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Media Contact:
Jason Alston
jasonalston@gmail.com
803-822-3075

BCALA; SELF-e Partner for New Self-Publishing Literary Award to Promote Diverse Books in Libraries

In advance of the 2015 Book Expo America (BEA) conference, the Black Caucus of the ALA (BCALA) and BiblioBoard announce the creation of an annual self-publishing award. Following the model of the current BCALA Literary Awards, the new award will honor the best self-published ebooks in fiction and poetry by an African American author in the U.S.

Authors who enter the contest will have the opportunity to opt into the SELF-e program and their own Indie State module, providing them with an invaluable resource for promotion and exposure of their work. SELF-e is a partnership between BiblioBoard and the Library Journal and is aimed at finding the best self-published books and making those books seamlessly available to library patrons.

The first of the awards will be dedicated to Cynthia Hurd, whose life was tragically cut short in the Emanuel AME Church attack in Charleston, South Carolina. Hurd was a beloved public servant and dedicated librarian at Charleston County Public Library for over 31 years.

Winning authors will receive:

- \$500 Cash Prize
- Formal recognition at the Black Caucus of the ALA Literary Awards
- BCALA Literary Award Seal to use in marketing

The BCALA Self-Publishing Literary Award will be the first presented by the Black Caucus for digital content, as well as the first recognizing self-published work. It represents an exciting new opportunity not only to recognize diverse authors and books, but also to foster successful partnerships between libraries, authors and communities.

BiblioBoard founder and Chief Business Officer Mitchell Davis is excited for the opportunities the award will create. “As publishing continues to evolve in the digital era, it is clear that self-published authors will play an ever increasing role in the literary landscape,” says Davis. “Efforts like this help authors get the recognition they deserve and help readers to find important books. It also places libraries at the center of the indie movement and insures they can positively influence book culture now and into the future.”

As an organization that is celebrating 45 years of championing African American librarians and literature, the BCALA is excited to work with SELF-e in creating new avenues to foster relationships between libraries and indie authors. “Working with SELF-e is another way for the BCALA to continue our service as advocates for the development, promotion, and improvement of library services to the nation’s African American community,” says current BCALA president Kelvin Watson.

Watson also cites the *#weneeddiversebooks* campaign, a new viral movement championed by librarians in pursuit of books by diverse authors for diverse audiences, as an influence. “There has been a lack of diversity and equity in literature. SELF-e is an excellent tool to assist in connecting and being more

inclusive,” he added. The *#weneediversebooks* campaign is one of *Library Journal*’s [2015 Movers and Shakers](#) and *School Library Journal* has partnered with them as well to produce a [booktalking kit](#).

The BCALA Ebook Literary Award submission period began in June and will extend through December. Final selections will go to a BCALA-appointed panel, which will select the winners of the Best Fiction and Best Poetry awards in January. Winners will be announced in January 2016 and formally recognized at the 2016 ALA Annual Conference.

About the Black Caucus of the ALA (BCALA)

Established in 1970, the Black Caucus of the American Library Association serves as an advocate for the development, promotion, and improvement of library services and resources to the nation’s African American community; and provides leadership for the recruitment and professional development of African American librarians.

About SELF-e

SELF-e is an online discovery tool for self-published authors created by *Library Journal* in collaboration with BiblioBoard. Authors that submit to SELF-e may have their work chosen by *Library Journal* to appear in curated collections on BiblioBoard’s award-winning PatronsFirst™ mobile platform being used in participating libraries nationwide. The multi-user, waitlist-free eBook platform provides authors with an exceptional resource for expanding readership, targeting new audiences and promoting their work.

About BiblioBoard

BiblioBoard is the PatronsFirst™ mobile library. The folks behind BiblioBoard are a powerful team based in Charleston, S.C. They aim to transform access to information by providing a world-class user experience that thrills library patrons and is profitable for publishers. BiblioBoard is moving library content delivery into the future in a sustainable way. BiblioBoard, used by nearly 3,000 libraries and multiple statewide eBook projects, reaches 30 million patrons. BiblioBoard has won numerous design and product awards including the 2015 Modern Library Award.

BCALA is a nonprofit organization for different areas of librarianship, including school, public, academic, and special, with national and international membership. It also provides game-changing leadership for the recruitment and development of African-American education and information professionals. It is one of five American Library Association ethnic affiliates and advocates for promoting and improving library services to diverse populations and communities of color. In addition, BCALA has sponsored literary awards for African American authors since 1994 and is also a sponsor of the prestigious Coretta Scott King Book Award.

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More information about BCALA is available at www.bcala.org.