

**SEE What's ON SALE** [CLICK HERE](#) **frELECTRONICS Fry's**





dallasnews SportsDay GuideLIVE FD Luxe neighborsgo Sign In Subscribe Subscriber Services

OBITS CLASSIFIEDS AUTOS JOBS REAL ESTATE SHOPPING

# dallasnews

Powered by *The Dallas Morning News*

**92°**    
 FORECAST TRAFFIC

[Home](#) [NEWS](#) [BUSINESS](#) [SPORTS](#) [ENTERTAINMENT](#) [LIFE](#) [OPINION](#) [VIDEO](#)

[Home](#) > [New Articles](#)

## Albanian writers recognize 2 from UTD for translating poet

  **A** Text Size  Comments ( )

By BRENT FLYNN  
 Special Contributor  
 Published: 06 July 2012 02:11 PM  
 Updated: 06 July 2012 02:11 PM

*Editor's note: This story originally appeared on August 18, 2005.*

Gjeke Marinaj, president of the Albanian-American Society of Writers, understands the illuminating power of the written word in a nation that wishes to be free.

His organization recently honored two University of Texas at Dallas professors for their lifetime of literary achievement with the first-ever Gjenima Prize. Professors Zsuzsanna Ozsvath and Frederick Turner are joint recipients of the prize, which was presented to them at the society's annual literary award ceremony Aug. 7 in Lewisville.

Dr. Marinaj said his commitment to writing was born out of a harrowing personal tale of dissent and retribution. As a prominent journalist for the Albanian paper of record, Drita, meaning "the light," Mr. Marinaj wrote what at first glance read like a simple poem about farm animals. However, it was actually a satirical social commentary about the Albanian people being herded and corralled by an oppressive communist regime.

"The poem was called Horses, and it just alluded to the whole idea of the Albanian people eating whatever the government says and doing whatever the government tells them to do," he said.


A few weeks later, on Sept. 12, 1990, as he sipped coffee with two other writers at the Rozafa Hotel in Shkoder, Albania, a stranger pulled up a chair at the table.

"I said, 'I am from the country. I am just sad for the horses.' He didn't buy it, and then he showed me his badge and told me that I was supposed to be at his headquarters the next day at 8 a.m."

Having seen other poets hanged in the city's center for voicing similar notions of freedom and liberty, Mr. Marinaj knew that he had to leave the country immediately. He packed a few of his favorite books, told his friends and family that he was going on vacation, and set off on an eight-hour hike over the

**Related**

Gjekë Marinaj



**THINGS TO DO >**


**Upcoming Events**

Search [Add A Listing](#)

**Events** **Restaurants** **Movies** **Venues**

What When

Where Within

Miles 

From GuideLive

mountains and into Yugoslavia.

His journey finally led him to Richardson in 1992. He teaches literature and communications at Richland College, owns and operates a publishing company, and works nights at Baylor University Medical Center as a component technician in the transfusion services department.

### A young group

His organization is small, with only 44 members across the U.S.

"I formed the society in 2001. I thought it would be a great idea to preserve the Albanian culture, keep the language alive in the United States and keep Albanian-Americans informed," he said.

Mrs. Ozsvath and Mr. Turner have distinguished writing careers of their own, but it was their collaborative effort to translate into English the works of one of the greatest Hungarian poets, Miklos Radnoti, that earned them the latest distinction. The book is titled Foamy Sky: The Major Poems of Miklos Radnoti.

A prominent writer before World War II, Mr. Rodnoti, a Jew, was executed by the Nazis and buried in a mass grave. When his body was exhumed two years later, a notebook containing the last 10 poems he wrote was found in the pocket of his raincoat.

### 'Enormously shaken'

Mrs. Ozsvath, a Holocaust survivor whose extended family was killed by the Germans, knew of his story but didn't internalize it until she was exposed to his poetry at the age of 14.

"It was shortly after his body was found. I read about it, but I didn't think much of it. At that time there were so many stories like that," she said. "When I first heard one of his poems read, I was enormously shaken. I was sobbing, crying, and I went out and bought the book. So he has always been with me."

She carried his book of poems with her as she traveled to Germany and on to the United States. Her personal experiences, along with her position at UTD as chairwoman of the Leah and Paul Lewis Holocaust Studies program, made the translation project a perfect fit.

