



THE 2021

HURSTON/WRIGHT FOUNDATION

LEGACY

AWARDS

SPONSORSHIP INFORMATION

DEAR HURSTON/WRIGHT SUPPORTERS-

Author Marita Golden and businessman and cultural activist Clyde McElvene started the Zora Neale Hurston/Richard Wright Foundation in 1990 with \$750 and a dream to create an institution that nurtured and mentored Black writers. Since our founding, more than 1,000 writers have participated Hurston/Wright's workshops and classes and more than 2,000 readers have attended our public readings. Among the programs we remain most excited about, however, is our Annual Legacy Awards Ceremony.

Each year, this signature event honors 12 months of the best in literature, as well as the career achievements of a select group of authors whose voices and contributions have raised the bar for excellence. Since 1991, we have recognized nearly 400 works by Black writers for their contributions to the literary canon and honored 97 students with College Writing Awards. Thirty-one of those recipients have published books, including Tayari Jones (*An American Marriage*, *Silver Sparrow*, *Leaving Atlanta*), Natalie Baszile (*Queen Sugar*), Brit Bennett (*The Mothers*, *The Vanishing Half*), Mitchell S. Jackson (*Survival Math*, *The Residue Years*), and others.

With the clashing of social, political, and scientific interests reaching a fever pitch, the need is greater than ever for strong voices to tell our stories, celebrate our culture, preserve our heritage, and speak to critical issues. And while we continue to emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic, this year's event is as unique as last year's, taking place virtually with some in-person reception elements.

In the following pages, you will learn more about the Legacy Awards Ceremony, honoring the very voices at the precipice of this unique moment in time across the African diaspora.

Please consider joining us for this year's celebration. Your sponsorship will make a world of difference for the readers and writers we serve. Together, we will continue to honor Zora Neale Hurston and Richard Wright by supporting the work of Black writers who are shaping literature and inspiring change.

With appreciation,



Audrey Hipkins
Board Chair
Hurston/Wright Foundation

LEGACY

A NOD TO OUR PAST AND EYE TOWARD THE FUTURE



When Marita Golden and Clyde McElvene co-founded the Hurston/Wright Foundation, they were responding to a new generation of voices creating its own space and influencing the discourse about Black life and society at large. Marita and Clyde seized that moment and envisioned an institution that would offer what they knew writers required: community, expanded opportunities, mentorship and recognition.

With dedication and early support from Henry Louis Gates, Terry McMillan, Gloria Naylor, John Edgar Wideman, Nikki Giovanni, Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou, John Grisham, and publishing houses like HarperCollins, the Hurston/Wright Foundation has grown to fully embody our founders' vision of a vibrant space where the legitimacy of the narratives of Black life and the brilliance of Black writers would be celebrated and cultivated in community.

The mission of the Hurston/Wright Foundation is to discover, mentor, and honor Black writers. Through workshops, master classes, public readings, and awards, the Foundation teaches literary craft, creates a supportive community for writers, provides financial support to unpublished writers, celebrates artistic excellence, and connects readers to local, national and international authors through in-person and virtual events.

The Hurston/Wright Foundation has unilaterally adapted to accommodate both the isolation and safety requirements of the Covid-19 pandemic and expanse of Black writers worldwide. Through the Legacy Awards Ceremony and other programming opportunities, we continue to explore ways to promote the great work of Black writers, introduce new voices to the literary scene, and to encourage ongoing support of our mission.



A LEGACY 20 YEARS IN THE MAKING

The Hurston/Wright Legacy Awards honor the best in Black literature in the United States and around the globe. Introduced in 2001, the Legacy Award was the first national award presented to Black writers by a national organization of Black writers.

Each fall, writers and publishers are invited to submit fiction, nonfiction and poetry books published that year. Panels of acclaimed writers serve as judges to select nominees, finalists and winners in each category.

At Legacy each year, the Board of Directors for the Hurston/Wright Foundation also presents three achievement awards to select writers for their storied career accomplishments and inspiration to the writing community, both on and off the page.

The Ella Baker Award recognizes a person whose work honors social justice—the most recent recipient of which was late Congressman John Lewis. This year's honoree will be none other than renowned speaker, New York Times bestselling author, and National Book Award Winner Dr. Ibram X. Kendi.

