

[Nick Spitzer honored for Louisiana cultural contributions](#)

January 10, 2014 12:30 PM New Wave staff
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Tulane University professor Nick Spitzer, who also is producer and host of the “American Routes” weekly music program on National Public Radio, has received the James Williams Rivers Prize in Louisiana Studies from the University of Louisiana’s “Lafayette's Center for Louisiana Studies.



Nick Spitzer, center, receives the James Williams Rivers Prize in Louisiana Studies at the University of Louisiana’s “Lafayette from James Wilson, left, of the Center for Louisiana Studies and Barry Ancelet, right, professor of French at UL’s “Lafayette. (Photo by Robin May)

He was honored on Thursday (Jan. 9) during a ceremony at Edith Garland Dupré Library on the UL’s “Lafayette campus. A [video of the ceremony](#) also can be viewed.

“It's nice to be appreciated by radio listeners, but this award means even more to me,” [Spitzer](#) said. The annual award honors a person or organization that has made significant contributions to Louisiana culture.

Spitzer's [radio program](#), produced in collaboration with Tulane, explores American roots music. Now in its 15th year, it reaches nearly a million listeners on more than 268 stations. He is a professor of anthropology and American studies at Tulane.

Spitzer lived in Lafayette in the 1980s while conducting folklore research. After Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans in 2005, he and his radio show production team were housed at ULâ€“Lafayette for five months.

James Wilson, assistant director of the Center for Louisiana Studies, said that Spitzer's contributions within the field of Louisiana folklore studies are remarkable.

Spitzer was founding director of the Louisiana Folklife Program. He edited and co-wrote *Louisiana Folklife: A Guide to the State* and created the Louisiana Folklife Pavilion at the 1984 World's Fair. He served as the senior folklife specialist at the Smithsonian Institution from 1985 to 1990.

His doctoral dissertation on the Creoles of southwestern Louisiana and subsequent documentary are considered the definitive treatments of that subject, Wilson added.

The James Williams Rivers Prize was established with private funds donated in memory of James Williams Rivers, a New Orleans architect and graduate of ULâ€“Lafayette who died in 1991. Previous recipients include authors Ernest Gaines and James Lee Burke, musicians Ellis Marsalis and Zachary Richard, and the late artist George Rodrigue.