Los Angeles Times Festival of Books draws more than 150,000 people
USC has hosted the festival that celebrates literature, community, and creativity since 2011

1. USC President C. L. Max Nikias and the Trojan Marching Band greet festival attendees.
2. President Nikias congratulates the first place recipient of the Read On! Salute trophy, Aalaneja Stelly.
4. (from left) President Nikias; Justin Dearborn, chief executive officer of Tronc, the Los Angeles Times’ parent company; and Davan Maharaj, Los Angeles Times editor-in-chief and publisher.
5. Los Angeles food blogger Maria Provenzano reads to children.

Photos 1-5 by David Sprague

6. USC Professor and Pulitzer Prize-winning author, Viet Thanh Nguyen
7. Author, actor, and comedian Cheech Marin
8. Writer Margaret Atwood
9. Actor Bryan Cranston
10. Dave Grohl, musician and Foo Fighters lead singer
11. Joyce Carol Oates, a National Book Award recipient
12. President Nikias and First Lady Niki C. Nikias visit USC’s Civic Engagement, Pharmacy, and Keck Medicine of USC tents

Photos 6-8, 10-11 by Michael Owen Baker; photos 9, 12 by David Sprague

Also of Note...
USC doctoral student Robin Coste Lewis, past winner of the National Book Award for Poetry, was recently named the Los Angeles poet laureate.

Photo by Amanda Schwengel, courtesy of Hampshire College
The 22nd annual L.A. Times Festival of Books officially got underway Saturday morning with a performance by the USC Trojan Marching Band, which got festivalgoers dancing and cheering to a rendition of Pat Benatar’s “Heartbreaker” and, of course, “Fight On,” among others.

Justin Dearborn, chief executive of Tronc Inc., The Times’ parent company, and USC President C. L. Max Nikias delivered opening remarks.

“There is no better place to host this festival than the USC campus,” said Nikias, noting that USC and the L.A. Times are the two oldest surviving nonreligious institutions in the city, with USC having been founded in 1880 and The Times in 1881.

UCLA hosted the festival for 15 years, but it was moved to USC in 2011. More than 160,000 people were expected to attend this weekend’s event, Nikias said.

About 200 people gathered around USC’s main stage for the kickoff event at 10 a.m., already sweating from 80-degree heat and fierce sunshine. Temperatures were expected to approach 90 later in the day.

Joon-Ho Choi, an architecture professor at USC, came with his wife and three kids, ages 7, 7 and 5. He wanted his children to see the band and get introduced to new books, he said.

“The kids’ section is the most interesting,” Choi said. “And the travel guide section.”

Zoraida Pimentel and her two daughters, Jasmine, 12, and Jackeline, 10, left their home in Coachella at 7 a.m. to attend the festival. They came on a bus with a group from the girls’ school, Coral Mountain Academy, whose librarian had organized the trip.

Pimentel was already excited about her first purchase — for $5 — a hard-cover coffee table look back by Life magazine at John F. Kennedy 50 years after his death.

“His life was so fascinating,” she said.

Her daughters were more interested in fiction — John Grisham for Jasmine and “Wimpy Kid” and “Dork Diaries” for Jackeline.