



The Word Guild Is Pleased to Announce
The 2020 Word Awards Winner's List

Honouring the Best of Canadian Christian Writing from 2019

TORONTO, ON — On Saturday, June 13, 2020 at 7pm Eastern Standard Time, The Word Guild held their 32nd Annual Awards presentation, honouring Canadian Christian literary excellence. The show was co-hosted by Soul H₂O Host, author, blogger and awards coordinator, Sherry Stahl alongside best-selling author, speaker and missionary, Joe Amaral. Board Chair David Kitz welcomed everyone and opened the ceremonies in prayer. Sponsors graciously helped broadcast the news and announced winners in their respective awards classes.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the annual Gala was cancelled, so the 2020 Celebration was a pre-recorded video, streaming through Facebook and YouTube. This was the first time in 32 years that winners could hear their names called as winners from sea to shining sea! What some feared to be a negative, proved to be a huge success! The online platform provided greater promotion for Canadian Christian writers featured on the list. People watched across our great nation around the globe. Many continue to view and share the recording through the two social media platforms and a link on The Word Guild website finalist page.

“This year’s awards celebration was an amazing event. Canadians globally cheered on their favourite authors from the comfort of their own home”, said Stahl.

This year’s celebration was a great time to reflect on the accomplishments of many writers in the past year. Parties were held around the globe as one scholarship and 58 awards were given out in 56 categories from the short list of novelists, bloggers, columnists, apologists, theologians, and songwriters reaching both Christian and mainstream audiences.

Book winners ranged from self-published, to co-publishing, to traditional with publishing house names like Castle Quay Books, Harvest House, Word Alive Press, InterVarsity Press, B&H Publishing and Thomas Nelson. Articles were written in the smallest of local publications to national newspapers and magazines like *Testimony*, *Christian Courier*, *Crux*, *Faith Today*, or *The Light Magazine*.

Janet Surette was this year’s big winner! She impressively took home three wins in The 2020 Word Awards Celebration! Janet graciously received the largest literary prize in Canada for Christians with the Grace Irwin Best Canadian Book Award... along with a win for her book’s category and the Best Canadian Book Cover Award. Newcomer Melanie Stevenson of Cambridge, ON took home the Best Canadian New Author Award. Melanie published two books in her debut year to the publishing world. Two books, three nominations on the shortlist and two award wins. What an entry into the literary world!

Amazingly, seven writers took home two winning awards. They were Julia Friesen, Paul C. Breen, Eleanor Bertin, Carolyn Arends, Craig Macartney, Terrie Todd, Melanie Stevenson and Susan Doherty.

A heartfelt tribute was given in honour of Michael D. O’Brien as the recipient of the Castle Quay Books sponsored, Leslie K. Tarr Lifetime Achievement Award. As a survivor of Residential School living, O’Brien overcame to become an author, magazine editor, essayist, artist, and a well-known lecturer on faith and culture.

During the evening, Ruth Coghill and Sara Davison were honoured for excellence in social justice issues writing with The Debra Fieguth Award. Former awards winner Preston Pouteaux took home the Harvey/Mackey New Journalist Award. The 4th Annual Castle Quay Best New Canadian Manuscript award went to Larry McCloskey of Ottawa, ON with a prize package including publication of his unpublished manuscript by Castle Quay Books.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING WINNERS...



UNPUBLISHED WORK CLASSES

FRESH INK {Student Writing Awards} High School Sponsored by Tyndale University

SHORT STORY

- Sarah VanZandbeek: Edmonton, AB *“The Messiah Beside Me – The Criminal on the Cross”* (Homeschooled)

POETRY

- Rachel Reid: *“The Personal Poems of Aliana Charon”* (Westmount Secondary School)

1ST 3 CHPT—UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT

- Kail Levasseur: Hythe, AB *“The Book”* (Homeschooled)

FRESH INK {Student Writing Awards} University/College ~ Sponsored by Crossroads Christian Communications

POETRY

- Kaitlyn Hogeterp: Centreville, NS *“His Mercy is More”* (Redeemer University: Hamilton, ON)

SCRIPT -SCREEN OR STAGE

- Julia Friesen: North York, ON *“A Broken Violin”* (Tyndale University & Seminary: Toronto, ON)

Wendy Elaine Nelles Scholarship ~ Sponsored by Personal Donations

- Julia Friesen: North York, ON

IN THE BEGINNING {Unpublished Author Awards} ~ Sponsored by Deep Dive Author Club

SHORT STORY

- Evelyn Pedersen: Mississauga, ON *“Through Her Lens”*

NON-FICTION SHORT PIECE

- Paul C Breen: Burlington, ON *“Saying Goodbye to Heather”*

POETRY

- Paul C Breen: Burlington, ON *“Ronnie the Bee”*

FIRST 3 CHAPTERS – FICTION OR NON-FICTION

- Kelly L Ditmars: Victoria, BC *“All That It Takes”*

CASTLE QUAY BEST NEW CANADIAN UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT AWARD ~ Sponsored by Castle Quay Publishers

