

Summer Festival Days

June 27: Festival Keynotes and Inspiration

11:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. PST

KEYNOTE PANEL: Sources of Inspiration

A compelling panel conversation on the nature of hope, writing complex characters, unsung heroes, civil rights, advocacy, using one's own life experiences as inspiration, and facing life's most difficult topics through words.

Moderated by San Diego Writers Festival Co-founder, **Marni Freedman**, the panel features four of our Keynote Speakers:

- **Jan Eliasberg**, award-winning screenwriter, film director, and author of *Hannah's War*
- **Joe Ide**, a multi-award-winning author of the popular and riveting *IQ* detective fiction series
- **Dr. Catherine Grace Pope**, an advocate and activist for children, education, and civil rights. Author of *In Search of The Crown: A Memoir of a Black Beauty Queen During the Civil Rights Movement*
- **Eilene Zimmerman**, *New York Times* journalist and author of *Smacked: A Story of White-Collar Ambition, Addiction, and Tragedy*

Bring your questions! A Q&A session will follow via Facebook—prepare to post your questions and enter your email address in the Facebook comment field during the event for a chance to **win a signed copy** of one of the Keynote speakers' books

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MARNI FREEDMAN

Marni Freedman (BFA, LMFT) is a screenwriter, playwright, award-winning author, writing coach, and co-founder of the San Diego Writers Festival. After graduating from USC Film School, Marni began her career bringing her play, *Two Goldsteins on Acid* to the stage, after which it was made into the film, *Playing Mona Lisa*, produced by Disney. She has written for Tony Award-Winning actor Harvey Fierstein and Academy Award-nominee Elliot Gould. She co-authored the play, *A Jewish Joke*, about a 1950s comedy writer facing the Hollywood Blacklist, which won the NY Solo Show for best drama, critics' choice for the *Union-Tribune*, received critical acclaim across the U.S., and was recently produced Off Broadway.

Marni leads the Memoir Certificate Program for San Diego Writers, Ink, produces the San Diego Memoir Writers Association's theatrical Memoir Showcase, and is an editor of the award-winning anthology series, *Shaking the Tree: short. brazen. memoir*. She is also a writing coach and a therapist for artists and writers. Her first book, *7 Essential Writing Tools: That Will Absolutely Make Your Writing Better (And Enliven the Soul)* is an Amazon Bestseller. Her second award-winning book is *Permission to Roar: For Female Thought Leaders Ready to Write*. Last, but certainly not least, in 2019 Marni launched the first-annual San Diego Writers Festival in conjunction with her partner in crime, Jeniffer Thompson. You can find Marni at www.marnifreedman.com, a writing hub to help writers find their authentic voice.



JAN ELIASBERG

An award-winning screenwriter and film director, Jan Eliasberg is now turning her hand to fiction, taking her long-standing talent for portraying strong, independent female characters and for orchestrating rip-roaring, fast-paced drama and action on-screen and bringing it to the page in her debut novel *Hannah's War* (**Little, Brown and Company; March 3, 2020**). With this tale of an extraordinary heroine inspired by a real-life female physicist, Eliasberg has accomplished the rare feat of creating a riveting spy thriller that's also an evocative and moving work of literary fiction. As award-winning writer Charles Baxter put it, *Hannah's War* “**moves forward with great speed and power, giving off both heat and light.**” In her re-imagining of the race to build the atomic bomb, Eliasberg brings cinematic scope, unforgettable imagery, pitch-perfect dialogue, and rich, complex characters to a compelling story full of unexpected plot twists, set against the high-stakes historical backdrop of World War II. The result is a beautifully rendered, gripping novel that readers will want to devour in one sitting.

Eliasberg also wrote *Hannah's War* to give an unsung, brilliant female scientist her due. While doing research at the New York Public Library, Eliasberg read the issue of the *New York Times* released on the day the United States dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and was startled by one seemingly innocuous paragraph: **"The key component that allowed the Allies to develop the bomb was brought to the Allies by a 'female, non-Aryan physicist.'" Who was this woman? What is her story? And why isn't her face staring out of every science textbook?**

Inspired by the life and genius of Jewish-Austrian physicist Lise Meitner, *Hannah's War* is Eliasberg's nuanced answer to those and other important questions about scientific discovery, patriotism, morality, love, and loyalty. In giving voice to Dr. Meitner's experiences, Eliasberg wanted to correct the historical record and to enable her own daughter and her peers to see that "history is filled with remarkable women of towering achievement and of deep humanism; we need only look beyond the authorized texts to see them. I wrote to shine a light on one of these women, and I hope *Hannah's War* will be a beacon for all women."



