

Mark Richard awarded second annual Hobson Prize

Franklin native, author of several books, honored for "Distinguished Achievement in Arts and Letters"

MARK RICHARD, a native of Franklin, Va., was honored on Monday, April 23, when he became the 1996 recipient of the prestigious Mary Frances Hobson Prize for Distinguished Achievement in Arts and Letters during the second annual Hobson Lecture series at Chowan College.

The Hobson Prize for Distinguished Achievement in the Arts and Letters was initiated by the Hobson Family Foundation of San Francisco, Calif., to recognize the outstanding achievements of a person in the field of arts and letters and as a memorial to journalist and poet Mary Frances Hobson.

She was connected to Chowan College through her aunt, Lois Vann Wynn, a member of the Class of 1905 and who served as a faculty member from 1908 to 1915.

Charles Hobson III, son of the namesake from San Francisco, made brief addresses at the conferral dinner and again at the lecture held in the amphitheater of Robert Marks Hall.

He thanked Chowan for sponsoring the evening and said, "It is a great personal pleasure to have Mark Richard receive this award."

Dr. James M. Chamblee, chair of the department of fine arts and also chair of the Hobson Prize Nominating Committee, introduced Richard as the 1996 recipient.

Affirmation of the prize was given by Richard's friend, Ann Jervy, chair of the Ruth Camp Memorial Library Board of Directors in Franklin, Va.

"Mark belongs to us," Jervy said, "and he is very special. I am in awe of his talent and his way with words."

Following her remarks, Hobson and Dr. Herman E. Collier Jr., president of the college, bestowed the monetary prize and medallion upon Richard.

The medallion bears Richard's name along with a likeness of Mrs. Hobson on one side and a view of the McDowell Columns building on the other.

After the conferral dinner, Richard delivered the Mary Frances Hobson Lecture in Robert Marks Hall before an overflow audience.

Dr. G. Kenneth Wolfskill, chair of the department of languages and literature, introduced the author at the lecture program, and said, "It

seems to me that Mark Richard is a serious talent. He is already a significant voice."

Richard responded by saying, "I've received some other rewards but this one means the most." He spoke about his recent meeting with 17 other southern writers in Chapel Hill whose collective works are published in *New Stories from the South*, an anthology.

He said the media did many interviews and one of the questions often posed was about getting story ideas.

Richard said that part of the brain never sleeps and that the same part of the brain is responsible for our dreams.

Richard, the son of Mrs. Claire Richard, is a graduate of Franklin (Va.) High School and brother-in-law of Virginia Governor George Allen.

While a student at Washington and Lee University, Richard took a break in his college studies and went to sea. For three years, he worked on ocean-going trawlers, coastal steamers and fishing boats from Cuba to Nova Scotia. After returning to Washington and Lee, Richard earned a journalism degree in 1980. His seafaring experiences proved a treasure trove of background for his well-received first novel, *Fishboy*.

His first collection of short stories, *The Ice at the Bottom of the World*, received the PEN/Ernest Hemingway Foundation Award in 1990 for "best first book of fiction."

Richard has also received the Whiting Foundation Writers' Award, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, and a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship.

His short stories have appeared in *Esquire*, *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, *Grand Street*, *Antaeus*, *The Quarterly*, *Shenandoah*, *Equator*, and have been widely anthologized, including *Best American Short Stories*, *The Pushcart Prize Stories* and *New Stories from the South*.

In 1994, Richard was named the first Tennessee Williams Fellow at the University of the South, Sewanee. Last year, Richard was named Visiting Southern Writer in Residence at the University of Mississippi through an endowment from John and Renee Grisham.

His journalism has appeared in *Spin*, *George*, *Vogue*, and *The Oxford American*,



and he is a correspondent for BBC Radio.

Richard has just completed a second collection of short stories and is at work on his second novel, *Babyhead*.

The first recipient of the Hobson Prize was Kaye Gibbons, a Nash County (NC) native who has authored several critically acclaimed works.

Charles Hobson III, right, presents the medallion to Richard during the conferral dinner.



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The 1996 Hobson Prize recipient posed with family and friends prior to the conferral dinner. Seated are, left to right: Mrs. Claire Richard and Miss Maggie Vaughan, both of Franklin, Va. Standing, left to right, Charles Hobson III of San Francisco, Calif.; Julie Flourmoy, sister of Mark Richard from Richmond, Va.; Mark Richard and his wife, Jennifer, of Los Angeles, Calif.



Several faculty members gain promotions, tenure

Several members of the faculty have been granted promotions by the Board of Trustees upon the recommendations of the Promotion and Tenure Committee, the vice president for academic affairs and president of the college.

Promoted to the rank of professor were Dr. John Davis and Carol Sexton.

Dr. Brenda Gordon was promoted to the rank of associate professor and Renee Felts and Linda Hassell were promoted to the rank of assistant professor.

Dr. Charles Bentley and Dr. Brenda Gordon were granted tenure.