

Celebrated Author Bret Anthony Johnston Named New Michener Center Director

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This month, award-winning author Bret Anthony Johnston has assumed the directorship of the [Michener Center for Writers](#), one of the most selective and prestigious writing programs in the country.

Johnston has directed the creative writing program at Harvard University for the past 12 years. A native Texan, his fiction titles include the story collection *Corpus Christi* and the novel *Remember Me Like This*.

For the past 12 years, he has directed the creative writing program at Harvard University. A serious skateboarder for over 30 years, he also wrote the documentary film about the sport, *Waiting for Lightning*, which was released by Samuel Goldwyn Films and premiered at Austin's SXSW.

Johnston was born and reared in Corpus Christi, Texas, and attended Miami University and the Iowa Writers' Workshop. His many honors include a National Endowment for the Arts Literature Fellowship, a "5 Under 35" honor from the National Book Foundation, the Glasgow Prize for Emerging Writers, and both the Stephen Turner Award and Kay Cattarulla Prize from the Texas Institute of Letters. Most recently, he won the \$30£ Sunday Times EFG Award, the world's richest

and most prestigious prize for a single short story for his “Half of What Atlee Rouse Knows about Horses,” originally published in American Short Fiction.

Johnston replaces outgoing director James Magnuson who retired in May after 23 years at the helm of the Michener Center. Magnuson was responsible for bringing the program from its inception to national prominence among MFA programs.

“Bret’s going to be great for the Center,” says Magnuson. “He’s walking into a situation where there are extraordinary faculty and resources, and amazing students. The students at the Michener Center have been the joy of my life, and I’m sure they will be for Bret, too.”

“With Mr. Michener’s original vision and Jim’s inspired leadership,” Johnston says, “the Michener Center for Writers has had, since its start, a hand in shaping contemporary literature. The opportunity to be part of the Center’s future is an honor and a privilege. It’s a gift. The students, faculty, and staff are unparalleled, and their commitment to art-making is contagious. In most respects, my job is simply to keep the lights on and get out of their way.”

The Michener Center for Writers is a three-year interdisciplinary Master of Arts program. Admitting fiction writers, poets, playwrights, and screenwriting for fully-funded graduate study, it was created by a \$20-million endowment from James A. Michener, philanthropist and author of over 50 books.

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