

EPIC STORIES OF HEROES AND SURVIVORS WIN AT THE WRITERS' TRUST AWARDS: LAWRENCE HILL AND ANNA PORTER HEADLINE LIST OF WINNERS

TORONTO, ON - April 1, 2008 - The works of great Canadian authors were honoured this evening at the Jane Mallett Theatre at the seventh annual Writers' Trust Awards. Burlington native Lawrence Hill was awarded the \$15,000 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize for his harrowing novel *The Book of Negroes*, about a forgotten chapter of black history. Toronto author Anna Porter won the \$15,000 Nereus Writers' Trust Non-Fiction Prize for *Kasztner's Train: The True Story of Rezsó Kasztner, Unknown Hero of the Holocaust*, a comprehensive account of a Hungarian Holocaust hero. Six other authors received awards for their excellence in literature: Craig Boyko, Martha Brooks, Michael Crummey, Graeme Gibson, David Helwig, and Diane Schoemperlen.

Eight prizes were awarded with a combined value of \$123,000, making the event one of the richest awards nights in Canada.

Below are the prizes presented at the Writers' Trust Awards, with comments from the juries.

THE ROGERS WRITERS' TRUST FICTION PRIZE (\$15,000)

Sponsored by Rogers Communications Inc.

- Winner: **Lawrence Hill** (Burlington, Ontario) for *The Book of Negroes*, published by HarperCollins
"A provocative, humane journey into the unfathomable depths of the soul of another."

Finalists (each receives \$2,000):

- **Robert Hough** (Toronto) for *The Culprits*, published by Random House Canada
- **Nancy Huston** (Paris, France) for *Fault Lines*, published by McArthur & Company
- **Shaena Lambert** (Vancouver) for *Radiance*, published by Random House Canada
- **M.G. Vassanji** (Toronto) for *The Assassin's Song*, published by Doubleday Canada

Jury: Kevin Major (St. John's), Kim Moritsugu (Toronto), and Madeleine Thien (Montreal)

THE NEREUS WRITERS' TRUST NON-FICTION PRIZE (\$15,000)

Sponsored by Nereus Financial Inc.

- Winner: **Anna Porter** (Toronto) for *Kasztner's Train: The True Story of Rezsó Kasztner, Unknown Hero of the Holocaust*, published by Douglas & McIntyre

"Porter's narrative is a chilling but redemptive tale about how bargaining for justice can shadow the burden of truth."

Finalists (each receives \$2,000):

- **Katherine Ashenburg** (Toronto) for *The Dirt on Clean: An Unsanitized History*, published by Knopf Canada

- **Tim Bowling** (Edmonton) for *The Lost Coast: Salmon, Memory and the Death of Wild Culture*, published by Nightwood Editions
- **Barry Gough** (Victoria) for *Fortune's a River: The Collision of Empires in Northwest America*, published by Harbour Publishing
- **Douglas Hunter** (Port McNicol, Ontario) for *God's Mercies: Rivalry, Betrayal and the Dream of Discovery*, published by Doubleday Canada

Jury: Greg Gatenby (Toronto), John Metcalf (Ottawa), and Aritha Van Herk (Calgary, Alberta)

THE WRITERS' TRUST OF CANADA/McCLELLAND & STEWART JOURNEY PRIZE (\$10,000)

Made possible by James A. Michener's donation of his Canadian royalty earnings from his 1988 novel, *Journey*, and awarded to a new and developing writer for the best short story or excerpt from a novel-in-progress that had its first publication in a Canadian literary journal in the previous year.

- Winner: **Craig Boyko** (Victoria) for "OZY"

"Boyko somehow manages to capture, celebrate, and mourn the passing of childhood and also to reflect upon the enigma of mortality."

For publishing the winning entry *PRISM international* receives \$2,000.

Finalists:

- **Krista Foss** (Hamilton, Ontario) for "Swimming in Zanzibar," published in *The Antigoniish Review*
- **Rebecca Rosenblum** (Toronto) for "Chilly Girl," published in *Exile*

Jury: Caroline Adderson (Vancouver), David Bezmozgis (Toronto), and Dionne Brand (Toronto)

THE VICKY METCALF AWARD FOR CHILDREN'S LITERATURE (\$15,000)

Sponsored by the George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation.

Awarded to a writer of children's literature for a body of work.

- Winner: **Martha Brooks** (Winnipeg)

"Her novels and short stories push the boundaries of the young adult genre in terms of character, situation, and theme, the result of which is works notable for their depth and resonance."

Jury: Nora Flynn (St. John's), Jean Little (Guelph, Ontario), and Susan Perren (Toronto)

THE TIMOTHY FINDLEY AWARD (\$15,000)

Sponsored by the Writers' Trust of Canada.

Awarded to a male writer in mid-career for a body of work.

- Winner: **Michael Crummey** (St. John's)

"Death haunts Crummey's books. But so do love and desire, the human ferment that supplies his work with a fundamental generosity, a glowing, wistful hopefulness."

Jury: Joan Barfoot (London, Ontario), Douglas Glover (Gansevoort, New York), and Jack Hodgins (Victoria)

THE MARIAN ENGEL AWARD (\$15,000)

Sponsored by the Writers' Trust of Canada.

Awarded to a female writer in mid-career for a body of work.

- **Winner: Diane Schoemperlen** (Kingston, Ontario)

"Schoemperlen has been one of the most consistently innovative writers in Canadian fiction for over three decades."

Jury: Caroline Adderson (Vancouver), Gayla Reid (Vancouver), and Nino Ricci (Toronto)

THE MATT COHEN AWARD: IN CELEBRATION OF A WRITING LIFE (\$20,000)

Supported by Beatrice Wright.

Awarded to a writer whose life has been dedicated to writing as a primary pursuit, for a body of work.

- **Winner: David Helwig** (Charlottetown)

"Helwig has made a significant and lasting contribution to Canadian literature, and has lived the writing life."

THE WRITERS' TRUST AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED CONTRIBUTION

Awarded to an individual or organization for long-standing involvement with the Writers' Trust.

- **Winner: Graeme Gibson** (Toronto)

"Through his ongoing commitment of time, energy, and resources, Gibson has given selflessly to shape the Writers' Trust."

The 2008 Writers' Trust Awards event is made possible through generous support from corporate, foundation, and individual sponsors. The Writers' Trust would like to thank The Globe and Mail for continuing to be the event's national print media sponsor. Other sponsors include Bassett Productions, Charton Hobbs, Effen Vodka, Push Design, and Steam Whistle Pilsner.

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For writers' biographies, complete jury citations, information about the Writers' Trust, and a chance to win a set of this year's nominated titles, please visit writerstrust.com.

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