The Madam C.J. Walker Award honors a person or company whose business supports Black writers. This year, the Foundation will recognize the Calabash International Literary Festival, which draws thousands of authors and readers from around the world to Treasure Beach Jamaica every two years.

The North Star Award is the Foundation's highest honor, celebrating an individual whose career exemplifies achievement and inspiration to others in the field of literature. We will recognize international award-winning author and leading feminist voice Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie with this prized award. She is in good company, as recent winners include Ntozake Shange, Ernest Gaines and Rita Dove.

During the Ceremony, the Foundation also recognizes excellence by Black college students in the categories of fiction and poetry. This was our inaugural award, catalyzing our annual ceremony back in 1991.

Support for the Legacy Awards Ceremony helps to underwrite our celebrated and essential programs; supports the foundation's mission to discover, mentor and honor Black writers; helps us expand our programming, workshops, emerging writer competitions; and enables us to hire full-time staff.



THIS YEAR'S EMCEE

NIKOLE HANNAH-JONES

Nikole Hannah-Jones is a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter covering racial injustice for The New York Times Magazine and creator of the landmark 1619 Project.

The New York Times's 1619 Project commemorates the 400th anniversary of the beginning of slavery in what would become the United States by examining slavery's modern legacy and reframing the way we understand this history and the contributions of black Americans to the nation. Nikole's lead essay, "Our Democracy's founding ideals were false when they were written. Black Americans have fought to make them true," was awarded the 2020 Pulitzer Prize.

Nikole also has written extensively about school resegregation across the country and chronicled the decades-long failure of the federal government to enforce the landmark 1968 Fair Housing Act.

In 2016, Nikole Hannah-Jones co-founded the Ida B. Wells Society for Investigative Reporting, a training and mentorship organization dedicated to increasing the ranks of investigative reporters of color. She regularly provides political commentary on national cable news outlets.

2021 MERIT HONOREES



CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE

NORTH STAR AWARD RECIPIENT

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is the author of award-winning and best-selling novels, including *Americanah* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*; the short story collection *The Thing Around Your Neck*; and the essays *We Should All Be Feminists* and *Dear Ijeawele, or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions*. A recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship, she divides her time between the United States and Nigeria.

The North Star Award pays homage to the significance of the North Star for enslaved Africans, who looked to it as a guide to freedom. The recipients of the award are individuals whose writing and/or service to the writing community serves as a beacon of brilliant accomplishment and as an inspiration to others.



IBRAM X. KENDI

ELLA BAKER AWARD RECIPIENT

Ibram X. Kendi is one of America's foremost historians and leading antiracist scholars. He is a National Book Award-winning and #1 New York Times bestselling author of seven books. Dr. Kendi is the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities and the Founding Director of the Boston University Center for Antiracist Research. He is also the 2020-2021 Frances B. Cashin Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for the Advanced Study at Harvard University. Dr. Kendi is a contributor writer at *The Atlantic* and a CBS News Racial Justice Contributor. He is the host of *Be Antiracist* with Ibram X. Kendi, a new podcast he's launching on June 9th with Pushkin Industries and iHeartMedia. In 2020, *Time* magazine named him one of the 100 most influential people in the world.

The Ella Baker award, named for the heroic civil rights activist, recognizes writers and arts activists for exceptional work that advances social justice.



CALABASH INTERNATIONAL LITERARY FESTIVAL

MADAM C. J. WALKER AWARD RECIPIENT

The Calabash International Literary Festival was founded in 2001 by novelist Colin Channer with the support of two friends, the poet Kwame Dawes and the producer Justine Henzell. Their aim was simple—to create a world-class literary festival with roots in Jamaica and branches reaching out into the wider world. A three-day festival of readings and music with other forms of storytelling folded in the mix, Calabash is earthy, inspirational, daring and diverse.

The Madam C.J.Walker Award recognizes exceptional innovation in supporting and sustaining Black literature.

LEGACY

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

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TICKETS TO IN-PERSON LEGACY AWARDS DINNER	●	●	●	

Support for the Legacy Awards Ceremony helps to underwrite our celebrated and essential programs, which discover, mentor and honor Black writers; and will help us expand our programming during a time of increased need for community and spaces that nurture Black writers.

HURSTON / WRIGHT FOUNDATION

LEGACY

AWARDS

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at Kristen@hurstonwright.org or to our address:

HURSTON/WRIGHT FOUNDATION

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