

## A Celebration to Benefit the New Haven Free Public Library **TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2022**

Event to Benefit



Presenting Sponsor





## - Schedule of Events -

## Welcome

Michael Morand President, New Haven Free Public Library Foundation Board of Directors

Lauren Anderson President, New Haven Free Public Library Board of Directors

> John Jessen City Librarian and Director New Haven Free Public Library

### **Keynote Conversation**

Honorée Fanonne Jeffers Reginald Dwayne Betts

## **Noah Webster Award**

Presented to Karen Pritzker

# Mardi Gras Goes Virtual!

Dear Friends,

Thank you for joining us for another virtual Mardi Gras program to benefit the New Haven Free Public Library!

While I wish we could celebrate in person this year, we are eager to welcome you into the library as we increase programs and services in the coming year. From collaborations with community partners across the city to explore Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower* during "One City, One Read" to new passport services at Ives Main Library, you can do more at your library than ever before. And with an expanded presence across New Haven on our book bike, appropriately named "The Book Pedaler," we are also getting creative to bring the New Haven Free Public Library to you!

I look forward to welcoming you into the new Stetson Branch Library when it opens later this month and to celebrating this milestone together. The culmination of this project is due to the tireless efforts of staff, donors, community partners, and library advocates throughout the city, and I can't wait for you to see and experience this beacon of a contemporary public library.

We have much to be grateful for tonight, including the generosity and enthusiasm of library champions like you. Thank you for supporting a vibrant public library system!

With appreciation,

John Jessen City Librarian and Director

# **Special Thanks to:**

New Haven Free Public Library Staff

Lauren Anderson and the Board of Directors of the New Haven Free Public Library

Michael Morand and the Board of Directors of the New Haven Free Public Library Foundation

Mayor Justin Elicker, City of New Haven

Patrick Dunn, The New Haven Pride Center

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## **Keynote Conversation**



For over twenty years, **Honorée Fanonne Jeffers** has been lifting her voice on issues of Black culture, racism, American history, and gender through the medium of writing. Jeffers is author of the novel *The Love Songs of W.E.B. Du Bois* (2021); an Oprah's Book Club pick, *Love Songs* was long-listed for the

National Book Award in Fiction, short-listed for the Center for Fiction First Novel Prize, and was a finalist for the Kirkus Prize in Fiction. She is also the author of the poetry collections, *The Age of Phillis* (2020); *The Glory Gets* (2015); *Red Clay Suite* (2007); *Outlandish Blues* (2003); and *The Gospel of Barbecue* (2000).



**Reginald Dwayne Betts** is a 2021 MacArthur Fellow, award winning author, poet, lawyer, and outspoken advocate for criminal justice reform as the founding director of Freedom Reads.

Betts transformed himself from a sixteen-year old kid sentenced

to nine-years in prison to a critically acclaimed writer and graduate of the Yale Law School. He has written three collections of poetry, the recently published and critically acclaimed *Felon* (2019); *Bastards of the Reagan Era* (2015) and *Shahid Reads His Own Palm* (2010).

# The Noah Webster Award

The Noah Webster Award reflects the passion of Noah Webster, a Yale graduate and New Haven resident for many years, whose legacy remains a literacy building block today. The award recognizes a library supporter who builds community and advocacy coalitions in support of the Library and, in turn, the New Haven Community.

# It is our honor to present the 2022 Noah Webster Award to Karen Pritzker.

Karen Pritzker is an editor, writer, film producer, and philanthropist. As the co-founder of KPJR Films, she has executive-produced three award-winning documentary films: *The Big Picture: Rethinking Dyslexia*; *Paper Tigers*; and *Resilience: The Biology of Stress and The Science of Hope*. Each film has served as a catalyst for social change, sparking global movements that have increased community awareness, created educational initiatives, and impacted all levels of policy.

Karen also advocates for literacy and children's issues, and as the President of the Seedlings Foundation she directs resources toward programs that nourish the physical and mental health of children and families as well as institutions that foster an educated and engaged citizenship. Since its founding in 2002, the Foundation has awarded millions of dollars in grants, catalyzing advancements in medical research, social services, job retraining for adults, affordable housing, and online news sites dedicated to local, factual, ad-free reporting. Karen's support of the New Haven Free Public Library has transformed the library system for the 21st century: from the Wilson Branch in the Hill to the new Stetson Library opening this spring at the Q House, New Haven's public libraries have been enhanced and expanded thanks to Karen's commitment to literacy and librarianship.



The Seedlings Foundation Community Challenge kicked off the capital campaign for the new Stetson Branch Library, matching gifts of \$50-10,000 from across the city and inspiring a groundswell of support from thousands of neighbors, school groups, congregations, affinity groups, social clubs, sororities, and community partners to invest in the success of their library.

Thanks to Karen's generosity, advocacy, and leadership the New Haven Free Public Library is a destination for children, families, and residents across the city to learn and grow through shared access to the information and resources that enrich our lives.

## Thank You to Our Mardi Gras Donors

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### \$250+

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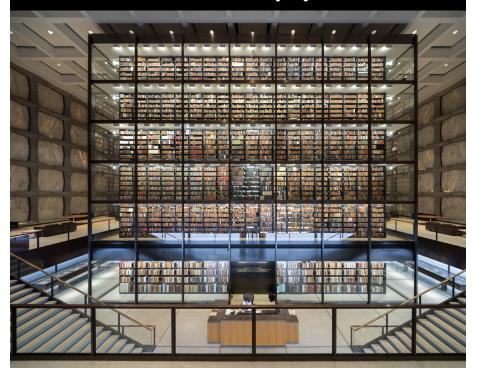
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Visit **nhfpl.org/annual-reports** to read online! John Jessen City Librarian and Director

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