

## The Wright Stuff: 5th Annual Rancho Mirage Writers Festival

Marc Byrd Special to The Desert Sun

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Geoffrey Cowan, Bret Stephens, and Karl Rove Lani Garfield/Special To The Desert Sun

The 5th Annual Rancho Mirage Writer's Festival "Angels Only" opening night dinner was held at The Helene Galen Auditorium at Eisenhower Medical Center. It scored a "Best Seller" with a high-energy, star power level created by keynote speakers. They included Pulitzer Prize winning author **A. Scott Berg**, Pulitzer Prize winning journalist **Bret Stephens**, Chief of Staff to U.S. President George W. Bush **Karl Rove**, and the first director of Sunnyslands **Geoffrey Cowan**.

The festival was founded by **Jamie Kabler** to help create a forum and face-to-face environment where readers can meet authors and authors can get to know their readers as well as other authors. Kabler said "My aim is to create an outstanding, world-renowned Festival. I volunteer my time all year to work toward that goal. Thanks to the generous support of our Angels, we are able to bring the most acclaimed and talented writers to the festival every year."

This internationally recognized festival has quickly become the foremost "Best Writer's" festival in the country and honors the value of reading at a time when fewer people in America are reading as a result of social media.

### SOME NUMBERS ARE BETTER THAN WORDS

This year's festival hosted fifty authors, including nine Pulitzer Prize winners and two National Book Award winners. Collectively these authors presented 90 lecture sessions in two and a half days, some which were repeated during the festival to over one thousand Angels and Readers.

At the Opening Night Program for Angels, Eisenhower Medical Center President and CEO **Aubrey Serfling** and EMC Foundation President **Michael Landes** welcomed the attendees. Their announcement that Helene Galen had generously donated funds for the renovation of The Center to be completed in time for next year's Sixth Writers Festival resulted in a round of well-deserved applause.



Helene Galen & Festival Founder Jamie Kabler Bruce Lani Garfield/Special To The Desert Sun



Front row : Daisy Lewis, Elizabeth Sorensen, Nancy Isenberg, Benjamin Reiss, Susan Eisenhower, Helen Rappaport, Sally Bedell Smith, Senator Barbara Boxer, Richard Kurin  
Second Row: Richard North Patterson, Linda Fairstein, Ben Macintyre, Douglas Brunt, Van Gorden Sauter, Geoff Cowan, Bret Stephens, Karl Rove, Adrian Goldsworthy, Richard Mason. Lani Garfield/Special To The Desert Sun



Philanthropist Harold Matzner, left, was among those able to secure a rare --and tight -- seat at the over-sold Rancho Mirage Writer's Festival. Lani Garfield/Special To The Desert Sun

### LUNCHEONS and DINNERS

On the second night, Helene Galen and Jamie Kabler hosted a private dinner for Authors and Gold and Silver Angels at their home, and on the last evening of the festival, a "Dinner in Honor of the Writers" was held at Tamarisk Country Club hosted by **Stephen and Marjorie Kulp**, and **Madeline Redstone**. On the final day of the festival, a luncheon honoring authors **Sherry Lansing** and **Suzanne Somers** was held at Tamarisk Country Club hosted by **Helene Galen** and **Jamie Kabler**. The one and only **Miles Berger** presided over the event and proceeded to handcuff Jamie to his chair so he couldn't jump up.



Philanthropist Harold Matzner, left, was among those able to secure a rare --and tight -- seat at the over-sold Rancho Mirage Writer's Festival. Lani Garfield/Special To The Desert Sun



Barbara & Stewart Boxer & Executive Producer Debbie Green Lani Garfield/Special To The Desert Sun

### FESTIVAL MAJOR SPONSORS

2018 Founding Angeles included **Helene Galen**, **Hal and Diane Gershowitz**, **Anne Holland**, **Donna MacMillan**, **Madeline Redstone**, and in memoriam **Lois Horvitz**. Golden Angels (\$20,000) included **Eisenhower Medical Center**, **Helene Galen**, **Jack and Patti Grundhofer**, **Chole Katz**, **Harrison Katz**, **Renee Katz**, **Harold Matzner**, and **Jan Salta**. The Silver Angels (\$10,000) were **Jerome and Mary Angel**, **Auen Foundation**, **Ron and Sherrie Auen**, **Dan Clivner** and **Steven Cochran**, **Mira Clivner**, **Richard and Bryn DeBeikes**, **Raymond Galante**, **Anne Holland**, **Tom and Samie Lang**, and **Catherine Reed**. Hundreds of Angels, a literary Who's Who list of supporters at the (\$5,000) level, help to bring the most acclaimed and talented writers to the Festival every year.

The hard working Festival staffers included Executive Producer **Debbie Green**, Rancho Mirage Library Operations Manager **Aaron Espinosa**, Programming Librarian **Susan Cook**, Director of Programming **Deborah Dejah**, and Art Director **Rachel Horwitz**. The Annenberg Retreat at Sunnyslands President Ambassador **David Lane** and Editorial Director **Susan L. Davis** played significant roles in the Festival. Angel and Author Concierges included Lead Festival Concierge, **Elizabeth Lorenz**, **Marcus Aleman**, **Debbie Avila**, **Jason Bruecks**, **Julia Childers**, **June Corrigan**, **Marnie Cortez**, **Sid Craig**, **Majna Dikic**, **Robin Gold**, **Paul Harris**, **Brian Kephart**, **Valentine Lort**, **Robbie Lomes**, **Daniel McCullor**, **Olga Morales**, **David Murguia**, **Pablo Navarro**, **Cristal Ortega**, **Olivia Pompa**, **Kristie Ramos**, **Robert Rekuic**, **Diane Sagan**, **Dennis Sullivan**, and **Tom Truhe**.



