazine, Best Canadian Poetry, Best New Poetry from the Midwest, and Belt. Along the way his work has garnered numerous Pushcart Prize nominations, National Magazine Award nominations, and Best of the Net nominations. He is a graduate of the Indiana University – Bloomington MFA in Creative Writing program where he held a Neal-Marshall Graduate Fellowship in Creative Writing.

Lockhart called the Kyle Oak and the Irvington neighbourhood of Indianapolis home for many years. His body of work as a whole utilizes Hoosier land-rooted mythologies and histories and continues to explore the rich interplay of Indigenous, Midwestern, and American cultures in the physical space that is modern day Indiana. He and his family have relocated to Waawiiyaatanong (Windsor, On – Detroit, MI) with plans to return to his ancestral Lenape Opeksipu homelands in Central Indiana. He is pùkuwànkooamimëns of the Moravian of the Thames First Nation. He is the publisher at Urban Farmhouse Press.

Available for virtual events.

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Robin Lee Lovelace, Genre Shortlist Honoree



Robin Lee Lovelace is a mixed-race African-American Hoosier who usually writes short fiction. In 2017, Robin won the grand prize in a one-act play contest, presented by the 30XNinety theatre in Mandeville, a suburb of New Orleans. In March 2019, she won the Etchings Press annual competition for novellas for her novella *Savonne, Not Vonny*. Robin was named as an honoree in the Emerging Author category for the Indiana Author's Awards in September 2020. Robin was one of the three finalists for the Don Belton Fiction Prize for 2021 for her collection of stories titled *A Wild Region* and a Stowe Story Labs SAG Indie Finalist for *Savonne, Not Vonny*, in 2021. In 2021, she won the Marguerite McGlinn short fiction prize for her story *Uncle*, awarded by Rosemont College and Philadelphia Stories. Robin was a Wildacres Retreat Diversity Scholarship winner in July 2023. A non-fiction essay that she wrote, called *Different Times, Different Degrees, Same Shit* appeared in the 2023 summer edition of Indiana Review. Robin's latest book is a collection of short stories titled *A Wild Region* that can be

found for purchase on Amazon, Books-a-Million, and Barnes and Noble. In March 2024, Robin was named as one of ten finalists for the ScreenCraft Cinematic Book Competition.

Available for virtual and in-person events.

Contact: robinlovelace@msn.com

Douglas Manuel, Poetry Shortlist Honoree



Douglas Manuel was born in Anderson, Indiana, and now resides in Long Beach, California. He received a BA in Creative Writing from Arizona State University, an MFA in poetry from Butler University, and a PhD in English Literature and Creative Writing from the University of Southern California. He is the author of two collections of poetry, *Testify* (2017) and *Trouble Funk* (2023). His poems and essays can be found in numerous literary journals, magazines, and websites, most recently *Zyzzyva*, *Pleiades*, and the *New Orleans Review*. He has traveled to Egypt and Eritrea with The University of Iowa's International Writing Program to teach poetry. A recipient of

the Dana Gioia Poetry Award and a fellowship from the Borchard Foundation Center on Literary Arts, he is an assistant professor of English at Whittier College and teaches at Spalding University's low-res MFA program.

Available for virtual and limited in-person events.

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Michael Martone, Fiction Shortlist Honoree



Michael Martone's recent books include *Table Talk* and *Second Thoughts*, *Plain Air: Sketches from Winesburg, Indiana*, *The Complete Writings of Art Smith*, *The Bird Boy of Fort Wayne*, *Edited by Michael Martone*, *The Moon Over Wapakoneta*, *Brooding*, and *Memoranda*. *Michael Martone*, is a memoir in contributor's notes. *Unconventions: Writing on Writing* and *Rules of Thumb*, edited with Susan Neville, are craft books. He is also the author of *The Blue Guide to Indiana*, published by FC2. The University of Georgia Press published his book of essays, *The Flatness and Other Landscapes*, winner of the AWP Award for Nonfiction, in 2000. His stories and

essays have appeared in *Harper's*, *Esquire*, *Story*, *Antaeus*, *North American Review*, *Benzene*, *Epoch*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Iowa Review*, *Third Coast*, *Shenandoah*, *Bomb*, *Story Quarterly*, *American Short Fiction* and other magazines.