- Larry McCloskey: Ottawa, ON *“Inarticulate Speech of the Heart”*



DIGITAL ENTRY CLASSES

CHRISTIAN—ARTICLE / SHORT PIECES (ASP)

Sponsored by Category

BLOG ~ Sponsored by Soul H2O Ministries

- Eleanor Bertin: Botha, AB *"#FosterMasculinity"* (Eleanor Bertin Blog)

COLUMN SERIES ~ Sponsored by Compassion Canada

- Carolyn Arends: Surrey, BC *"Getting our Stories Straight"* & *"It Takes a (Global) Village"* (Faith Today)

COLUMN SINGLE ~ Sponsored by Compassion Canada

- Roland De Vries: Montreal, QC *"The Missing Cup"* (Christian Courier)

INSPIRATIONAL/DEVOTIONAL ~ Sponsored by *testimony/Enrich* Magazines

- Rose McCormick Brandon: Caledonia, ON *"The 'Oh!' of God"* (The Bible Advocate)

LONG FEATURE ~ Sponsored by Compassion Canada

- Amy MacLachlan: Burlington, ON *"Bucking the System: Can we end chronic poverty in Canada?"* (Faith Today)

NEWS ~ Sponsored by HH Communication Services

- Craig Macartney: Ottawa, ON *"How hope rose from the ashes of the Rwandan genocide"* (Faith Today)

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE ~ Sponsored by *testimony/Enrich* Magazines

- Carolyn Arends: Surrey, BC *"Stoicism isn't Spiritual"* (Faith Today)

POETRY ~ Sponsored by *testimony/Enrich* Magazines

- Dagmar Morgan: Mississauga, ON *"There is no Free Meal"* (Love is Moving Movement)

PROFILE/HUMAN INTEREST ~ Sponsored by Belinda's Burst'n with Flavour Pies

- Craig Macartney: Ottawa, ON *"Persecuted, But Not Struck Down: How three persecuted Christians – from Iraq, Egypt, and Myanmar – are making Canada home"* (Faith Today)

SHORT FEATURE ~ Sponsored by Carol Ford

- Alex (Alexandra) Newman: Toronto, ON *"Christian Postsecondary schools are a good investment: Report highlights benefits to the spiritual and academic lives of youth"* (Faith Today)

SHORT STORY ~ Sponsored by Ottawa Christian Writers' Fellowship

- Eleanor Bertin: Botha, AB *"Like Wool"* (The Mosaic Collection)

CHRISTIAN SCRIPTS

FULL LENGTH STAGE OR SCREENPLAY ~ Sponsored by Karen Amaral Design

- Anne Cattaruzza: Longueuil, QC and Kim Feeney: Saint-Lambert, QC *"Searching for Sheida"*

**GENERAL MARKET—ARTICLE / SHORT PIECES (ASP) ~ Sponsored by That's Life! Communications****COLUMN - SINGLE**

- David Kitz: Orleans, ON "*Kitz: The slow, silent type – Confessions of an Ottawa male misfit*" (The Ottawa Citizen)

LONG FEATURE

- Paul Heintzman: Chelsea, QC "*Bill Mason's Environmental Ethics: Ideas for Outdoor Educators*" (Pathways: The Ontario Journal of Outdoor Education, Published by The Council of Outdoor Educators in Ontario)

PERSONAL FEATURE

- Terrie Todd: Portage la Prairie, MB "No Such Thing As Unplanned" (The Graphic Leader)

SHORT STORY

- Tara K. Ross: Milton, ON "*Searching for Spotlights*" (The Wells Street Journal)

GENERAL MARKET—SCRIPTS**SHORT SCRIPT**

- Terrie Todd: Portage la Prairie, MB "*What Peace We Forfeit*"

THE DAVID MAINSE BEST BLOG OF THE YEAR AWARD

~ Sponsored by Crossroads Christian Communications

- Jonathan Puddle: Guelph, ON "*Jonathan Puddle*"

TERRENCE L. BINGLEY AWARD SONGWRITING AWARD ~ Sponsored by The Bingley Family

- Elise Arsenault: Hamilton, ON "In The Velvet"

PUBLISHED BOOKS CLASSES**BOOKS – CHRISTIAN FICTION ~ Sponsored by Category****CHILDREN ~ Sponsored by Paul H. Boge**

- Janet Surette: Barrie, ON "*Scarlett's Spectacles*" (B & H Publishing)

YOUNG ADULT ~ Sponsored by Hope For Liberia

- Jennifer L. Willcock: Kitchener, ON "*Exit Stage Right*" (Word Alive Press)

CONTEMPORARY ~ Sponsored by Soul H2O Ministries

- Deb Elkink: Cypress County, AB "*The Red Journal*" (Rolled Scroll Press)

HISTORICAL ~ Sponsored by Hope For Liberia

- Jack Taylor: Vancouver, BC "*The Cross Maker*" (Word Alive Press)

ROMANCE ~ Sponsored by Soul H2O Ministries

- Melanie Stevenson: Cambridge, ON "*One More Tomorrow*" (Word Alive Press)



