

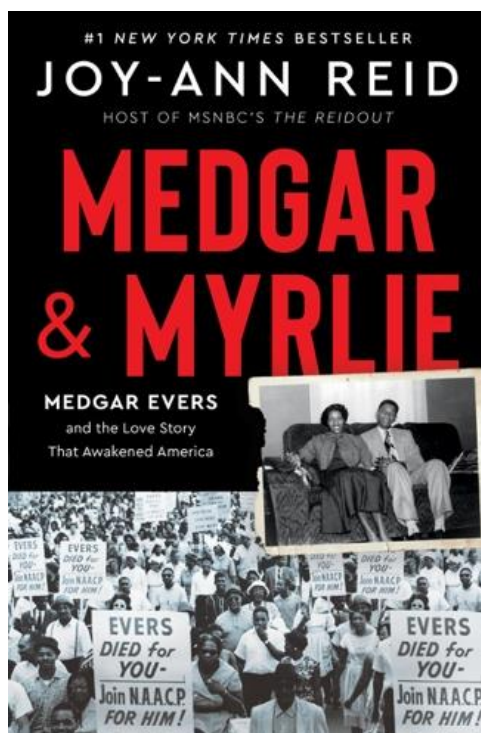
For Immediate Release

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## UofM's Hooks Institute Announces *Medgar & Myrlie: Medgar Evers and the Love Story That Awakened America* by Joy-Ann Reid as the 2024 Hooks National Book Award Winner

The Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change at the University of Memphis has selected *Medgar & Myrlie: Medgar Evers and the Love Story That Awakened America* by Joy-Ann Reid (Mariner Books) as the 2024 Hooks National Book Award winner. The book award will be presented in February of 2026.



“Joy-Ann Reid effectively explores Medgar and Myrlie Evers as partners in love and in civil rights activism. What makes this book so interesting is that it really explores the two of them together, the love story that they had and the impact of their love story in Medgar's work, but also the work that Myrlie takes up after Medgar is assassinated. We see them working as co-leads in civil rights and that's not something we normally see, and that's what makes this such a compelling book,” says Dr. Terrence Tucker, chair and professor in the University of Memphis Department of English and chair of the Hooks National Book Award committee.

“In the push for civil rights, we usually think about it in terms of anger or outrage, but Reid's book brings love into the center of the civil rights movement...the love for people in addition to the love Medgar and Myrlie had for each other and their family. The power of their love led Medgar and Myrlie Evers to

work, tirelessly to make our country better.”

Mariner Books, the publisher, described this groundbreaking book as follows:

[A] triumphant work of biography that repositions slain Civil Rights pioneer Medgar Evers at the heart of America's struggle for freedom and celebrates Myrlie Evers's extraordinary activism after her husband's assassination in the driveway of their Mississippi home.

On June 12, 1963, Medgar Evers . . . [was] gunned down in the couple's driveway in Jackson [Mississippi]. In the wake of his tragic death, Myrlie carried on their civil rights legacy; writing a book about Medgar's fight, trying to win a congressional seat, and becoming a leader of the NAACP in her own right. . . .

Joy-Ann Reid uses Medgar and Myrlie's relationship as a lens through which to explore the on-the-ground work that went into winning basic rights for Black Americans, and the repercussions that still resonate today.

### **About Joy-Ann Reid**

Joy-Ann Reid is a journalist, author, documentary film producer and social and political commentator. She is the former host of The Reid Report, AM Joy, and "The ReidOut" on MSNBC (a two-time NAACP Award-winning and Emmy nominated nightly news analysis program). Her latest project: The Joy Reid Show, airs on Youtube and on all audio podcast platforms.

Reid has written four books, two of which were New York Times best sellers: *Medgar and Myrlie; the Love Story That Awakened America*, which made the *Times* best-seller list and won the 2025 NAACP Image Award in the biography category; and *The Man Who Sold America*, which was also made the *Times* best-seller list. Additionally, Reid authored, *Fracture: Barack Obama, The Clintons and the Racial Divide*, and the foreword to *Kamala Harris: Selections from the Official White House Photography*.

A 1991 Harvard graduate with a documentary film concentration, Reid has worked in talk radio for Radio One; was the managing editor of TheGrio.com; was a political operative for America Coming Together in 2004; and worked for the 2008 Barack Obama presidential campaign.

Reid is a proud honorary member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. She and her husband Jason co-own the production company, Image Lab Media Group, which produces The Joy Reid Show and an upcoming documentary on Medgar Evers. They have four adult children.

### **About the Hooks National Book Award**

The Hooks Institute's National Book Award is presented to a non-fiction book published in the calendar year that, through scholarly research, best furthers understanding of the American civil rights movement and its legacy. Finalists for the national book award were chosen from 47 books that were nominated for the 2024 award. In addition to "Medger & Myrlie" the award finalists were:

- *Black Utopians: Searching for Paradise and the Promised Land in America* by Aaron Robertson (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)

- *From Rights to Lives: The Evolution of the Black Freedom Struggle* by Françoise Hamlin and Charles McKinney, Jr. (Vanderbilt University Press)
- *Survival is a Promise: The Eternal Life of Audre Lorde* by Alexis Pauline Gumbs (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)
- *John Lewis: A Life* by David Greenberg (Simon & Schuster)

#### **About the Hooks National Book Award Committee**

The Hooks Institute extends its gratitude to the 2024 Hooks National Book Award committee. In addition to Tucker, chair of the English Department at the University of Memphis, the committee includes Dr. Daryl Anderson, Jr., Assistant Professor of English at LeMoyne-Owen College; Dr. Brian Kwoba, Associate Professor of History at the University of Memphis; Dr. Ladrica Menson-Furr, assistant dean of the UofM College of Arts and Sciences and associate professor of English and Dr. Shatavia Wynn, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies and Africana Studies at Rhodes College.

**For more information, visit [memphis.edu/benhooks/programs/book-award.php](https://memphis.edu/benhooks/programs/book-award.php).**

#### **About the Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change**

The Benjamin L. Hooks Institute implements its mission of advancing social change and strengthening democracy through research, service, and historical preservation. Institute programs include community outreach; funding faculty research initiatives on community issues; implementing community service projects; hosting conferences, symposiums and lectures; and promoting local and national scholarship on civil and human rights. The Hooks Institute is an interdisciplinary center at the University of Memphis. Contributory support for the Hooks Institute, including funding from individuals, corporations and foundations, is administered through the University of Memphis Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization.

**For more information, visit [memphis.edu/benhooks](https://memphis.edu/benhooks)**

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