Martone was born and grew up in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He attended Butler University, IPFW, and graduated from Indiana University. He holds the MA from The Writing Seminars of The Johns Hopkins University. Martone has won two Fellowships from the NEA and a grant from

the Ingram Merrill Foundation. His stories have won awards in the *Italian Americana* fiction contest, the *Florida Review* Short Story Contest, the *Story* magazine Short, Short Story Contest, the Margaret Jones Fiction Prize of *Black Ice Magazine*, and the first World's Best Short, Short Story Contest. His stories and essays have appeared and been cited in the *Pushcart Prize*, *The Best American Stories* and *The Best American Essays* anthologies.

In 2013 he received the national Indiana Authors Award, in 2016, the Mark Twain Award for Distinguished Contribution to Midwestern Literature, and in 2022, the Truman Capote Award for Short Fiction. Michael Martone is now Emeritus Professor at the University of Alabama where he had been teaching since 1996. He has been a faculty member of the MFA Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College since 1988. He also taught at Iowa State University, Harvard University, and Syracuse University.

Available for **virtual** and limited **in-person** events.

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Janna Matthies, Children's Award Winner



Janna Matthies was born in Anderson, Indiana, and raised in southern Ohio—though she returned often to Indiana to ride her uncle's tractor, climb his trees, and mind the cash box at his roadside produce stand. Her early years consisted of inventing stories on her cassette recorder, practicing piano and violin, and searching outdoors for additions to her bug collection. Today she's a picture book author and guitar-playing music teacher in Indianapolis, where she and her husband raised three children and have lived for twenty-seven years.

Janna's most recent picture books include *MY TOWERING TREE* (Beach Lane/Simon & Schuster, 8.27.24), *OVER IN THE GARDEN* (Doubleday/Random House Children's Books, 3.18.25) and *BABY, LET'S GO TO THE ORCHESTRA* (Creative Editions, 2025). Her other titles are *HERE WE COME!* (Beach Lane Books/S&S, 2022), which earned a *Horn Book* starred review and Junior Library Guild Gold Standard selection; *GOD'S ALWAYS LOVING YOU* (WorthyKids/Hachette, 2021); *TWO IS ENOUGH* (Running Press Kids/Hachette), which made the Bank Street list and *NYT Book Review*; *THE GOODBYE CANCER GARDEN* (Albert Whitman), which earned a School Library Journal starred review, "Best Foreign Children's Book" at the Sharjah International Book Fair, and inclusion in the CCBC Choices list; *PETER, THE KNIGHT WITH ASTHMA* (Albert Whitman); and *MONSTER TRUCKS* (Piggy Toes Press).

Janna is represented by Rachel Orr of Prospect Agency. She holds a BA from Northwestern University and is a long-time participant in the Indiana SCBWI. She's also proud to edit the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra's "Teddy Bear Concert" picture book series. When not reading, writing, or making music, you'll find Janna in her garden, swimming laps, or taking long evening walks (sometimes by moonlight) with her howling husky, Juneau.

Available for **virtual** and **in-person** events.

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Rebecca McKanna, Genre Award Winner



Rebecca McKanna's short stories have been anthologized in *The Best American Mystery Stories 2019* and recognized as distinguished in *The Best American Short Stories 2019*. She has been published in *Colorado Review*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *The Rumpus*, *McSweeney's Internet Tendency*, and *Third Coast*, among other publications. She is an associate professor of English at the University of Indianapolis. *Don't Forget the Girl* is her first novel.

Available for virtual and in-person events.

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Brittany Means, Debut Award Winner



Brittany Means was born dead and then lived for a while in a car and then later in a huge black barn out in the cornfields of rural Indiana. A graduate of Ball State University and the University of Iowa's Nonfiction Writing Program, her debut memoir, *Hell If We Don't Change Our Ways*, earned a Kirkus starred review and was picked as a Best Book of Fall 2023 by *PEOPLE* magazine. Currently, Means lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where she keeps chickens, edits, and watches many many horror movies.

Available for virtual and limited in-person events.