SUSPENSE/SPECULATIVE ~ Sponsored by Hope For Liberia

- Kevin Dautremont: Moose Jaw, SK “Scars” (Word Alive Press)

BOOKS – CHRISTIAN NON-FICTION ~ Sponsored by Category

ACADEMIC ~ Sponsored by Word Alive Press

- James R. Payton Jr.: Mount Hope, ON “*The Victory of the Cross: Salvation in Eastern Orthodoxy*” (IV Press)

INSTRUCTIONAL ~ Sponsored by Fletcher’s Horse World

- Margaret Gibb: Brantford, ON “*Faith, Life and Leadership: Vol 2*” (Castle Quay Books)

APOLOGETICS/EVANGELISM ~ Sponsored by Redeemer University

- Michael W. Goheen: Surrey, BC and Jim Mullins: Ada, MI “*The Symphony of Mission*” (Baker Academic)

BIBLICAL STUDIES ~ Sponsored by Tyndale University

- Mary A. Kassian: Sherwood Park, AB “*The Right Kind of Strong*” (Thomas Nelson Press)

CULTURE ~ Sponsored by ~ Sponsored by Redeemer University

- Paul H. Boge: Winnipeg, MB “*The Sound of Hope: The Ernesto Pinto Story*” (Square One World Media)

CHRISTIAN LIVING ~ Sponsored by Fletcher’s Horse World

- Cathie Ostapchuk: Oakville, ON “*Brave Women, Bold Moves*” (Word Alive Press)

INSPIRATIONAL ~ Sponsored by Tyndale University

- Todd Soltysiak: Caledon, ON “*I Learned it Through the Grapevine: Wisdom Comes in Bunches*” (Self)

DEVOTIONAL ~ Sponsored by Soul H2O Ministries

- Heather Rodin & Becki Baxter: Selwyn, ON “*Appointed*” (Self)

LIFE STORIES ~ Sponsored by Karen Amaral Design

- Valentina Gal: Fergus, ON “*Philipovna: Daughter of Sorrow*” (Guernica Editions)

LES PRIX DEX MOTS

VIE CHRÉTIENNE Sponsored by Joe Amaral

- Susan Doherty: Westmount, QC “*Le Jardin des Fantomes*” (Les Éditions De L’Homme)

BOOKS – GENERAL MARKET CHILDREN ~ Sponsored by That’s Life! Communications

- Tim Huff: Aurora, ON “*Make Way for the Christmas Hush*” (Castle Quay)

BOOKS – GENERAL MARKET ~ Sponsored by That’s Life! Communications

CULTURE

- Susan Doherty: Westmount, QC “*The Ghost Garden*” (Random House Canada)



LIFE STORIES

- Caren Jantzen: Abbotsford, BC *“Grow. Cook, Eat. Share. A Memoir”* (The Homestead Press)

SPECIALTY BOOK AWARD ~ Sponsored by Karen Amaral Design

- Dorene Meyer: Norway House, MB *“Bannock and Sweet Tea”* (Gold Rock Press)

SPECIALTY AWARDS

HARVEY/MACKEY NEW JOURNALIST AWARD ~ Sponsored by The Mackey & Robertson Families

- Preston Pouteaux: Chestermere, AB *“Caring for Politicians in a Harsh Culture”* (Faith Today)

DEBRA FIEGUTH SOCIAL JUSTICE AWARD ~ Sponsored by Faith Today Magazine

- Ruth Coghill: Bobcaygeon, ON and Sara Davison: Guelph, ON: *“Unborn. Untold. True Stories of Abortion and God’s Healing Grace”* (Word Alive Press)

LESLIE K. TARR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD ~ Sponsored by Castle Quay Books

- Michael D. O’Brien: Barry’s Bay, ON *Author, Magazine Editor, Essayist, Artist, Lecturer on Faith and Culture*

BEST CANADIAN NEW AUTHOR OF THE YEAR AWARD ~ Sponsored by Glow Box

WINNER

- Melanie Stevenson: Cambridge, ON *“One More Tomorrow”* & *“Soul Focus”* (Word Alive Press)

BEST CANADIAN BOOK COVER OF THE YEAR AWARD ~ Sponsored by Cowlick Studios

- Janet Surette: Barrie, ON *“Scarlett’s Spectacles”* (B&H Publishing)

GRACE IRWIN BEST CANADIAN BOOK OF THE YEAR {GRAND PRIZE}

AWARD OF MERIT

- Valentina Gal: Fergus, ON *“Philipovna: Daughter of Sorrow”* (Guernica Editions)
- Mary A. Kassian: Sherwood Park, AB *“The Right Kind of Strong”* (Thomas Nelson Press)

WINNER

- Janet Surette: Barrie, ON *“Scarlett’s Spectacles”* (B&H Publishing)

Copies of the 2020 Winners List Media Release in both .docx and .pdf can be found on our [media page](#) and are recorded on the Finalists Page under the Contests Menu.