

News Release

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Board of Governors for Higher Education
Department of Higher Education
State of Connecticut



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Department Chief Awarded Major Lithuanian Literary Prize

HARTFORD, Oct. 31 – Jonas Zdanys, chief academic officer and associate commissioner for academic affairs for the Connecticut Department of Higher Education, has been awarded Lithuania's Jotvingiai Prize for 2002.

The prize – similar to a Pulitzer in the U.S. – is the major award for poetry given in Lithuania and is awarded by Lithuania's Ministry of Culture and by the City Council of Druskininkai, the host city for Lithuania's international fall literary festival. Zdanys was awarded the prize for his new collection of poetry, written in Lithuanian, Dūmų Stulpai (Pillars of Smoke), published in May 2002 by the Writers Union Publishing House, the country's leading literary publisher. It was judged as the best volume of poetry published in Lithuania this year.

The Jotvingiai Prize is awarded by a select committee of poets and other writers, and has been awarded to all of Lithuania's major writers since its inception. The prize is the most recent recognition Zdanys has received for his literary work. He was awarded the Lithuanian Writers Union Prize for Translation in 1996 for his book Four Poets of Lithuania; the Lithuanian Writers' Society Prize for Best Book of the Year in 1994 for Aušros Daina (Aurora's Song), a volume of his poetry in Lithuanian; and the Phillips Poetry Award and the Weinstein Memorial Creative Writing Award for his English-language poems. He also was selected as Finalist for the Ohio State University Press/The Journal Award in Poetry for Water Light, a volume of his selected poems.

Zdanys also was recognized for two other books published this year: Five Lithuanian Women Poets, his translation into English of poems by Lithuania's leading women poets, and Inclusions in Time, his translation into English of poems by Lithuanian poet Antanas A. Jonynas. Both volumes of translations were featured at this year's Frankfurt Book Fair, the principal international book exhibition held annually in Frankfurt, Germany.

Zdanys is the author of 28 books, principally collections of his poetry in English and in Lithuanian and of his translations into English of Lithuanian poetry and fiction. Before coming to the Department of Higher Education in 1998, Zdanys worked for 18 years at Yale University, where he held a faculty appointment in the Department of Comparative Literature, was a Scholar-in-Residence in the Council on Russian and East European Studies, and served in a variety of administrative positions, including associate dean of the Yale Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and Assistant to the President. A native of **New Britain**, Zdanys lives in **North Haven** with his wife and two daughters.

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