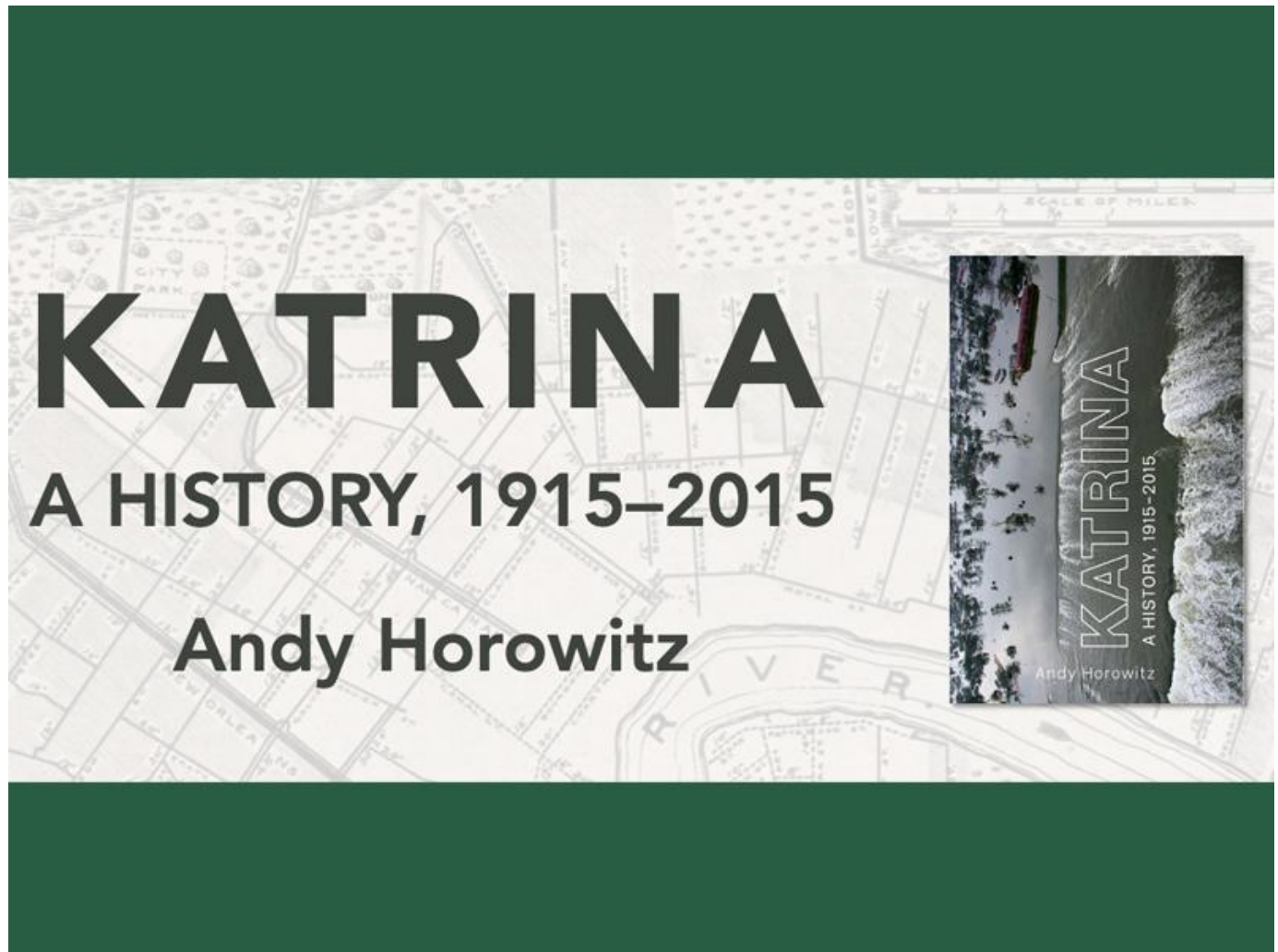


Tulane professor awarded prestigious Bancroft Prize for book on Hurricane Katrina

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Andy Horowitz's book on Hurricane Katrina came out in 2020, just prior to the 15th anniversary of the devastating 2005 storm.

[Andy Horowitz](#), an assistant professor of history at Tulane University, has won a [2021 Bancroft Prize in American History and Diplomacy](#) for his book [Katrina: A History, 1915-2015](#), published last year by Harvard University Press.

Columbia University Libraries announced the award March 22, calling it an “extraordinary and revelatory work of scholarship.”

It is one of two Bancroft Prizes, the other being awarded to Claudio Saunt for *Unworthy Republic, The Dispossession of Native Americans and the Road to Indian Territory*.

The Trustees of Columbia University award the Bancroft Prizes annually, with the winners judged in terms of scope, significance, depth of research and richness of interpretation that they present in the areas of American history and diplomacy. A total of 213 books were submitted for consideration for the 2021 prize.

In writing his book, Horowitz, who studies the history of disasters, traces Katrina's causes and consequences across a century, beginning with a largely forgotten 1915 hurricane and continuing to recovery policies in the recent past. The book is divided into two parts, the first covering 1915 to the years just prior to Katrina and including chapters on the rise of Louisiana's oil industry and Hurricane Betsy's impacts in the Lower Ninth Ward.

The second part covers Katrina and the following decade and includes everything from the levee failures and “inept” rescue operation to calls for New Orleans to be abandoned and a series of racist attacks on African Americans. It also traces the development and implementation of policies that reshaped the greater New Orleans area after the storm.

“Horowitz transforms our understanding of the catastrophic 2005 New Orleans flood and its aftermath,” the judges wrote. “The author decenters the devastating hurricane and flooding to provide a richly researched environmental, social, urban and economic and political history of New Orleans, and of federal policy over the sweep of a century.

“Horowitz provides a masterful and gripping reconstruction of an unnatural disaster,” the judges wrote. “The book is brilliant, and it is also timely; it is a story of New Orleans history that is also the story of the nation and its possible future.”

The Bancroft Prize, which includes an award of \$10,000 to each author, is administered by Ann Thorntorn, Columbia University's vice provost and university librarian. The Bancroft Prize jury included Lisa McGirr, professor of history at Harvard; David Rosner, professor of history at Columbia and Nancy Tomes, professor

of history at Stony Brook University.

“This recognition gives me the opportunity — and the responsibility — to continue to try to draw attention to the injustices that have shaped New Orleans and the United States, and the danger those injustices continue to pose,” said Horowitz, the Paul and Debra Gibbons Professor in the School of Liberal Arts at Tulane.

“This is an enormous honor, which I accept with humility and on behalf of the many people who helped me learn this history and supported me as I wrote this book.”

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