The first Miami Book Fair International took place in 1984, founded by Miami Dade College and other local partners. During the 31 years of its existence, the fair has grown from a local gathering called Books by the Bay to the largest literary festival in the country, taking over blocks of Miami's downtown. Along the way, the fair has hosted literary lions, celebrity authors, politicians and international sensations, including Hunter S. Thompson, George W. Bush and Patti Smith. The fair has also helped local and little-known writers onto the national stage. In previous years, authors have included recipients of the Nobel Prize, Pulitzer Prize, National Book Award and MacArthur Fellowship. Three decades in, what was once a two-day street fair has become an eight-day book party held in mid-November, with readings and discussions that allow readers access to some of their favorite authors.

1984: Ken Kesey speaking at the Miami International Book Fair.


2008: Mario Batali and Anthony Bourdain speaking at the Miami International Book Fair.

1996: Kenzaburō Ōe speaking at the Miami International Book Fair.

2005: Joan Didion speaking at the Miami International Book Fair.


2012: Junot Diaz speaking at the Miami International Book Fair.

2010: George W. Bush speaking at the Miami International Book Fair.

1992: Carl Sagan and Anne Druyan speaking at the Miami International Book Fair.

2003: Carl Hiassen and Dave Barry at the Miami International Book Fair.

1999: Elie Wiesel speaking at the Miami International Book Fair.


2006: Arianna Huffington speaking at the Miami International Book Fair.

11/18/1997, Raul Rubiera/Miami Herald Staff: Dr. Cornell West speaks at the Miami Book Fair International.

11/18/1997, A. Enrique Valentin/Miami Herald Staff: Board of Directors of the Miami Book Fair International cut the ribbon to kick off this year’s event during a celebration at the Wolfson Campus of Miami Dade Community College in downtown Miami.

1994: Camilo Jose Cela speaking at the Miami International Book Fair.


11/16/1997, A. Enrique Valentin/Miami Herald Staff: Board of Directors of the Miami Book Fair International cut the ribbon to kick off this year’s event during a celebration at the Wolfson Campus of Miami Dade Community College in downtown Miami.

1994: Camilo Jose Cela speaking at the Miami International Book Fair.

Jose Barrera 9yrs enjoys his ice cream while reading books at the Book Fair Sunday November 23, 1997. (Photo/Jeffrey Boan)
11/21/1998, Chuck Fadely/Miami Herald Staff: Browsers look over the selections at the Miami Book Fair's street fair. This booth features "Man Eating Bugs: The Art and Science of Eating Insects."

11/20/1998, Shawn Thew/Miami Herald Staff: Andrew Carr, 3, takes a cat nap this afternoon as he is pulled by his mother along the Miami Book Fair Parade route. Andrew has two siblings in the Homestead Middle School Marching Band. The Parade started and ended at the Miami-Dade Community College Wolfson Campus.

11/14/1999, C.W. Griffin/Miami Herald Staff: Thomas Keneally, author of The Great Shame and Schindler's List, reads from his newest book to open the Miami Book Fair.

1990: Mario Vargas Llosa speaking at the Miami International Book Fair.

11/16/2001, Pedro Portal/El Nuevo Herald Staff: Peruvian author Vargas Llosa reads to an audience at the annual Miami Book Fair Friday night.


11/08/2003: During the Miami Book Fair International, held at Miami Dade College, Wolfson Campus, Elizabeth Cox, from Miami Springs, finds herself at the Antiquarian Annex, while looking for some rare grammar books. Little Black Sambo, by Helen Bannerman, priced at $200.00 published in the early 1930's was one of the books that caught her attention. According to Cox, "the spirit of the book is very, very old and interesting".

11/18/1995, Candance Barbot/Miami Herald Staff:
Saturday afternoon while waiting for Anne Rice's
book signing, Sandra Naidlich, 17, passes the time
in one of the many book vendors' stands at the
annual "Miami Book Fair International" held this
weekend at MDC's Wolfson Campus in Downtown
Miami.

1994: Camille Paglia speaking at the Miami
International Book Fair.

11/18/1995, Candance Barbot/Miami Herald Staff:
Saturday afternoon, hundreds of people lined the
streets surrounding Miami-Dade Community
College's Mitchell Wolfson Campus for the annual
Miami Book Fair International.

11/8/2003, Pedro Portal/El Nuevo Herald Staff:
From left- Mexican Carlos Monsivais, Peruvian
Mario Vargas Llosa and Cuban Carlos Alberto
Montaner. Three of the best Latin American
writers spoke with hundreds of participants to the
Miami International Book Fair 2003, celebrated at
Miami Dade College Wolfson Campus in
downtown Miami.

11/23/1997, Chuck Fadely/Miami Herald Staff:
Jimmy Raggett, left, and Hope Montgomery look
at some of the books in the Little, Brown &
Company tent at the Miami Book Fair Saturday.
They're from Miami Beach. Thousands of readers
browsed the huge fair in downtown Miami.

11/19/2010: Rock musician and author Patti Smith
shares excerpts from her memoir, Just Kids, with
the audience at the Miami International Book Fair
at Miami-Dade College.

5/28/1996, A. Enrique Valentin/Miami Herald Staff:
Artist Wendell Minor, left, and Mitchell Kaplan,
Chairperson of the Miami International Book Fair,
unveil the poster for the 1996 Fair.

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