



**Black Caucus of the American Library Association, Inc.
BCALA Literary Awards Committee**

Press Release
For Immediate Release
February 1, 2015

Contact: Gladys Smiley Bell 757-727-5185
or gladys.bell@hamptonu.edu
Press Room - McCormick Place, Chicago, IL

BCALA Announces the 2015 Literary Awards Winners

The Black Caucus of the American Library Association, Inc. (BCALA) announces the winners of the 2015 BCALA Literary Awards during the Midwinter Meeting of the American Library Association in Chicago, IL. The awards recognize excellence in adult fiction and nonfiction by African American authors published in 2014, including an award for Best Poetry and a citation for Outstanding Contribution to Publishing. The recipients will receive the awards during the 2015 Annual Conference of the American Library Association in San Francisco, CA.

The winner of the 1st Novelist Award is ***Forty Acres: A Thriller*** by Dwayne Alexander Smith (Atria Books). In his thought-provoking debut thriller, ***Forty Acres***, Smith crafts a tale that confronts challenging racial and moral issues. When a young attorney joins a new group of wealthy and powerful friends, he soon learns they harbor disturbing secrets. Smith is a talented screenwriter and author residing in Los Angeles, CA.

The Fiction category winner is ***Citizens Creek: A Novel*** by Lalita Tademy (Atria Books). *Citizen's Creek* a historical fiction novel detailing the growing pains of a new nation. Tademy chronicles the unforgettable story of Cow Tom, a slave turned Indian Chief, and the incredible journey of his family as told through the eyes of multiple generations. Lalita Tademy is the New York Times Bestselling author of three historical novels. She lives in California.

The Honor Books for Fiction are ***Saint Monkey: A Novel*** by Jacinda Townsend (W. W. Norton & Company). ***Saint Monkey***, is a beautifully profound story of two best friends coming of age. The story begins in a small Kentucky town in the late 1950s, and follows the two young women as they experience the joys and heartaches of life as it leads them in increasingly different directions. As the young women struggle with their lives and their relationship with each other, we are reminded of the complexities of life and friendship, and the power of forgiveness. Townsend teaches creative writing at Indiana University; ***'Til the Well Runs Dry: A Novel*** by Lauren Francis-Sharma (Henry Holt & Company). ***'Til the Well Runs Dry*** is a captivating story that vividly explores a woman's tumultuous family life in Trinidad, and the difficulties she faces as an immigrant in the United States in the 1960s. Francis-Sharma is a devoted wife and mother, former attorney, and she lives in Maryland; and ***Ruby*** by Cynthia Bond (Crown Publishing Group). In this gripping saga of innocence's lost, the restorative power of love triumphs over unspeakable evil, murder, and madness. Cynthia Bond is a native of East Texas and lives in Los Angeles with her daughter.

The winner in the Nonfiction category is ***Visible Man: The Life of Henry Dumas*** by Jeffrey B. Leak (University of Georgia Press). Henry Dumas was a poetry and fiction genius known for writing about the clash between black and white cultures. Leak has painstakingly shed light on the life and work of Dumas whose story is unknown to many. Leak is an associate professor of English and director of the Center for the Study of the New South at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte.

Honor Books for Nonfiction are ***Life in Motion: An Unlikely Ballerina*** by Misty Copeland with Charisse Jones (Touchstone). ***Life in Motion*** is a tale of the groundbreaking progress of Misty Copeland, currently only the third African American female to become a soloist at the distinguished American Ballet Theatre. She reveals a story of struggles, discovery, and extraordinary fortitude throughout her life as an up and coming Ballerina. Copeland is an accomplished dancer who lives in New York. Jones is an African American journalist and essayist; ***Dorothy Porter Wesley at Howard University: Building a Legacy of Black History*** by Janet Sims-Wood (The History Press). ***Dorothy Porter Wesley at Howard University*** is an authentic biography chronicling the role Dorothy Porter Wesley played in preserving African American history and creating a world class archive known as Moorland-Springarn Research Center at Howard University. Sims documents the legacy of this pioneering African American librarian, bibliographer and curator and leaves an enduring tribute to a legend. Dr. Janet Sims-Wood is the retired assistant chief librarian of the Moorland-Springarn Research Center, Howard University; and ***The Oxford Handbook of African American Theology***, edited by Katie G. Cannon and Anthony B. Pinn (Oxford University Press).

The winner for BCALA's Best Poetry Award is ***Books of Hours: Poems*** by Kevin Young (Knopf). Written ten years after the sudden death of his father, the poems in Kevin Young's ***Book of Hours*** give us a glimpse into his grief and its ultimate transformation into something beautiful through the birth of his son. In these captivating poems, presented almost like a journal or diary, Young's unique rhythmic and lyrical writing style evokes feelings of pain and sorrow, as well as comfort and hope.

The BCALA Literary Awards Committee presents the Outstanding Contribution to Publishing Citation to ***Regina Anderson Andrews, Harlem Renaissance Librarian*** by Ethelene Whitmire (University of Illinois Press). The Jury has also selected ***Virginia Stanley***, Director of Library Marketing, HarperCollins and ***Marcia Purcell***, retired Director of Library Marketing, Random House for a Special Publishing Citation Award.

Members of the BCALA Literary Awards Jury are: Gladys Smiley Bell (Chair), Hampton University; Jennifer Baxmeyer, Princeton University; Tracy Crawford, Queens Library's Langston Hughes Community Library and Cultural Center; Tiffany Duck, Jefferson-Madison Regional Library; Carolyn Garnes, Atlanta, GA; John Page, Washington, D.C.; and Apryl Price, Florida State University.