

Kansas Book Festival Was a Great Success

by Roy Bird, Director, Kansas Center for the Book

Thousands of Kansans flocked to Lawrence-Dumont Stadium in Wichita on Friday, September 29, and Saturday, September 30, to enjoy the inaugural Kansas Book Festival. The event was a wonderful success!



Kansas Book Festival Banner

Busloads of school children, carloads of visitors, and scores of curious book lovers took advantage of the unique opportunity to experience the literary heritage and culture of Kansas during the two-day Festival. The weather for the outdoor event, held on stages and under tents on the baseball field, was nearly perfect.

The Festival offered those attending a wide choice of entertainment. The celebration began with a poetry reading by State Poet Laureate Jonathan Holden and a reading of *Bunny Cakes* by Governor Kathleen Sebelius. *Bunny Cakes*, by Rosemary Wells, is the title selected for the second annual Kansas Reads to Preschoolers project.

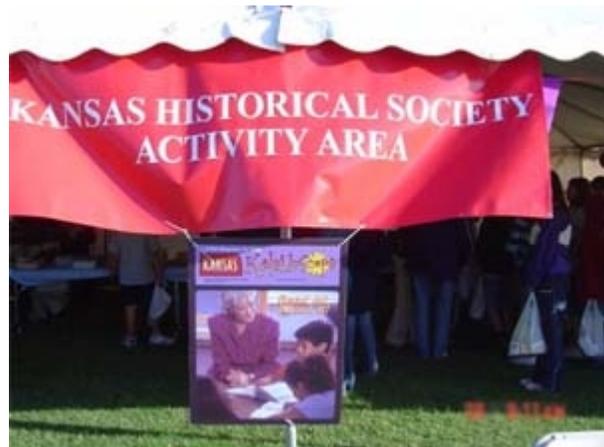


Visitors spoke with Kansas authors and received signed books; listened to traditional music by people of diverse backgrounds; enjoyed poetry, illustrating, and storytelling; met characters of the state's literary and historic past; attended a special tribute to the late Kansas genius Gordon Parks; played games and participated in hands-on activities; acquired new books at six different vendor booths; and visited booths sponsored by the agencies and organizations promoting the Festival.

Governor Sebelius opened the Festival after she and the Poet Laureate had finished their initial readings. From then until Saturday evening Kansans of all ages from every part of the state wandered through exhibits, listened to music and watched dancing, stopped for programs, and shopped for books under six tents.



Book Festival Activities



Kansas Historical Society Activities Tent

On Friday evening, festivities adjourned to the Exploration Place, a museum a few blocks north of the stadium, for the Black, White, and READ All Over Ball. There the fifteen titles of the 2006 Kansas Notable Books List were honored by emcee and jazz vocalist Donna Tucker. Ten authors were present to receive the medals recognizing them as Notable Book Authors. David Parks, son of the late Gordon Parks, and Elizabeth Hood, daughter of the late Hugh Snyder, accepted the awards for their fathers' work. Judy Entz accepted the medal for Marci Penner, who could not attend.

Until 11:00 p.m., the guests attending the Ball enjoyed great food, wonderful Kansas wine, and dancing to the music of Donna Tucker and her ensemble.

The Festival closed on Saturday evening with a fitting musical tribute by Queen Bey for Kansas native son Gordon Parks.



Roy Bird, Director, Kansas Center for the Book



Festival Goers Enjoyed Music and Dance on Stage

The goal of the Governor's Council on Cultural Affairs for the Festival was to celebrate Kansas books, arts, and heritage. The mission of the Kansas Center for the Book is to promote Kansas books, authors, libraries, booksellers and publishers, and literary events. The first annual Kansas Book Festival accomplished all that, and much more!airs for the Festival was to celebrate Kansas books, arts, and heritage. The mission of the Kansas Center for the Book is to promote Kansas books, authors, libraries, booksellers and publishers, and literary events. The first annual Kansas Book Festival accomplished all that, and much more!