Mr. Turner, who teaches in the School of Arts and Humanities at UTD and has written 25 books of his own, said he almost feels unworthy of the praise from the Albanian-American Society of Writers.

"The president is himself a first-rate poet. And when I met the other writers in the society at the annual meeting, some of them Nobel Prize winners, I realized what a very great honor it was," he said. "These are distinguished writers."

## CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS >

Did you see something wrong in this story, or something missing? [Let us know.](#)

### FROM THE WEB

Foodie [The Cheese Dip That Will Make You Famous!](#)

Tech Policy [Too Good To Be True](#)

BlackBerry Empire [BlackBerry and Neil Gaiman Launch Final Outcome of Keep Moving Project: "A Calendar of Tales"](#)

E! Online [Kate Upton Gets "Amazing Golf Lesson" From Arnold Palmer—See the Pic!](#)

CafeMom [Woman Sleeps in Makeup for a Month & the Results Are Horrifying](#)

### MORE FROM DALLASNEWS.COM

Dallas News [No-bake nirvana: Vanilla and Lemon Spiked Sour-Cream Panna Cotta](#)

Dallas News [Berries with Mascarpone Cream and Cookie Crumbles](#)

Dallas News [Bubba's Bunch Barbecued Baby Back Ribs: The secret's in the rub](#)

Dallas News [Pasta with Mint Pesto and Zucchini](#)

Sports [Texas senior defensive tackle Ashton Dorsey will transfer](#)

Recommended by 



 MOBILE >

[Get dallasnews.com on your mobile device](#)

 NEWSLETTERS >

[Subscribe to a variety of newsletters](#)

## YOUR OPINION

[What's This?](#)

Best "Twilight" film so far?

"Breaking Dawn Pt. 1"

"Twilight"

"Eclipse"

"New Moon"

## FIND IT

<a href="#">Shop</a>
<a href="#">Autos</a>
<a href="#">Classifieds/Place an Ad</a>

## TOP PICKS



### Pop Culture blog

Peppard: Greenhill School lets students invest with actual \$100,000 portfolio



### Dining

Vote: It's Fuel City vs. Rusty taco in final round of our Dallas taco throwdown



### Sports

What constitutes a 'targeting' hit under the new Big 12 rule? See examples



### Editorial Cartoons

Observations on American politics and more

## Comments

Dallasnews.com is now using Facebook Comments. To post a comment, log into Facebook and then add your comment below. Your comment is subject to Facebook's [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#) on data use. If you don't want your comment to appear on Facebook, uncheck the 'Post to Facebook' box. To find out more, read the [FAQ](#).



Facebook social plugin

<p><b>DALLASNEWS.COM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Home</li> <li>Blogs</li> <li>Business</li> <li>eBooks</li> <li>Entertainment</li> <li>Investigations</li> <li>Life</li> <li>Local</li> <li>Nation &amp; World</li> <li>Opinion</li> <li>Sports</li> <li>Traffic</li> <li>Weather</li> <li>Autos</li> <li>Real estate</li> <li>Jobs</li> <li>Shopping</li> <li>Classifieds</li> <li>Business listings</li> <li>Legal notices</li> <li>Obituaries</li> <li>Pets</li> <li>Mobile Apps</li> <li>-----</li> <li>Site map</li> </ul>	<p><b>ADVERTISING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>View ads</li> <li>Place a Classified ad</li> <li>Media kit</li> <li>Special sections</li> </ul> <p><b>SUBSCRIBER SERVICES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Home delivery</li> <li>Pay bill</li> <li>Vacation stop</li> </ul>	<p><b>CONTACT US</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Careers</li> <li>News tips</li> <li>2014 DMN Intern Program</li> <li>Feedback/questions</li> </ul> <p><b>NEWSPAPER ARCHIVES</b></p> <p><b>CELEBRATIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit a Celebration ad</li> <li>View Celebration ads</li> </ul>	<p><b>RELATED SITES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AIDiaTX.com</li> <li>FDLuxe.com</li> <li>GuideLive.com</li> <li>neighborsgo.com</li> <li>eEdition</li> <li>Parade</li> <li>Pegasusnews.com</li> <li>DentonRC.com</li> <li>Local business listings</li> <li>The Texas Wedding Guide</li> <li>Design Guide Texas</li> </ul>
--	---	--	--