

John Dower named winner of 1986 National Book Critics Circle Award for Non-Fiction for his book "War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War"

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(San Diego Area Editors Note: Dower is a resident of University City)

UCSD HISTORY PROFESSOR WINS NATIONAL BOOK CRITICS CIRCLE AWARD

John Dower, holder of the Joseph Naiman Endowed Chair in Japanese Studies at the University of California, San Diego, has been named winner of the 1986 National Book Critics Circle Award for Non-Fiction for his book "War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War" (Pantheon, 1986).

The annual award is given by a panel of book reviewers from major newspapers and magazines.

Dower's book was also one of the five finalists in the non-fiction category of the 1986 American Book Awards.

"I was pleased that a book dealing with such harsh and controversial themes as war and racism was recognized as a constructive attempt to wrestle with these problems," said Dower. "It took about five years to write, and it is also gratifying to find the book being read by a wider audience than we academics usually reach."

The award will be presented at a reception in New York City January 29.

Dower described his book as "a study of World War II from a comparative perspective.

"It is a look at war through both Allied eyes and Japanese eyes," he added. "I try to relate the perceptions that each side had of the other, including racial and racist stereotypes, to the conduct of the war.

"What sets the book apart is that it examines the role of race in the Pacific war more closely than other sources and also does so in a comparative framework," Dower said. "It is a new way of trying to come to grips with the war, and it draws broader conclusions for contemporary U.S.-Japan relations and also problems of racism, violence and war today."

Dower is considered the country's leading authority on the American occupation of Japan and how that occupation changed Japanese society following World War II.

Dower's interests extend not only to modern Japanese history, but include U.S.-Asian relations and Japanese art as well.

He has co-edited a recently published book, "The Hiroshima Murals: The Art of Iri Maruki and Toshi Maruki," and produced a documentary film about those artists called "Hellfire: A Journey from Hiroshima" which received two awards: The Marjorie Benton Peace Film Award, and the Gold Medal for films dealing with Japanese arts

and culture in "The 30th Competition for Films on Japan" sponsored by the Japanese Foreign Ministry and Asahi Shimbun newspaper.

Dower earned his Ph.D. from Harvard University in history and far eastern languages, and had been at the University of Wisconsin prior to coming to UCSD last year.

The Naiman Chair, which is housed in the Department of History, was created in 1985 through a gift from Jack Naiman of San Diego, chief executive officer of the Naiman Co., a real estate development company. The chair is named in honor of his father.

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