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Rebecca Mullin, Children's Shortlist Honoree



Rebecca Mullin wrote *Purple Carrot* and *One Tomato* to recreate the joy of picking and learning about home-grown vegetables. An avid gardener and mother of four girls, Rebecca gained bookselling experience at Kids Ink in Indianapolis and as a Board Member of the Great Lakes Independent Bookseller Association. Rebecca continues to expand her garden and her series of gardening board books with the upcoming release of *Tiny Turnip* in the Spring of 2025.

Available for in-person events.

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Jeff Darren Muse, Debut Shortlist Honoree



In his award-winning book, *Dear Park Ranger*, Jeff Darren Muse writes: "You will not care for what you do not know. Start now. Start knowing it." From crawdad creeks and public wildlands to college classrooms and prison gardens, he has worked throughout the United States as an environmental educator, historical interpreter, and park ranger.

Born and raised in Indiana, Muse graduated from Mt. Vernon High School in 1987 and DePauw University in 1991. With master's degrees in science and creative writing, he has been employed by numerous agencies, public universities, and nonprofit organizations, from McLeod Plantation Historic Site and Zion National Park, to The Evergreen State College and University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, to Hudson River Sloop Clearwater and North Cascades Institute. Be it north, south, east, or west, he embodies the Crossroads of America.

As a writer, Muse is inspired by Brian Doyle's dictum: "The essay is a jackdaw, a magpie, a raven. It picks up everything and uses it." Exploring nature, culture, family life, and his own highs and lows, Muse's essays have appeared in *Ascent*, *The Common*, *High Country News*, and *River Teeth*, among others. His book, *Dear Park Ranger*, interrogates his lifelong restlessness—that of a fatherless, childless Hoosier who wouldn't and couldn't stay put. In 2024, Nautilus Book Awards honored his memoir-in-essays with a silver medal, and *Foreword Reviews* deemed it a finalist for a 2023 INDIES Book of the Year Award.

With his wife, "Ranger Paula," Muse has returned home to central Indiana where he now battles cancer—his own. In the summer of 2023, as they both rangered in New Mexico, he experienced a cluster of confusing symptoms. An MRI revealed a brain tumor. Healthcare laid out a map. "Don't fret," he says. "I'm still here! Still hiking!" Along with writing about this new wilderness, Muse continues to connect people to places and people to each other—all ages, all walks of life. Learn more at www.jeffdarrenmuse.com.

Available for virtual and in-person events.

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Donald Platt, Poetry Shortlist Honoree



Donald Platt (Ph.D., University of Utah, 1995) is the author of eight volumes of poetry: *Swansdown* (Grid Books, 2022), *One Illuminated Letter of Being* (Red Mountain Press, 2020), *Man Praying* (Parlor Press / Free Verse Editions, 2017), *Tornadoesque* (CavanKerry Press, 2016), *Dirt Angels* (New Issues Press, 2009), *My Father Says Grace* (Arkansas University Press, 2007), *Cloud Atlas* (Purdue University Press, 2002), and *Fresh Peaches, Fireworks, & Guns* (Purdue University Press, 1994). His ninth book, *Tender Voyeur*, will be published by Grid Books in 2025. His fine-press, limited-edition chapbook *Leap Second at the Turn of the Millennium* was

published in 1999 by the Center for Book Arts in New York City.

His poems have appeared in many journals, including *The New Republic*, *Nation*, *American Poetry Review*, *Paris Review*, *Poetry*, *Kenyon Review*, *Georgia Review*, *Ploughshares*, *TriQuarterly*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *Ironwood*, *Shenandoah*, *Crazyhorse*, *Antioch Review*, *Colorado Review*, *Notre Dame Review*, *Gulf Coast*, *Sou'wester*, *New Ohio Review*, *Nimrod International Journal*, *Epoch*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Passages North*, *Cream City Review*, *VOLT*, *River Styx*, *Third Coast*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *DIAGRAM*, *Diode*, *32 Poems*, *BLOOM*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *AGNI*, *BOMB Magazine*, *Barrow Street*, *Cimarron Review*, *Plume*, *Wallace Stevens Journal*, *William and Mary Review*, *Meridian*, *ACM (Another Chicago Magazine)*, *Quarterly West*, *Green Mountains Review*, *Laurel Review*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *Ecotone*, *Water~Stone Review*, *Poetry Northwest*, *New American Writing*, *Chelsea*, *Rattle*, *Black Warrior Review*, *Seneca Review*, *Cincinnati Review*, *Florida Review*, *New England Review*, *Salmagundi*, *Western Humanities Review*, *Field*, *Five Points*, *Fence*, *Adroit Journal*, *Iowa Review*, *Southwest Review*, *Tin House*, *Southern Review*, *Lana Turner*, *New Criterion*, *Yale Review*, and *Atlantic Monthly*, as well as in *The Best American Poetry 2000*, *2006*, and *2015*. His poems have been republished on the Poetry Daily and Verse Daily websites.

