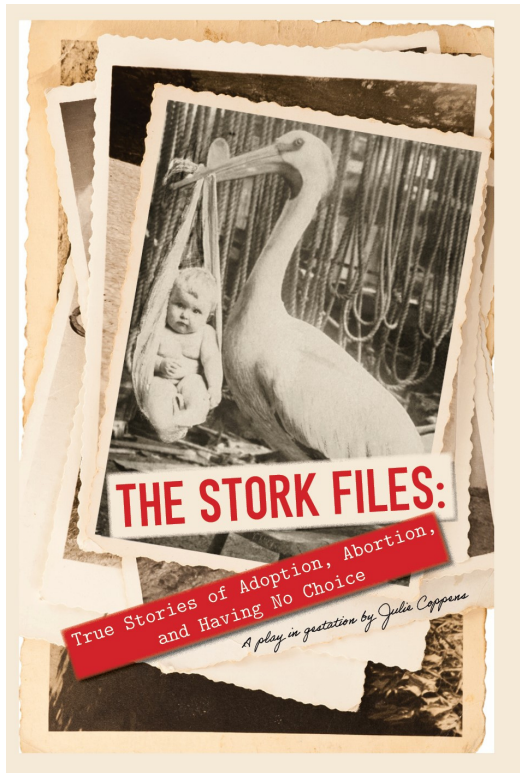
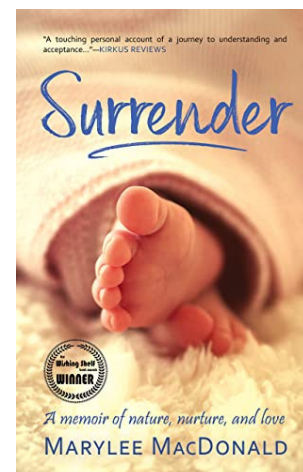
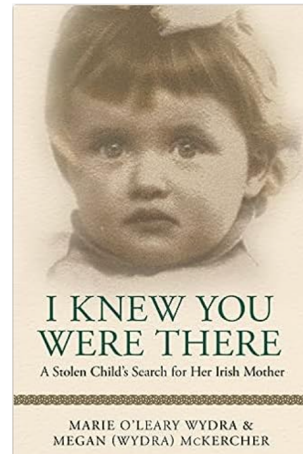
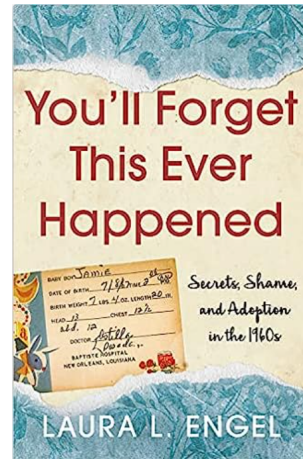


Performance



Authors

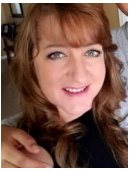


Film: Sneak Peek



Welcome

SCHEDULE & INFORMATION



Renee Gelin After losing her son to a devastating unnecessary adoption, Renee discovered her purpose – to help other mothers preserve their families. Renee started speaking to other expectant mothers and realized that many of the reasons that they were considering adoption, were similar to hers – temporary. She started to explain the lifelong trauma that maternal separation causes both the mothers and their newborns and the mothers were listening. Many in the adoption community began to support her efforts of family preservation. Others online began to direct mothers considering adoption to speak with Renee and the concept of **Saving Our Sisters** became a reality. Renee married her son’s father and together they parent their two daughters in Florida.



Gretchen Sisson, PhD, is a sociologist who studies abortion and adoption in the United States. She is a researcher with Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health, part of the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences at the University of California, San Francisco. Her studies on adoption include hundreds of in-depth interviews with women who have relinquished infants for domestic adoption over the past sixty years, with a particular focus on women who have relinquished since Roe v. Wade. Gretchen’s book "Relinquished: The Politics of Adoption and the Privilege of American Motherhood" is forthcoming from St. Martin’s Press (Macmillan) in February 2024.



Karen S. Rotabi-Casares, PhD, MSW is a social work educator who has worked in child welfare and related social work education for over 30 years. She has been a vocal critic of illicit intercountry adoption practices, including critique of practices by "professionals" in this field, particularly as related to Guatemalan adoptions as well as other countries. She has also conducted research on commercial global surrogacy, interviewing surrogate mothers in India. she has authored several books including, "From Intercountry Adoption to Global Surrogacy: A Human Rights History and New Fertility Frontiers".



