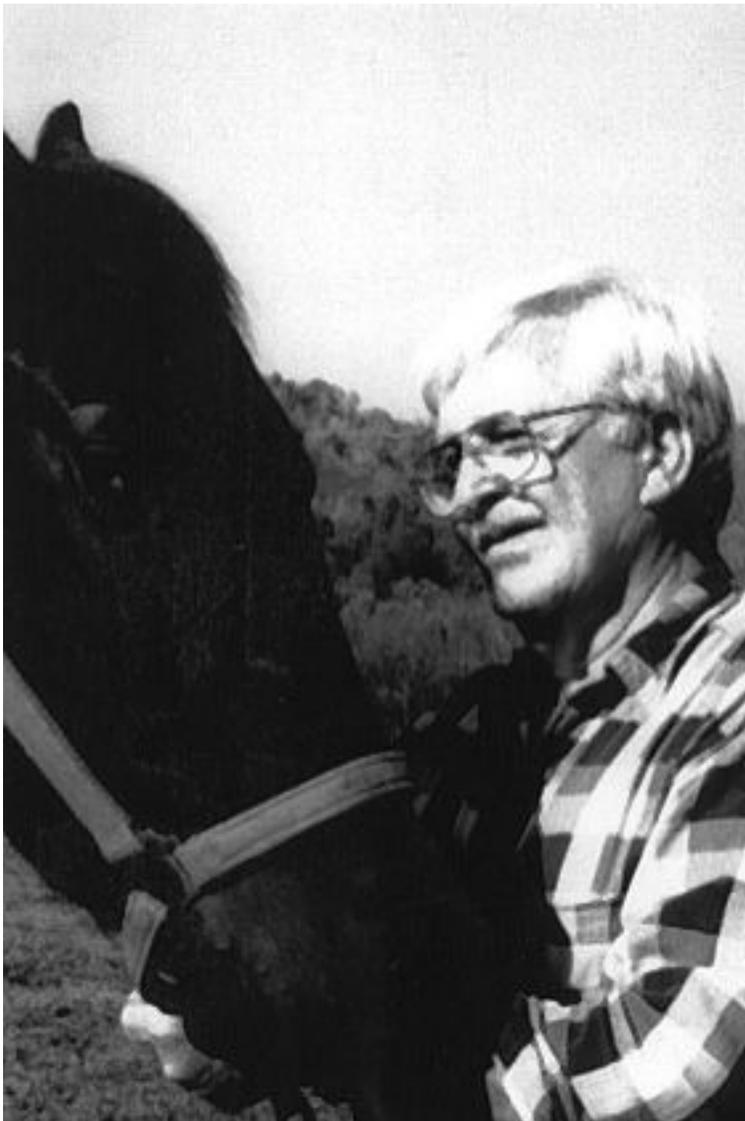


Ray Cristina Recipient of Ninth Annual James Jones First Novel Fellowship

The Humanities Department of Wilkes University and the James Jones Literary Society announced on October 1 the winner of the 2001 James Jones First Novel Fellowship. Ray Cristina of Prospect, Pennsylvania, received the \$5,000 first prize on November 10th at the Society's annual conference in Robinson, Illinois, the birthplace of James Jones, author of *From Here to Eternity* (1951), *The Thin Red Line* (1962), and many other works. The University's Humanities Department administers the contest for the Society, which is headquartered in Robinson.



Cristina's manuscript, "Tracking Ginger," was chosen out of 432 submissions to the contest, which was established nine years ago to honor the spirit of unblinking honesty, determination and insight into modern culture exemplified by James Jones. Set in Pennsylvania and Ohio, Cristina's novel tells the story of Manos, a veteran who lost part of his leg in Vietnam. He returns home one evening to find his constant companion, a Rhodesian Ridgeback named Ginger, to be gone, probably stolen. After a complex search, Manos comes to believe that a man named Jasper Hoag, an ex-convict also known as "Hog," is holding the dog. The novel builds up to a struggle between the men.

Born in Pittsburgh and a long-time resident of western Pennsylvania, Ray Cristina holds A.B. and M. Litt. degrees from the University of Pittsburgh, both in creative writing. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1946-48 and has worked as a wire-service reporter, medical writer, freelance writer and photographer, and at the University of Pittsburgh, as a writing instructor and information specialist. Currently, he raises and trains Morgan show horses with his wife on a small farm.

His previous publications include *Above and Below* (with Tom Shelnick), a nonfiction book about deep-sea diving, and many short stories in literary magazines. He has written television plays and documentaries for three Pittsburgh television stations and produced nine medical films for Western Pennsylvania Hospital. In addition, he was the book reviewer for *The Pittsburgh Press* in the late fifties and early sixties. Cristina says he's "not on the internet yet because my computer is an antique, but the first thing I'm going to do with my award check is buy a new one." He has finished "Tracking Ginger" and is at work on a second novel with the idea for a third one in mind.

The judges for this year's contest were Kaylie Jones, the novelist daughter of James Jones; Kevin Heisler, a New York based writer; Dr. Patricia Heaman, Professor Emeritus of English at Wilkes and former chair of its English Department; and Dr. J. Michael Lennon, former Vice

President for Academic Affairs at Wilkes and now Professor of English there.

The James Jones First Novel Fellowship welcomes inquiries on the contest. Requests for guidelines should be sent with a SASE to James Jones First Novel Fellowship, c/o Humanities Department, Kirby Hall, Wilkes University, Wilkes-Barre, PA, 18766 or via email to english@wilkes.edu. Submission deadline is March 1st of each year. Fellowship guidelines are available online at <http://www.wilkes.edu/humanities/jones.html>.