Helene Galen, Marion Rosenthal, Jan Salta Lani Garfield/Special To The Desert Sun



Jeannette & Ray Galante with Authors Bret Stephens, Geoff Cowan, Scott Berg, Karl Rove and the Galante Scholars Lani Garfield/Special To The Desert Sun

### LITERARY PERSONAGES

Movers and Shakers seen at the Festival included American Ambassadors **Rock Schnabel**, **Tim Timken**, **Brenda Johnson**. Local and Los Angeles Notables were **Harold Matzner**, **Eli and Edye Broad**, **Michael Landes**, **Aubrey and Lori Serfling**, **Geoff Cowan**, **Stewart** and Former Senator **Barbara Boxer**, **Harrison and Renee Katz**, **Marion Rosenthal**, **Marjorie Kulp**, former Los Angeles Mayor **Richard Riordan**, **Elizabeth Riordan**, **Ray** and **Jeannette Galante**, **Nancy Stone**, **Frank Jones**, **Suz Hunt**, **Al Fromm**, **Dennis and Phyllis Washington**, **Joanne McGrath**, **Annette Bloch**, **Henry and Joyce Freund**, **Barbara Fromm**, **Angie Gerber**, **Dana and Vicki Hobart**, **Vern Kozler**, **Susan Meredith**, **Marjorie Fayer**, **Arthur and Patty Newman**, **Bill and Cydney Osterman**, **Kevin Walker**, **Greg and Stacey Renjor**, **Faye Sarkowsky**, **Arlene Schnitzer**, **Jordan Schnitzer**, **Lori Serfling**, **Robert Walker** and **Ernest Phinney**, **Ted and Jenny Weill**, and **JoAnn Wellner**.



USC Scholars Danielle Balderas and Anna Blue with Bryn & Richard DeBeikes Lani Garfield/Special To The Desert Sun

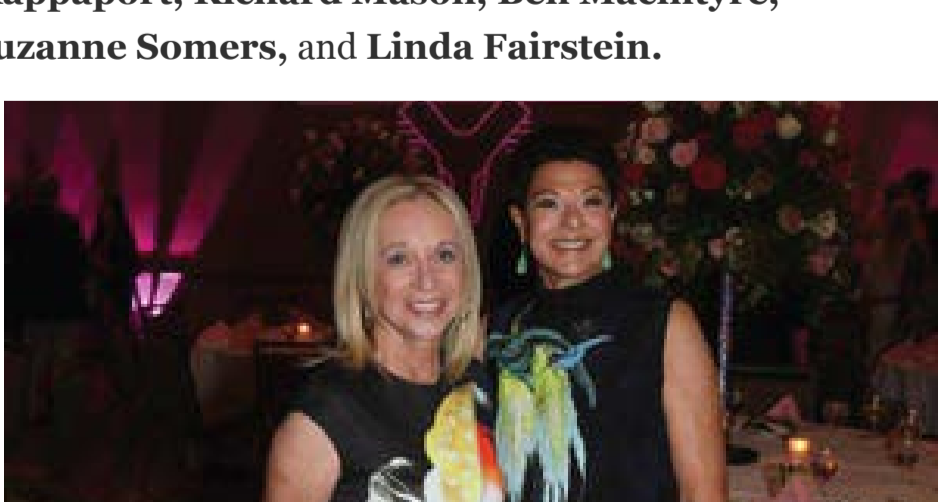


Crowd at Eisenhower Lani Garfield/Special To The Desert Sun

Among the authors were **Dave Barry**, **Karl Rove**, **Scott Turow**, **T.J. Stiles**, **Elizabeth Cobbs**, **Colson Whitehead**, **Stewart McLaurin**, and **Linda Fairstein**, **Sally Bedell Smith**, **Tom Parker Bowles**, **Elizabeth Sorensen**, **Tim Miller**, **Amie Parnes**, **Richard North Patterson**, **Helen Rappaport**, **Richard Mason**, **Ben Macintyre**, **Margaret MacMillan**, **Bret Stephens**, **Sherry Lansing**, **Suzanne Somers**, and **Linda Fairstein**.



Golden Angels Harrison, Chloé, and Renee Katz Lani Garfield/Special To The Desert Sun



Maddy Redstone, Marjorie Kulp Lani Garfield/Special To The Desert Sun

### ONE LECTURE OUT OF 90

One extremely interesting author talk was given by The White House Historical Association (WHHA) President **Stewart McLaurin**. This is a private, non-profit organization with a mission to protect, preserve, and provide public access to the rich history of America's executive mansion. He gave his audiences an insider's view of the 226-year history of The White House. The WHHA was founded by First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy in 1961. Since then, over 47 million people have toured The White House. McLaurin's talk included fascinating information on the daily operations at The White House, including descriptions of the permanent furniture and art collection reclaimed over the years.

Since 1981, a yearly White House Christmas fund raiser and gift sales have funded the costs of maintaining the interior rugs, drapes, china, official portraits, and new furniture purchases.

McLaurin, presented Rancho Mirage Library Director David Bryant a collection of the 2017 White House historical books for the library's collection. Attendees had a sneak peak of the ornament that will be sold this year but were sworn to secrecy at least until later this month when it will be unveiled in Washington, D.C.

For more information about the 2019 Rancho Mirage Writer's Festival go to the website at [rmwritersfest.org](http://rmwritersfest.org), email [info@rmwritersfest.org](mailto:info@rmwritersfest.org) or call (760) 341-7323.