Abbi Johnson was sent away to a maternity home and forced to surrender her son for adoption when she was 17 years old in 2008. For 14 years, the adoption was "open". She understood from the start of her relationship with her son’s adoptive parents that she would need to be affirming of their joy and silent in her grief in order retain her visitation "privileges". When her son was 14, his adoptive parents decided to revoke her "privilege" to contact. Since that time just over a year ago, she has taken to social media to express her voice as a "birth mother" and promote the voices of adoptees. She now spends much of her time creating educational videos about the industry of adoption and her lived experiences as a birth mother in an "open adoption". She intends to continue educating the general public about adoption trauma and cultivating community and safety for those of us living with adoption.



Denise Schnelle joined CUB in 2006 after reuniting with her son just before his 18th birthday when she realized she had unresolved grief from relinquishing and losing his childhood to adoption. She spent the last 17 years educating herself on adoption issues and now is on the CUB Board of Directors and facilitates the Los Angeles support group.



Benjamin Coolman is a graduate student of philosophy at Boston College. He was adopted from Ohio at birth in 2000 and his adoption has remained open since that time. Benjamin attend his first CUB event in 2019 and is interested in learning more about the adoption community.



Laura Dotson is an active member of the Los Angeles chapter of CUB, is the mother of five children, four she raised and one she lost to adoption in 1965. She is a survivor of the maternity home system. Laura is a a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and she maintains a private psychotherapy practice in Hermosa Beach, California.



Carol Schaefer is author of *The Other Mother* (Soho Press, 1991), considered a classic in adoption literature. The memoir has had Italian, German and Spanish language translations. NBC produced the film version in 1995, starring Frances Fisher. The film scored highest in the ratings that night with 25 million viewers. In connection with both the book and the movie, Carol has appeared on Good Morning America, CNN, MSNBC, and many local television and radio programs around the country and in Canada. She has been a keynote speaker and given numerous workshops at adoption conferences throughout the US, and in Canada and Italy, and has facilitated TRIAD support groups for twenty-three years, in San Francisco and New York City. Her sequel to *The Other Mother, Searching for Healing After Reunion*, offers in depth insights about what it takes to forge lasting relationships, and inspiration for others on their complex and challenging healing journey.



Danielle Gaudette is a Body & Brain coach and author of *Healing Tree: An Adoptee’s Story About Hurting, Healing and Letting the Light Shine Through*. After her reunion with her birth mother twenty-four years ago, she began an energy practice to process the unraveling of her primal wound. She is now a 20-year senior trainer and seeks to share those healing principles and practices to help others find the courage to go inward and heal their hearts.

SCHEDULE

All sessions/events in the Seascape Ballroom unless otherwise noted

Thursday Oct. 12th

- 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. National CUB Board Meeting
- 7:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m. Hospitality Suite – come meet and greet us! (Room #3057)

Friday Oct. 13th

- 8:30 am. – 10:00 a.m. Breakfast
 - First Time Attendees: Look for the reserved table to start your day with welcome team!
- 10:00 a.m. – Welcome & Opening Remarks
- 10:05 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **Adoption Today: Groundbreaking Researchers to Boots on the Ground** with Renee Gelin (Founder, *Saving Our Sisters*) & Gretchen Sisson, PhD (Author, "Relinquished") & Karen S. Rotabi-Casares, PhD, MSW
- 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Lunch On Your Own & Free Time
- 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. **Open Adoption: Myths and Realities** with Abbi Johnson, Denise Schnelle, and Ben Coolman
- 4:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Support Groups (Rooms TBA)
- 6:15 p.m. Hosted Dinner
- 8:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. **Film Sneak Peek & Discussion: All You Have Is Love: Demand, Deception, and the Infant Adoption Industry** with Lisa Elaine Scott, Director
- 9:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m. Hospitality Suite (Room #3057)

Saturday Oct. 14th

- 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Breakfast
 - 8:45 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. Journaling w/ Candace Cahill (Author, "Goodbye Again") (The Ocean Room)
- 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **Reunions: Navigating Complex Relationships** with Laura Dotson MFT, Carol Schaefer, & Danielle Gaudette
- 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Lunch On Your Own & Free Time
- 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. **Author Panel: Telling Our Stories** with Julia Chang featuring Laura Engel (Author, "You'll Forget This Ever Happened"), Marylee MacDonald (Author, "Surrender"), Marie O'Leary Wydra and Megan (Wydra) McKercher (Co-Authors, "I Knew You Were There")
- 4:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Support Groups (Rooms TBA)
- 6:15 p.m. Hosted Dinner
- 8:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. **Live Performance with Q&A: The Stork Files**, written and performed by Julie Coppens
- 9:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m. Hospitality Suite (Room #3057)

Sunday Oct. 15th

- 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Hosted Breakfast & Closing Remarks