He is a recipient of two fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, three Pushcart Prizes, the Paumanok Poetry Prize, the "Discovery" / *The Nation* Prize, two Verna Emery Poetry Prizes, and the Center for Book Arts Chapbook Prize. A professor in Purdue University's English Department since 2000, he offers courses in the writing of poetry at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Available for virtual and in-person events.

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Lori Rader-Day, Genre Shortlist Honoree



Award-winning crime novelist **Lori Rader-Day** was born in Boone County, Indiana, and lived most of her childhood in homes surrounded by cornfields. She attended Western Boone Jr.-Sr. High School, which is also surrounded by cornfields—and a graveyard. She earned BS and MA journalism degrees from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, which is, yes, also surrounded by cornfields. She later earned a master of fine arts degree in creative writing from Roosevelt University, which is surrounded by Chicago.

Lori is the author of the crime fiction novels *The Death of Us*, *Death at Greenway*, *The Lucky One*, *Under a Dark Sky*, *The Day I Died*, *Little Pretty Things*, and *The Black Hour*, and has had short fiction published in several publications, including *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*. Her next novel will be released in late 2025/early 2026.

Lori is the recipient of the 2016 Mary Higgins Clark Award, the 2022 Agatha Award for Best Historical Novel, the 2015 Anthony Award for Best First Novel, and both the 2018 and 2019 Anthony Awards for Best Paperback Original Novel. She has also been nominated for the Edgar Award, one of the highest honors in crime fiction, and the Thriller, Barry, Macavity, and Left Coast Crime Lefty awards. In 2016, Lori received the Outstanding Journalism Alumnus Award from Ball State University. She is a past recipient of the Indiana Author Award, winning the regional category in 2017.

Lori has held several professional positions in advertising and marketing communications, working primarily in higher education advancement and non-profit health care communications. She worked in the Ball State University Office of University Relations for four years, assisting clients that included the new College of Communication, Information, and Media (heavily guarding that serial comma against all invaders). She was most recently the director of communications for the School of Communication at Northwestern University and now teaches in Northwestern University's MFA in Poetry and Prose program in the School of Professional Studies. She has previously taught at Ball State University, Roosevelt University, Yale University, Antioch Writers Workshop, Midwest Writers Workshop, and others.

Lori has been an active leader in the crime fiction community. She is a former regional chapter president and national board member for Mystery Writers of America and is a past national president of Sisters in Crime, a 4500-member writers' organization focused on equity and inclusion in crime publishing. She is a founding co-chair of the non-profit mystery readers' event [Midwest Mystery Conference](#).

Lori lives in Chicago with her husband Greg and their dog Clementine. Visit her at www.LoriRaderDay.com or follow her on Facebook or Instagram. She is represented by Sharon Bowers of Folio Literary Management and for film by Anonymous Content.

Available for **virtual** and **in-person** events.

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Marabai Rose, Debut Shortlist Honoree



Marabai Rose was raised by a pack of hippies amongst the rolling hills of Southern Indiana, where she still lives with her two quirky and creative teens. Marabai is a licensed clinical social worker who specializes in helping individuals heal from trauma. She is a business owner, an author, and produces and hosts a podcast called, *Badass: Tales of Resilience*. Marabai's memoir *Holding Hope: One Family's Odyssey Through Lyme Disease and Psychosis* was published in October of 2022.

Potential talk topics include sexism in medicine, Lyme disease, and mental health issues.

Available for virtual and in-person events.

