



LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

Sandra Gioia Treadway
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Library of Virginia & VMFA Announce Winner of Annual Art in Literature Award Erin I. Kelly and Winfred Rembert to be honored at the 2022 Library of Virginia Literary Awards in October

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CONTACT: Angela L. Flagg, Director of Marketing & Communications, Library of Virginia
804.692.3653, angela.flagg@lva.virginia.gov

Richmond, Virginia – The Library of Virginia and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts are pleased to announce the winner of the annual **Art in Literature: The Mary Lynn Kotz Award**. The judges selected **Erin I. Kelly and Winfred Rembert's** book ***Chasing Me to My Grave: An Artist's Memoir of the Jim Crow South*** (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021). Although Rembert passed away in 2021, both authors will be recognized on Friday, Oct. 14, 2022, at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, and on Saturday, Oct. 15, 2022, during the Library of Virginia's 25th Annual Literary Awards Celebration.

The winner of the 2022 Pulitzer Prize in Biography, *Chasing Me to My Grave: An Artist's Memoir of the Jim Crow South* tells the remarkable life story of Black American artist Winfred Rembert (1945–2021). Rembert grew up in a family of Georgia field laborers and joined the civil rights movement as a teenager. He was arrested after fleeing a demonstration, survived a near-lynching at the hands of law enforcement and spent seven years on chain gangs. At the age of 51, he started drawing and painting scenes from his youth using leather tooling skills he learned in prison.

Rembert met Erin Kelly in 2015 and told her he wanted to share his life story in his own words, but needed help writing it. From 2018 to 2020, she visited his home every two weeks or so to interview him. The result is this collaborative memoir, which presents Rembert's breathtaking body of artwork alongside his story, bringing to life the promise and the danger of civil rights protest, the brutalities of incarceration, his search for his mother's love and the epic bond he found with his wife, Patsy.

In addition to the Pulitzer Prize, *Chasing Me to My Grave* was named a *Booklist* #1 Nonfiction Book of the Year, an African American Literary Book Club #1 Nonfiction Bestseller, an Amazon Editors' Pick and a Best Book of the Year by NPR, *Publishers Weekly*, *BookPage*, Barnes & Noble, Hudson Booksellers, *ARTnews* and more.

ABOUT THE AWARD

Art in Literature: The Mary Lynn Kotz Award recognizes an outstanding book published in the previous year that is written primarily in response to a work (or works) of art while also showing the highest literary quality as a creative or scholarly work. Submissions can include works of journalism, poetry, fiction, biography or history, as well as museum exhibition catalogues. This unique award, established in 2013, is named in honor of Mary Lynn Kotz, author of the award-winning biography *Rauschenberg: A Life*. The Art in Literature Award is presented each year during the annual Library of Virginia Literary Awards celebration weekend.

EVENTS

Sept. 28, Oct. 6 & Oct. 12, 2022 | Panel Discussions with the Literary Awards Finalists

Free virtual events, 6:00–7:30 p.m. | Livestreamed at facebook.com/LibraryofVA or youtube.com/user/LibraryofVa
The finalists for the Fiction, Nonfiction and Poetry Awards will discuss their work.

Friday, Oct. 15, 2022 | Art in Literature: The Mary Lynn Kotz Award

In-person event, 6:00–7:30 p.m. | VMFA, 200 N. Arthur Ashe Blvd, Richmond, VA 23220

\$8 (\$5 for Library of Virginia & VMFA members)

Tickets: www.lva.virginia.gov/public/litawards/kotz-register.htm

This event will feature a presentation by award honoree Erin I. Kelly, joined by Winfred Rembert's widow, Patsy. A book signing and reception will follow.

Saturday, Oct. 15, 2022 | 25th Annual Library of Virginia Literary Awards Celebration

In-person event, 6:00–9:30 p.m. | Library of Virginia, 800 E. Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219

Prices vary (see ticket link)

Tickets: www.lva.virginia.gov/public/litawards/sponsorship.htm

The winners of the Fiction, Nonfiction and Poetry Awards — as well as the People's Choice Awards — will be announced at the 25th Annual Library of Virginia Literary Awards Celebration honoring Virginia authors and friends. The event, presented by Amazon and Dominion Energy, attracts authors, publishers and those who enjoy the written word. Virginia author Adriana Trigiani serves as host for the event, with James Beard award-winning author and culinary historian Michael W. Twitty as the featured speaker. The festive evening includes cocktails, a seated dinner and author book signings.

For more information, please call 804.692.3592 or visit www.lva.virginia.gov/public/litawards.

ABOUT THE LITERARY AWARDS

In 1997, the Library of Virginia established its annual Literary Awards program to honor Virginia writers and celebrate their contributions to the literary landscape of our state and nation. Given to Virginia authors in the categories of fiction and poetry—and to nonfiction authors for works about a Virginia subject as well—the awards are presented at an annual celebration that has become the Library's signature event and an eagerly anticipated cultural tradition in Richmond. While the main award recipients are selected by independent panels of judges, the Library also invites book lovers and readers to vote for their favorite works for the People's Choice Awards for Fiction and Nonfiction. In the past, the Library has also bestowed a Literary Lifetime Achievement Award to recognize the enduring influence of an outstanding Virginia writer, with past winners including Earl Hamner, Lee Smith, Jan Karon, Tom Robbins, Charles Wright, Barbara Kingsolver, Rita Dove, John Grisham, Tom Wolfe and David Baldacci.

ABOUT THE LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

The Library of Virginia is one of the oldest agencies of Virginia government, founded in 1823 to preserve and provide access to the state's incomparable printed and manuscript holdings. Its collection, which has grown steadily through the years, is the most comprehensive resource in the world for the study of Virginia history, culture, and government with over 130 million items in the collections. The Library also engages the public through in-person and virtual events, education programs, and online resources that reach nearly 4 million individuals each year throughout the commonwealth and beyond. The Library of Virginia is located near Capitol Square in downtown Richmond at 800 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219. Learn more at www.lva.virginia.gov.

ABOUT THE LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA FOUNDATION

Founded in 1984, the Library of Virginia Foundation supports the Library of Virginia and its mission by raising private financial support, managing its endowment, and overseeing programming that brings Virginia's history and culture to life.

ABOUT THE VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

VMFA is a state-supported, privately endowed educational institution created for the benefit of the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Its purpose is to collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret art, to encourage the study of the arts, and thus to enrich the lives of all.

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