

The JaWS JAMCOPY Lignum Vitae Writing Awards

Background:

The Jamaican Writers Society (JaWS) and the Jamaican Copyright Licensing Agency (JAMCOPY) are collaborating to resuscitate the Una Marson and Vic Reid Awards for adult and children's literature respectively. These nationally instituted awards, by the now dormant National Book Development Council (NBDC) are being re-vitalized and re-imagined in order to stimulate the emergence of a new crop writers and writing in Jamaica.

The Awards were previously staged biennially from 1993 through to 2006 during which time they significantly impacted the careers of many writers. Under the auspices of the Book Development Council, at least two of the winning entries were published: Pam Mordecai's **Ezra's Goldfish** (Vic Reid Award, 1993) and Garfield Ellis' **Flaming Hearts and Other Stories** (Una Marson Award, 1993). The last winning title of the Una Marson Award, Kei Miller's novel **The Last Warner Woman** has also been published.

JaWS and JAMCOPY are seeking to build on the solid foundation laid down by the Book Development Council of Jamaica. The resuscitated awards will now come under the general nomenclature of the Lignum Vitae Writing Awards, a name which artfully emanates the national stature of the awards as well as symbolizes the elements of strength and beauty of the writing we wish to uncover and showcase.

Objectives

1. The Lignum Vitae Writing Awards aim to become the pre-eminent national awards with international recognition.
2. Reward and promote excellence in creative writing.
3. Raise the stature of writers and writing in Jamaica, highlighting the value of literature to the continued development of the nation's cultural landscape and its citizens.
4. Discover and promote new Jamaican writing from new, emerging and established writers and provide a mechanism to support existing writers and uncover new ones.
5. Become a fecund source for indigenous literature that will serve to enrich the lives of all Jamaicans.

6. Honour great Jamaican writing of the past by maintaining the Una Marson and Vic Reid nomenclature. We will also be seeking to introduce a new award, The Jean D'Costa Award for Children's Literature, and similarly ensure that this iconic writer receives well-deserved accolades.
7. Support the further development of the literary sector's contributions to the nation's economic development by becoming a conduit through which Jamaican, Caribbean and international publishers can discover new material for publication, and therefore stimulate the earning potential of Jamaican writers.

The Awards

The awards, which will be presented biennially, are intended to encourage original, high quality, creative work. Writers at all stages in their career are eligible for entry. In this first year, the award will only be open to works of fiction and creative non-fiction, with a view to accepting other genres in the future.

- The Una Marson Prize: awarded for adult fiction or adult creative non-fiction
- The Vic Reid Prize: awarded for Young Adult fiction
- The Jean D'Costa prize: will be awarded for children's fiction.

Prizes:

Una Marson Award –		J\$500,000.00
Vic Reid Award for Young Adult literature	-	J\$250,000.00
Jean D'Costa Award for children's literature	-	J\$250,000.00

Summary of Rules of Entry:

Three panels, comprising three jurors for each award, will adjudicate the awards. The judging panel will comprise respected members of the Jamaican and Caribbean literary community.

- 1) The awards are open to manuscripts not published books. Manuscripts are to be submitted anonymously.
- 2) The awards will be open to all Jamaican nationals (including those not resident in Jamaica) as well as permanent residents.
- 3) There is no age limit for entry.
- 4) An entry fee of \$2000 for the Vic Reid and Jean D'Costa Awards and \$4000 for the Una Marson Award applies.

- 5) Novels, collections of short stories and creative non-fiction (including essay collections) are eligible.
- 6) The judges, JAMCOPY staff, and members of their immediate family are ineligible for entry.