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### **Rita Dove to Receive Lifetime Achievement Award on October 18**

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For Immediate Release

At the 11th Annual Library of Virginia Awards celebration on October 18, one of Virginia's titans of the written word will receive recognition for a lifetime of literary achievement. The recipient of the 2008 Library of Virginia Lifetime Achievement Award is Rita Dove—former Poet Laureate of the United States and Consultant in Poetry at the Library of Congress, the youngest person—and the first African-American—to receive this highest official honor in American letters. She held the position for two years. In 2004 Virginia Governor Mark Warner appointed her as Poet Laureate of the Commonwealth of Virginia, a two-year position.

A native of Akron, Ohio, Dove won the 1987 Pulitzer Prize in poetry for her book *Thomas and Beulah*, based on her maternal grandparents. Her many other collections of poetry include *American Smooth*, *Mother Love*, *On the Bus with Rosa Parks*, *Grace Notes*, and *Selected Poems*. She has also published a collection of stories, *Fifth Sunday*; a novel, *Through the Ivory Gate*; a collection of her Poet Laureate lectures, *The Poet's World*; and a verse drama, *The Darker Face of the Earth*.

Rita Dove is Commonwealth Professor of Poetry at the University of Virginia. She holds honorary doctoral degrees from more than 20 American universities. Among her many awards are the 1996 Heinz Award in the Arts and Humanities, the 1997 Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Award, the 2001 Duke Ellington Lifetime Achievement Award in the Literary Arts, and the 2006 Commonwealth Award of Distinguished Service.

Previous recipients of the Library of Virginia's Lifetime Award were Ellen Glasgow, Edgar Allan Poe, Anne Spencer, Booker T. Washington, Mary Lee Settle, Louis D. Rubin, Jr., George Garrett, Merrill D. Peterson, William Styron, and Tom Wolfe.

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