

PRESS RELEASE: The Black Caucus of the American Library Association Seeks Best African American Self-Published Authors

(October 26, 2016) Charleston, SC — The Black Caucus of the ALA (BCALA) is proud to announce the second annual contest for the BCALA Self-Publishing Literary Awards. As with last year's contest, awards will honor the best self-published ebooks in adult fiction and adult poetry by African American authors in the U.S.

More than a writing competition, the BCALA Self-Publishing Literary Awards represent a unique opportunity to recognize diverse authors and books. The contest also encourages indie authors to grow local readerships and to build meaningful partnerships within libraries and communities. Besides being entered to win the contest, every author who submits their writing will have an opportunity to make their ebooks available to library patrons in their state through the SELF-e program.

Each genre prize winner will receive:

- \$500 Cash Prize
- Formal recognition at the Black Caucus of the ALA Literary Awards and the ALA Annual Conference
- A book review by *Library Journal*
- BCALA Literary Award Seal to use in marketing

As an organization that has championed African American librarians and literature for over 45 years, the BCALA is looking forward to a second year of the awards, which serve to highlight diversity among authors as well as their publishing methods. "This year's EBook competition promises to be just as rewarding as last year's," says BCALA president Gladys Smiley Bell. "The BCALA Ebook committee is committed to honoring African American authors who self-publish works of outstanding fiction and poetry. We are proud to be part of the collaboration with BiblioLabs to reward and bring attention to this format of literature." Chief Operating Officer of Queens Library and past BCALA president Kelvin Watson echoes Bell's sentiments, saying that, "BCALA is proud to be a leader in bringing more diverse voices into our world."

The BCALA Self-Publishing Literary Awards submission period will begin in October 2016 and extend until February 17, 2017. Final selections will go to a BCALA-appointed panel, which will then select the winners of the fiction and poetry awards. Winners will be announced in March 2017, then formally recognized at the 2017 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago. Visit <https://bcala.librariescreate.com/bcala2016/> to learn more about the contest.

About Last Year's Awards:

Last year's awards, won by L. Penelope and King Shakur for fiction and poetry, respectively, were noteworthy because, in addition to honoring Mother Emanuel Church victim and librarian Cynthia Hurd, they were also the first awards from the Black Caucus to recognize both digital content and self-published work.

"Winning the first BCALA Self-Publishing Ebook Award was an incredible honor," says Penelope. "All writers seek an audience to resonate with their work, and recognition from a group of librarians is immensely meaningful. My book is now available in hundreds of libraries across the country. New readers are able to discover my work — which is the ultimate goal of any author." In addition to reaching new readers through SELF-e, Penelope was also able to connect with and offer advice to thousands of indie authors when she was a featured panelist at the inaugural Indie Author Day event on October 8, 2016. She was also a featured presenter at the 2016 Balticon in Maryland, where she resides.

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Learn more about BCALA at www.bcala.org