

Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Award: Haki R. Madhubuti



It is a pleasure to read news from Third World Press that poet, essayist, publisher, author and educator Haki R. Madhubuti is one of three recipients of the 2014 Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Award. This award celebrates authors who have given generously to other writers or to the broader literary community. Nominations are solicited from past winners, other prominent writers, members of the publishing community, and *Poets & Writers'* board and staff. These nominations are reviewed and winners selected by a committee comprised of current and past members of the Board of Directors.

Also recognized this year for their work with writers and the literary community are Joyce Carol Oates and Ian Frazier. The Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Awards along with the Editor's Award were presented at the *Poets & Writers'* annual dinner, *In Celebration of Writers*, on March 11, 2014, in New York City.

Haki R. Madhubuti is a leading cultural icon, and one of the architects of the Black Arts Movement (1965-1976). As a publisher, editor and educator he has been a pivotal figure in the development of a strong Black literary tradition and a proponent of independent African centered institutions, he is a founder and chairman of the board of the International Literary Hall of Fame for Writers of African Descent. He founded Third World Press (1967), the Institute of Positive Education/New Concept School (1969), and is co-founded of the Betty Shabazz International Charter School (1998), the Barbara A. Sizemore Middle School (2005), and the DuSable Leadership Academy (2005), all in Chicago, Illinois.

He is the author of more than thirty books, including *From Plan to Planet-Life Skills: The Need for African Minds and Institutions* (1973), *Black Men: Obsolete, Single, Dangerous?: The Afrikan American Family in Transition* (1990), which has sold more than one million copies, and his poems and essays have been widely anthologized. Selected titles of his work include: *Don't Cry, Scream!* (1969), *Tough Notes: A Healing Call For Creating Exceptional Black Men* (2002), and *Run Toward Fear* (2004). His poetry and essays were published in more than 75 anthologies from 1997 to 2010. His recent releases are *Yellow Black: The First Twenty-One Years of a Poet's Life, A Memoir* (2006), *Liberation Narratives: New and Collected Poems 1966-2009* (2009), *Honoring Genius: Gwendolyn Brooks: The Narrative of Craft, Art, Kindness and Justice* (2011), co-editor of *By Any Means Necessary: Malcolm X: Real, Not Reinvented* (2012), and one of the few poets from the Black Arts Movement included in *The Penguin Anthology of 20th Century American Poetry* edited by poet Rita Dove (Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, 1987). And additionally, book-length critical studies on Madhubuti's literary works include *Malcolm X and the Poetics of Haki Madhubuti* and *Art of Work: The Art and Life of Haki R. Madhubuti*.

Madhubuti was selected to receive the Writers for Writers Award by the Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Award (2014) in recognition of his efforts to expand opportunities for African American writers. Those efforts include founding Third World Press, leading the establishment of the Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Center at Chicago State University, and creating an MFA program in Creative Writing where served as founder and director emeritus of the Gwendolyn Brooks Center for Black Literature, one of the only graduate creative writing programs at a predominantly African American university, with a curriculum rooted in African American literature. He is the former University Distinguished Professor and Professor of English at Chicago State University, and before, he held faculty positions at Columbia College of Chicago, Cornell University, University of Illinois at Chicago, Howard University, Morgan State University, the University of Iowa, and served as the Ida B. Wells-Barnett University Professor at DePaul University in Chicago for the 2010-11 academic year (he was third recipient of this position at the University).

Madhubuti earned his stripes in the Civil Rights movement working to help young African-American writers find their voices. While he served a writer-in-residence at Cornell University and Howard University, he became involved in Pan Africanism and thus the international aspects of the African liberation movement. He also (at an earlier time) worked with the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee; the Congress of Racial Equality, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, experiences that helped inform his activist poetry.

Madhubuti has received much considerable recognition for his work and accomplishments, including fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities, an American Book Award, an Illinois Arts Council Award, and the Studs Terkel Humanities Service Award. In 2006, he was awarded the Literary Legacy Award from the National Black Writers Conference for creating and supporting Black literature and for building Black literary institutions, in 2007, he was named one of *Chicago Magazine's* Chicagoans of the Year; in 2008, he was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award from Art Sanctuary of Philadelphia, appeared in *The Black Candle* (a documentary film about the holiday Kwanzaa); in 2009, he was named one of the "Ebony Power 150: Most Influential Blacks in America" for education; in 2010, he was presented with the President's Pacesetters Award from the American Association of Blacks in Higher Education, and was awarded the Ninth Annual Hurston/Wright Legacy prize in poetry for his book *Liberation Narratives*, and he appeared in the documentary film *Motherland*, a documentary on Africa fusing history, culture, politics, and contemporary issues and sequel to the film *500 Years Later*, released in 2005.

Madhubuti earned a MFA from the University of Iowa, and has received honorary doctorate degrees from Sojourner-Douglass College (DHL), Du Paul University (DHL), and Spelman College (DL).