JOE IDE

Since Ide's debut novel *IQ* exploded onto the scene and proceeded to win the Shamus, Macavity, and Anthony Awards for Best First Novel while also being nominated for the Edgar Award, the Strand Critics Award, and a Barry Award, it's safe to say his profile has skyrocketed. It's also no surprise that he's been called the Elmore Leonard of a new generation and "the best new discovery I've come across in a long time" according to none other than Michael Connelly.

Joe brings his distinctive and brilliant protagonist IQ back once more this winter with *HI FIVE* (Mulholland Books; January 28, 2020; ISBN 9780316509534). This fourth installment in the series is easily Ide's most ambitious, raising the stakes even higher for his South-Central Sherlock Isaiah Quintabe. In a departure from his usual pro bono work around the neighborhood, Isaiah takes on a paying client: the vicious arms dealer Angus Byrne, whose employee Tyler has been murdered and whose daughter Christiana is currently the only suspect. Isaiah must clear Christiana's name—or else—but trouble and pressure easily mount when he discovers Christiana and her five distinct personalities all have entirely different recollections of the events leading up to Tyler's murder. Isaiah must use his wits and his street smarts to untangle the multitudes of this case, but let's hope they're a match.

Joe Ide is an LA native. Currently residing in Santa Monica, he was raised in South Central with his parents and grandparents, who immigrated from Japan. Growing up in a neighborhood that was primarily African American, Joe found himself living with a foot in both cultures but belonging to neither. In his search to find his own identity, he found a role model in the Conan Doyle Sherlock Holmes stories, reading and rereading all 56 of them. Like Ide, Sherlock was a

misfit and not a tough guy, and he could defeat his enemies solely with his intelligence. At last, Ide had found a hero and a way to face a dangerous world.

Joe Ide has proven his place in the pantheon of detective fiction. With *HI FIVE*, he's demonstrated even more clearly that his innovative and exhilarating series shows no signs of slowing down.



DR. CATHERINE GRACE POPE

Catherine Pope is an advocate for children, a teacher, and an author. She is a product of the Omaha Public Schools. She received her undergraduate and graduate degrees in Speech and Language Pathology/Audiology from the University of Nebraska. She holds credentials from San Diego State University in Severe Disorders of Language and the United States International University in Educational Administration.

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While working in the Integration Office, she supervised programs in Magnet/ VEEP schools. She served as Vice-Principal of Lincoln and Principal of Harriet Tubman, where she led the highly diverse urban school out of Program Improvement. Catherine earned a counseling certificate in Person-Centered Counseling, and she is a Supervised Visitation Monitor for the State of California. In 2009, she earned a Doctor of Education Degree from NOVA Southeastern University, where she received the Phi Gamma Sigma Award for making significant contributions to her community. She taught at Point Loma as an Adjunct Faculty member.

In 2015, Catherine published her autobiographical memoir, *In Search of the Crown*. Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert named a week after her, sighting her courage during the Civil Rights Movement while reigning as Miss Omaha. The outcome was Black and Women Studies at the University of Nebraska. On January 29, 2016, her book was honored at the 50th Annual Local Author's Exhibit and Reception, Main Public Library, San Diego. That same year the University of Nebraska at Omaha, "UNO Women's Archive Project," honored her. Women are selected as examples of how courageous women have shaped their communities. Other achievements are the Phi Delta Kappa Educator of the Year, 2006 and The Culturally Courageous Leadership Award, 2009.

On March 9, 2018, Dr. Pope received from the Association of African-American Educators; the Educational Leadership Award, San Diego, County. She also received a special commendation for her leadership from the city council president; City of San Diego for addressing issues city wide in multicultural education, staff development, classroom instruction, as well as the intersections of culture, race, ethnicity, teaching, and learning. Other awards

were from the State of California, the Senate, California Legislature, and the United States Congress. Throughout her career and life, Dr. Pope has been unapologetic in her advocacy for student, parent, and family rights. A columnist wrote of her: “She ‘dared to challenge an unjust system.’”



EILENE ZIMMERMAN

Eilene Zimmerman has been a journalist for three decades, covering business, technology, and social issues for a wide array of national magazines and newspapers. She was a columnist for *The New York Times* Sunday Business section for six years and since 2004 has been a regular contributor to the newspaper. In 2017, Zimmerman also began pursuing a master’s degree in social work. She lives in New York City.