

Writer wins Strauss Living for literary excellence

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English associate professor Jesmyn Ward will devote two years to writing, thanks to receiving the prestigious Strauss Living for literary excellence from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Ward, who holds the Paul and Debra Gibbons Professorship in the School of Liberal Arts, plans to return to Tulane in 2018. (Photo by Ryan Rivet)

Award-winning author [Jesmyn Ward](#), an associate professor of English at Tulane University, has been named one of two winners of the prestigious Strauss Living for literary excellence.

The award, given every five years by the American Academy of Arts and Letters, is worth \$200,000 and will allow Ward, beginning in July, to devote two years to writing in lieu of her work as an associate professor of English. She will return to Tulane in

2018.

“Jesmyn Ward’s work, profoundly engaging and necessary, possesses great strength and a dire beauty,” Joy Williams, a juror on the award committee, wrote. She added that Ward and fellow award-winning author Adam Haslett, are “two wonderful, important writers.”

Ward is the author of *Where the Line Bleeds* and *Salvage the Bones*, the latter of which won the 2011 National Book Award and was a finalist for the New York Public Library Young Lions Fiction Award and the Dayton Literary Peace Prize. Her memoir, *Men We Reaped*, won the *Chicago Tribune* Heartland Prize for Nonfiction and was named one of the best books of 2013 by *The New York Times* Book Review.

“I’m deeply honored and humbled to receive the Strauss Living,” said Ward, who will be honored at a ceremony in May. “Time to write is essential for authors, and this award has given me this luxury for two years. I am so grateful.”

Funded through a bequest by Harold and Mildred Strauss, the Strauss Livings were established in 1983 to benefit two writers of English prose literature. The late Harold Strauss was editor-in-chief of Alfred A. Knopf Inc. and is best known for publishing the early works of John Steinbeck and introducing important Japanese writers to Western readers.

The award marks the second consecutive year that a Tulane faculty member has been honored by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Last year, [Zachary Lazar](#), an associate professor of English, won the academy’s John Updike award.

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Jesmyn Ward, associate professor of English