



MEDIA RELEASE

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The Jamaican Copyright Licensing Agency (JAMCOPY) is pumping J\$1.5 million into the development of the Jamaican cultural landscape through the support of the Lignum Vitae Writing Awards. Created through the collaborative efforts of JAMCOPY and the Jamaican Writers Society (JAWS), the Lignum Vitae Writing Awards was created to stimulate and celebrate excellence in Jamaican literature.

JAMCOPY has provided the financial support for the awards through its Cultural Fund which was established in 2011. The arrival of the JAMCOPY Cultural Fund has been heralded as a welcome addition to the few avenues of finances for the vibrant, yet severely underfunded, cultural industries. The fund was created to provide direct support to the development of the literary and visual arts, and music in Jamaica.

“Though the creation and support of the Lignum Vitae Awards, JAMCOPY identified an excellent vehicle to create relevant and sustainable impact on the creative sector,” explained Ms. Carol Newman, General Manager of JAMCOPY. “The awards were created at the instigation of Mrs. Shirley Carby, JAMCOPY’s Founding Chairman, as a way of celebrating excellence whilst highlighting the value of literature to the continued cultural and national development.”

Ms. Newman further explained that when the JaWS expressed an interest in establishing a writing award, the collaboration seemed an act of serendipity.

As the national rights management organisation in the text and image spheres, JAMCOPY works to protect and facilitate seamless access to copyright content and enables creators and publishers to meet the needs of their users in a constantly changing environment. JAMCOPY plays an important role in stimulating and developing our rich national culture, encourages ongoing creation of new works and promotes respect for the rights of those that bring this material to the public.

The establishment of the JAMCOPY Cultural Fund and the support of the Lignum Vitae Writing Awards falls well within the Agency’s mandate, and underscores its commitment to giving back not only to rights holders but also the wider society.

The Lignum Vitae Writing Awards comprises three awards: The Una Marson Award for adult literature, the Vic Reid Award for young adult literature and the Jean D’Costa award for children’s literature. The winner of the Una Marson prize will earn \$500,000.00 while the winners of the Vic Reid and Jean D’Costa prizes will each earn \$250,000.00.

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