

Uganda Poetry Society Celebrates First-Ever Dr. Ivan Edwards Poetry Award at Backyard Bistro

KAMPALA, UGANDA, April 14, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Uganda's literary community gathered at Backyard Bistro in Bugolobi for a milestone cultural event: the launch of the [Dr. Ivan Edwards Poetry Award](#), a new national honor created to spotlight exceptional poetic talent across Uganda.

The evening also marked an important moment for the [Uganda Poetry Society](#): the formal transition of leadership from outgoing President Philip Matogo to incoming elected President Atim Priscilla Ariance, who also received the top honor in the Spoken Word category.



Winners

Hosted by the esteemed Uganda Poetry Society, the ceremony brought together poets, educators, cultural leaders, and supporters of the arts. The award is named after Dr. Ivan Edwards, a poet and public figure whose creative work and public service continue to inspire audiences both within Uganda and abroad.

“

The award... signals the beginning of a lasting cultural tradition.”

Philip Matogo

The evening marked the first presentation of the award, recognizing excellence in four categories: Spoken Word, Written Word, Youth Spoken Word, and Youth Written

Word. Winners received a combined total of US\$1,200, underscoring the Society's commitment to elevating poetry as a serious and celebrated art form.

The ceremony unfolded in a warm, dignified atmosphere designed to honor originality, emotional depth, and cultural expression. Backyard Bistro, a creative venue in Bugolobi, was transformed into an intimate space for literary recognition and community celebration.

The award was created to:

- promote poetry as a respected national art form
- highlight both emerging and established voices
- strengthen Uganda's literary ecosystem
- establish an annual platform for artistic excellence

A distinguished panel of judges evaluated submissions for creativity, resonance, and craftsmanship. Following the formal presentations, the evening concluded with a lively interactive segment titled "Who Is the Poet?", an improvisational challenge that awarded 500,000 UGX to the most inventive participant — a spirited finale that brought laughter and energy to the venue.

2026 Laureates

- Atim Priscilla Ariance— US\$500 (Spoken Word)
- Lus Aziz Al'Fadhul— US\$500 (Written Word)
- Gumbadia La Joie— US\$100 (Youth Spoken Word)
- Praise Nowangye— US\$100 (Youth Written Word)

Leadership Transition and Vision for the Future

During the ceremony, outgoing President Philip Matogo formally handed over leadership to Atim Priscilla Ariance, marking a new chapter for the Society. In his remarks, Matogo emphasized that the award and the transition together "signal the beginning of a lasting cultural tradition", noting that the Society is committed to expanding opportunities for poets nationwide.

Matogo also announced an upcoming initiative: the creation of a literary anthology featuring selected works submitted for the 2026 award. The anthology will serve as both a historical record and a platform for emerging voices, reinforcing the Society's mission to develop talent and preserve Uganda's literary heritage.

A New Chapter for Ugandan Literature

The successful launch of the Dr. Ivan Edwards Poetry Award marks the beginning of a significant cultural tradition. The ceremony set a strong foundation for what is expected to become one of the region's most respected literary honors, affirming Uganda's growing influence in the global literary conversation.

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