



# Books & Writers



## Reinhardt gets prestigious literary publication

*James Dickey Review now published in Waleska*

By David R. Altman  
Books & Writers Editor

One of the nation's most prestigious and long-running literary publications is now being published by Reinhardt University.

In what many consider a literary coup, but really was the result of a long-standing friendship among two academic colleagues, the James Dickey Review (JDR) has moved from Lynchburg University in Virginia to Reinhardt University in Waleska.

The journal, which is published annually, will be edited by Dr. Mark Roberts, who was recently named the university's first-ever provost.

"We were lucky to have someone like James Dickey to be from our area," Roberts told the *Progress*. "He had such a huge impact on the trajectory of contemporary poetry in the middle to the last part of the 20th century."

Roberts said that the James Dickey Review will "help readers understand James Dickey's body of work and to support 21st Century American voices that carry forth Dickey's imaginative force and literary innovation."

The literary publication is subscribed to by more than 30 major university libraries across the country, including

those at Harvard, North Carolina, Wisconsin and Clemson.

Reinhardt's first edition of the James Dickey Review includes poetry and essays from the nation's great writers, including Fred Chappell, Steve Knepper, Stephen Dunn, William Wright and Stephen Corey.

While many readers associate Dickey with the novel *Deliverance* (1970), and the popular film that was made from the book, it is actually Dickey's poetry that has inspired a generation of writers and poets.

Dickey's high-octane poetry often looked toward fusing the natural word with human existence, sometimes with graphic imagery and even brutality (not unlike some of the situations in the novel *Deliverance*). Dickey, who won many national awards and served as the U.S. Poet Laureate in 1966, died in 1997 at the age of 73. He taught at the University of South Carolina until the time of his death.

"What I would want people to know about James Dickey is that he believed in everything," said Roberts. "Dickey had an incredible mind and was a student of mythology and Jungian psychology. He believed that poetry could change things. He believed that words could change things. He was



**Dr. Mark Roberts is Reinhardt's first-ever provost. He is also the editor of the James Dickey Review.**

a force of nature."

"It's important to us at Reinhardt that we represent Dickey's legacy the best way we can, and to make it live," said Roberts. "We believe it's important for the northwest Georgia region to embrace its cultural heritage" and publishing the JDR is part of that recognition.

Roberts, a native of east Tennessee, who is also a professor a poet himself, said the university will pay tribute to Dickey "...and his enduring work not only as a Southern writer but as a great American writer."

"As a young man, I saw the film *Deliverance* and it was both terrifying and attractive," said Roberts, who grew up in east Tennessee. "The mythic power of that story really resonated with me."

The James Dickey Review actually had its roots in suburban Atlanta's Dekalb College back in 1984, when Joyce Pair, then an English department professor, suggested to Dickey that they publish the James Dickey Newsletter. The newsletter continued to evolve, going from Dekalb to the University of South Carolina, and ultimately to Lynchburg, Virginia, where it became

the James Dickey Review.

It was Roberts' friendship with the review's editor at Lynchburg, Casey Clabough, that ultimately brought the prestigious publication back to north Georgia, less than an hour from Mineral Bluff, Georgia (where the Old Dickey Family Cemetery is on Hogback Mountain) and about 90 minutes from Buckhead, the part of Atlanta where Dickey grew up.

"Casey Clabough was very kind and gracious in transferring the journal over to us," said Roberts.

Roberts said this coming year, the university will be welcoming Dickey's son, Christopher Dickey, to this summer's Masters of Fine Arts (MFA) program at Waleska.

Christopher Dickey, a veteran foreign affairs correspondent for *Newsweek* and *The Washington Post*, is currently world affairs editor for *The Daily Beast*. He has written seven books.

"We're very excited to have Christopher coming here this year," said Roberts. "What we're hoping to do is to embed within the (MFA) residency a day or two where we bring in some scholars and creative writers who have been influenced by Dickey and his work."

The current issue of the James Dickey Review can be purchased through amazon.com or through the Reinhardt University bookstore.

[David R. Altman writes about books and writers for the *Progress*. His first book of poetry "Death in the Foyer" was published in 2014, when he was nominated for Georgia Author of the Year. He can be reached at davidraltman.com or altmandavidr@gmail.com.]

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