

Charles Henry Rowell, founder and editor of *Callaloo* literary magazine and professor of English at Texas A& M wins the Madam C.J. Walker Award



Charles Henry Rowell, founder and editor of *Callaloo* literary magazine and professor of English at Texas A&M, 2012 U.S. Poet Laureate, at the Zora Neale Hurston/Richard Wright Foundation's 2018 Legacy Awards Ceremony in Washington, D.C. on Oct. 19. Rowell is the recipient of the Madam C.J. Walker Award for his dedication to supporting and sustaining Black literature. (Stephanie Williams Images/All rights reserved).

Recognized as a pioneer in his field, Charles Henry Rowell, founder and editor of *Callaloo* literary magazine, and professor of English at Texas A&M University, earned the Madam C.J. Walker Award from the Zora Neale Hurston/Richard Wright Foundation. Rowell received the award at the 2018 Legacy Awards Ceremony in Washington, D.C., Oct. 19, for his dedication to supporting and sustaining Black literature.

“Dr. Rowell is truly a treasure to the literary community and to Black writers around the world. Through *Callaloo*, he discovered such enormous talent that we may not have known otherwise,” said Melanie Hatter, chair of the board of directors of the Hurston/Wright Foundation. “His work is aligned with the mission of the Hurston/Wright Foundation, and it was an absolute pleasure to present this award to him, recognizing his lifelong dedication to uplifting the Black cultural experience.”

In 1976, Rowell founded *Callaloo* at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and named the journal for a popular stew that originated in West Africa and developed several variations as the recipe spread across the Caribbean. A *mélange* of poetry, fiction and non-fiction short stories, interviews, articles, book reviews and visual art created by artists of all races throughout the African Diaspora fill its pages.

In four decades, *Callaloo* has become one of the world's premier literary journals and a veritable institution of African Diaspora culture. The journal has grown to include an annual *Callaloo* Conference, three annual *Callaloo* Creative Writing Workshops located strategically around the world, and a *Callaloo* African Diaspora Book Series.

“The literary community has always considered *Callaloo* and Dr. Rowell to be inseparable ... and through his leadership and strong commitment, *Callaloo* has become known worldwide as the leading journal of African Diaspora literature,” said John August, dean of faculties and associate provost at Texas A&M University. “Dr. Rowell has a passion for developing the next generation of writers, [and he] is a meticulous author, editor and scholar who sets extraordinary standards, both for himself and for the journal’s contributors.”

The journal has published the work of many established writers, such as Pulitzer Prize-winning poets Gregory Pardlo and Gwendolyn Brooks, and helped to launch careers as well. One such career belongs to Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Natasha Trethewey, who was the 19th Poet Laureate of the U.S. in 2012.

The Madam C.J. Walker Award was one of two merit awards given at the Legacy Awards Ceremony. The other, the North Star Award, went to Ntozake Shange, poet and playwright, for her accomplished and inspirational career.

The 2018 Hurston/Wright Legacy Awards recognize literary excellence by Black writers in the nation and world. More than 140 books were submitted by publishers and self-published authors. Winners of the juried awards for 2017 books in debut novel, fiction, nonfiction, and poetry categories were announced at the ceremony, which draws an audience of more than 200 literary stars and representatives of the publishing industry, media, arts, politics and academia.

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