

A champ returns



Award-winning author Mitchell S. Jackson began his college career at Clark. *Photo: Charlotte M. Wales*

During the 2017 winter quarter installment of its renowned Columbia Writers Series, Clark College will welcome back former student Mitchell S. Jackson, an award-winning author. Mitchell will read from and discuss his writing from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 17, in room PUB 258 on Clark's main campus.

"I'm excited about Mitchell's reading because I think it will be a great opportunity for Clark students to hear from someone who grew up in the area and attended Clark," says English instructor Alexis Nelson, who co-directs the Columbia Writers Series. "I also think *The Residue Years* suits the college theme of Transformation, in addition to being a unique and powerful read."

Raised in Portland, Mitchell Jackson is the author of *The Residue Years*, a novel that Mitchell has said includes many autobiographical elements. The award-winning book centers on the relationship between Champ, a young African-American man struggling to balance his ambitions with his circumstances, and his mother Grace, recently released from rehab.

Jackson began his college career at Clark in 1993, where he played basketball under then-coach David Waldow. "My time at Clark was formative," says Jackson. "It taught me that I would have to work hard to achieve my goals, that I'd have to take

responsibility for my decisions. Coach Waldow was tough on me, but he was also a figure I needed at that point in my life.”

Jackson transferred to another college after one year at Clark, eventually earning an M.A. in writing from Portland State University and an M.F.A in Creative Writing from New York University. He currently resides in New York, and serves on the faculty of both New York University and Columbia University.

The Residue Years has earned significant accolades since its release in 2013. It was praised by publications including *The New York Times*, *The Paris Review*, and *The Times of London*. Jackson is the winner of a Whiting Award. His novel also won The Ernest J. Gaines Prize for Literary Excellence and was a finalist for the Center for Fiction’s Flaherty-Dunnan First novel prize, the PEN/ Hemingway award for first fiction, and the Hurston / Wright Legacy Award. Jackson’s honors include fellowships from TED, the Lannan Foundation, the BreadLoaf Conference, and the Center for Fiction. It was also the 2015 Everybody Reads selection of the Multnomah County Library. *The New York Times* said in its review of the book, “Jackson’s prose has a spoken-word cadence, the language flying off the page with percussive energy ... there is a warmth and a hard-won wisdom about the intersection of race and poverty in America.”

The event is free and open to the public. Directions and maps are available online. Individuals who need accommodation due to a disability in order to fully participate in this event should contact Clark College’s Disability Support Services (DSS) Office at 360-992-2314 or 360-991-0901 (VP). The DSS office is located in room 013 in Clark’s Penguin Union Building.

The Columbia Writers Series was launched at Clark College in 1988, bringing local, national and international authors to the college and the region. Information about the Columbia Writers Series is available at www.clark.edu/cc/cws.

