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B.B. King Museum to host panel discussion on Dattel's new book

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For the Delta Democrat Times

INDIANOLA — The B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center will welcome author Gene Dattel Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. for a reception and panel discussion on his new book, "Cotton and Race in the Making of America: The Human Costs of Economic Power."

Joining Dattel for the evening discussion will be local attorney and veteran of the civil rights movement, Carver Randle, along with Lee A. Daniels, communications director for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and former editor of publications for the National Urban League.

Daniels' book, "Last Chance: The Political Threat to Black America," was published last year during the presidential campaign. C-SPAN Book TV will be filming the event.

Dattel will also read from his book and answer questions at noon on the 11th during a brown bag lunch at the Museum.

Dattel grew up in Ruleville and still has family in the Delta. He studied history at Yale and law at Vanderbilt. He then embarked on a twenty-year career in financial capital markets as a managing director at Salomon Brothers and at Morgan Stanley. A consultant to major financial institutions and to the Pentagon, he established a reputation as a foremost authority on Asian economies. His book, "The Sun That Never Rose," remains the definitive work on Japanese financial institutions in the 1980s.

Dattel is now an independent scholar who lectures widely and has served as an adviser to the New York Historical Society and the B. B. King Museum. He lives in New York City.

Advance praise for Dattel's book includes comments from former Mississippi Governor William Winter, actor Morgan Freeman, and many scholars, including Gavin Wright, professor of economics, Stanford University, and Niall Ferguson, professor of history at Harvard University and of business administration at the Harvard Business School.

Dattel's skillful historical analysis identifies the commercial forces that cotton unleashed and the pervasive nature of racial antipathy it produced. This story has never been told in quite the same way before, related here with the authority of a superb historian with Delta roots, who also has a profound knowledge of the history of international finance.