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Scott Russell Sanders, Fiction Shortlist Honoree



Born in Tennessee and reared in Ohio, Scott Russell Sanders studied at Brown University and earned his Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge before going on to become a Distinguished Professor of English at Indiana University. From his home amid the oaks and owls of southern Indiana, he reflects on the vast, marvelous, ongoing show we call nature, and he puzzles about our two-legged species—wondering why we divide into hostile tribes, fight wars, and degrade the conditions for life on Earth—and he imagines how we might live more wisely.

He is the author of more than twenty books of fiction, essays, and personal narratives, including *Hunting for Hope*, *A Conservationist Manifesto*, *A Private History of Awe*, and *Earth Works: Selected Essays*. His latest books are *The Way of Imagination*, a reflection on healing and renewal in a time of social and environmental upheaval, and *Small Marvels*, a slightly magical novel-in-stories. In addition to works of fiction and essays set in the Hoosier state, he has written the text for *Wild and Scenic Indiana*, and he has written about our limestone heritage in *Stone Country: Then & Now*, co-authored with photographer Jeffry Wolin.

For his writing, Sanders has won the Lannan Literary Award, the Associated Writing Programs Creative Nonfiction Award, the John Burroughs Essay Award, the Mark Twain Award, and the Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana Authors Award, as well as fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. His work has appeared in such magazines as *Harper's*, *Audubon*, *Orion*, and *The Georgia Review*, and it has been reprinted in *The Art of the Essay*, *The Norton Reader*, and more than a hundred other anthologies, including the annual *Best American Essays*. He was elected in 2012 to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. His writing examines the human place in nature, the pursuit of social justice, and the search for a spiritual path. He and his wife, Ruth, a

biochemist, have reared two children and helped rear two grandchildren in their hometown of Bloomington, in the hardwood hill country of Indiana's White River Valley.

Available for in-person events.

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Jessica D. Thompson, Poetry Shortlist Honoree



Jessica D. Thompson is the author of *Daybreak and Deep*—a finalist in the *American Book Fest Best Books of 2022* for narrative poetry. In addition, she co-authored *When Animals Miss the Sun*, (Brick Street Poetry), a children's book in 2024. Her poetry has appeared on *Verse Daily*, and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Her poems have been published in numerous journals and anthologies, including *ONE ART*, *The Midwest Quarterly*, *The Southern Review*, and *Next Indiana Campfires: A Trail Companion* (Indiana Humanities). Her awards include the *James Baker Hall Memorial Prize in Poetry* (New Southerner). Her newest book, *The*

Mood Ring Diaries, will be released in 2025. She writes in a log cabin in Brown County, Indiana.

Available for in-person events.

Contact: jessicathom912@gmail.com

Janis Thornton, Nonfiction Shortlist Honoree



Janis Thornton is Tipton, Indiana's home-grown author of history, mystery, and true crime.

Her latest book and the topic of her presentation, *The 1965 Palm Sunday Tornadoes in Indiana*, takes a look back at Indiana's worst weather disaster and includes more than 100 horrific, heartbreaking stories about the tornadoes, told by the people who experienced them.

Her 2018 non-fiction release, *Too Good a Girl*, tells the story of Janis' high school classmate, Olene Emberton, whose tragic, unsolved death in 1965 shocked their community. Now, some 50 years later, Janis has written Olene's story to ensure it is never forgotten. Janis' other works include two cozy mysteries in the *Elmwood Confidential* series – *Dead Air* and *Double Dare*, released in June 2017 and *Dust Bunnies and Dead Bodies*, published in 2014. Janis also is the author of three Central Indiana history books – *Images of America: Tipton County*, *Images of America: Frankfort*, and *Images of America: Elwood* – and she is a contributor to *Undeniably Indiana*, a bicentennial project from Indiana University Press.

She is a member of the national mystery writer's organization, Sisters in Crime, its Indianapolis chapter, Speed City Sisters in Crime, The Author's Guild, Women Fiction Writers Association, the Indiana Writers Center, and the Tipton County Historical Society.

Available for in-person events.

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Jenna Voris, Young Adult Shortlist Honoree



Jenna Voris writes books about ambitious girls and galaxy traversing adventures. She was born and raised in Indiana—where she learned to love roundabouts and the art of college basketball—and now calls Washington D.C. home. When she's not writing, she can be found perfecting her road trip playlists and desperately trying to keep her houseplants alive. *Made of Stars* is her debut novel.

Available for virtual and limited in-person events.

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