



LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

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Librarian of Virginia

Jones, Castleberry, and Kim Receive Literary Awards 2021 recipients honored by the Library of Virginia

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(Richmond, Virginia) – The Library of Virginia is pleased to announce the winners of the 24th Annual Library of Virginia Literary Awards, sponsored by Dominion Energy. The October 16 virtual awards celebration was hosted by best-selling author and award-winning filmmaker Adriana Trigiani. Awards categories were nonfiction, fiction, and poetry; People's Choice Awards for fiction and nonfiction; and Art in Literature: The Mary Lynn Kotz Award. Winners in each category receive a monetary prize and a handsome engraved crystal book.

"Year after year, we marvel at the incredible authors and books that come out of—and are inspired by—Virginia," said Joseph Papa, who co-chaired the Literary Awards Committee along with Jordana Kaufman. "It's a thrill to be a part of honoring these works that shine a light on forgotten histories, take prose to new heights, and give readers an escape. We are grateful to all of the participants, judges, and sponsors who have made this year's event possible."

The winner of the **2021 Literary Award for Nonfiction** is **Chip Jones** for his book ***The Organ Thieves: The Shocking Story of the First Heart Transplant in the Segregated South***. This powerful book shines light on the unforeseen links between racial inequality and the race to perform the first human-to-human heart transplant in Virginia during the 1960s.

Jones has been reporting for nearly 30 years for the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, *The Roanoke Times*, *Virginia Business* magazine, and other publications. As a reporter for *The Roanoke Times*, he was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for his work on the Pittston coal strike. He is the former communications director of the Richmond Academy of Medicine, which is where he first discovered the heart-stopping story in *The Organ Thieves*.

The other finalists for the Nonfiction Award were Ryan K. Smith for *Death and Rebirth in a Southern City: Richmond's Historic Cemeteries* and Nicole Myers Turner for *Soul Liberty: The Evolution of Black Religious Politics in Postemancipation Virginia*.

Brian Castleberry won the **2021 Emyl Jenkins Sexton Literary Award for Fiction** for his book ***Nine Shiny Objects***, which chronicles the eerily intersecting lives of a series of American dreamers whose unforeseen links reveal the divided heart of a haunted nation.

Castleberry's debut novel, *Nine Shiny Objects* was a *New York Times* Editor's Choice, an Indie Next selection, and was longlisted for the PEN/Faulkner Award. His shorter work has been published in *Narrative*, *Lithub*, *The Southern Review*, and elsewhere. An Oklahoma native, he lives in Virginia, where he is director of the creative writing program at the College of William and Mary.

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The other finalists for the Fiction Award were Rachel Beanland for *Florence Adler Swims Forever* and Alma Katsu for *The Deep*.

Annie Kim is the winner of the **Poetry Award** this year. Kim's poems in *Eros, Unbroken* explore the complicity between art, intimacy, and violence between two musicians in 18th-century Spain.

Kim's first collection, *Into the Cyclorama*, won the Michael Waters Poetry Prize, while *Eros, Unbroken* won the Washington Poetry Prize and was a finalist for the 2020 Foreword INDIES Poetry Book of the Year. Her poems have appeared in journals such as *Kenyon Review*, *Cincinnati Review*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Pleiades*, *Plume*, and *Narrative*. Kim works as an assistant dean at the University of Virginia School of Law, where she teaches law students about public interest lawyering and directs the Program in Law and Public Service. She was born in Seoul, Korea and lives in Charlottesville, Virginia.

The other finalists for the Poetry Award were Bill Glose for *Postscript to War* and Kiki Petrosino for *White Blood: A Lyric of Virginia*.

The winners of the **People's Choice Awards** are *A Time for Mercy* by **John Grisham** in the fiction category and *The Other Madisons: The Lost History of a President's Black Family* by **Bettye Kearse** in the nonfiction category. Winners are chosen by online voting.

The Art in Literature: The Mary Lynn Kotz Award went to **Gaylord Torrence** for his book *Continuum: Native North American Art at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art*.

This landmark publication brings Indigenous art to the fore with the presentation of 280 objects from the Nelson-Atkins Museum's rich collection. Curator Gaylord Torrence traces the evolution of the museum's holdings, which have expanded significantly since 2002. More than two-thirds of the volume's featured masterworks—paintings, sculptures, drawings, regalia, ceramics, textiles, and baskets—have never before appeared in publication. Created by both known and unknown makers, these singular and profound aesthetic achievements represent the traditions of communities across the United States and Canada in a continuum of visual expression from pre-encounter to the present.

Presented by the Library and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Art in Literature 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. This unique award, established in 2013, is named in honor of Mary Lynn Kotz, author of the award-winning biography *Rauschenberg: Art and Life*.

Michael Paul Williams, 2021's Pulitzer Prize for Commentary winner, was honored for his distinguished contributions to journalism in the commonwealth of Virginia. A native of Richmond and a graduate of Virginia Union University and Northwestern University, Williams has worked at the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* since 1981 and became the newspaper's first Black columnist in 1992. His honors include a Nieman Fellowship from Harvard University, several Virginia Press Association awards, the Humanitarian Award from the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities, and the Will Rogers Humanitarian Award from the National Society of Newspaper Columnists. Williams's Pulitzer Prize recognized his "penetrating and historically insightful columns that guided Richmond, a former capital of the Confederacy, through the painful and complicated process of dismantling the city's monuments to white supremacy."

The 2021 Literary Awards is also sponsored by Blue Edge Capital, MercerTrigiani, and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Next year's Library of Virginia Literary Awards Celebration will be held on October 15, 2022.

Photos of award winners are available at this link:

www.dropbox.com/sh/ifsf9zn08c1h92y/AAAnkJK3ICQ-yE4ys-wsXu00a?dl=0

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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 the state’s oldest institution dedicated to the preservation of Virginia’s history and culture. Our online offerings attract nearly 4 million website visits per year, and our resources, exhibitions, and events bring in more than 100,000 visitors each year. The Library’s collections, containing more than 130 million items, document and illustrate the lives of both famous Virginians and ordinary citizens.

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.

October 16, 2021