

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
University



Laurier hosts 100th birthday for literary icon Edna Staebler

Public invited to help friends, family and celebrities mark decades of writing

For Immediate Release

**January 10, 2006
05-06**

Contact: Kathryn Wardropper
Administrator, Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction
(519) 884-0710 ext. 3109

or Michael Strickland
Manager, Media Relations & Information
(519) 884-0710 ext. 3070

WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University will help Canadian author and award-winning journalist Edna Staebler celebrate her centennial.

The general public is invited to join the university community on Staebler's birthday on Sunday, January 15. The celebration will be held in Laurier's senate and board chamber between 2 and 4 p.m., with a brief formal program beginning at 3 p.m.

Bob Rosehart, president and vice-chancellor of the university, will welcome family, friends and well-wishers to Staebler's 100th-birthday party. TV Ontario Studio 2 co-host Paula Todd will be master of ceremonies. Food critic Rose Murray and CBC Radio 2 Music and Company host Tom Allen are among the guests scheduled to speak.

"Edna Staebler has long been a friend and supporter of the university and wider community, so we are thrilled to host this very special celebration," said Kathryn Wardropper, administrator of the Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction. "We hope all well-wishers will join us in making this a very special occasion for a truly remarkable person."

The celebration will include testimonials from Murray, Allen and others who have known and been influenced by Staebler. It will also include a performance by Daniel Lichti, co-ordinator of voice in Laurier's faculty of music, and Elvera Froese, the university's accompanist-in-residence.

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Staebler has a long association with Laurier. She received an honorary doctorate from the university in 1984. Along with the literary award that bears her name, she has endowed three awards for senior undergraduate students in the faculty of arts.

The Gerald A. Noonan Memorial Bursary, named for a former member of the English department, provides up to \$3,000 to two students in English and film studies with a strong interest in Canadian literature and creative writing. The Dr. Richard Playle Award in Canadian Studies, named for a professor who helped judge Staebler's literary award until his death last spring, provides up to \$500 to a student immersed in Canadian studies.

Staebler also established the George C. Blackburn Scholarship through the Canadian Federation of University Women, Kitchener-Waterloo, Charitable Fund. The significant award goes to a Laurier student entering the fourth year of honours history.

The Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction is supported by an endowment established by Staebler and is Canada's only university-administered literary award. It was created in 1991 to recognize and encourage a Canadian writer publishing a first or second book with a Canadian subject or location.

Staebler was born in Kitchener (then named Berlin), Ontario on January 15, 1906 and began serious diary writing in 1921. Maclean's magazine published the first of many articles in 1948 and her first book, entitled *Sauerkraut and Enterprise*, was released in 1967. Twenty more books followed and her writing also includes numerous articles for *Chatelaine*, the *Toronto Star Weekly* and *Saturday Night*.

Staebler has received a long list of honors. These include the Canadian Women's Press Club Award in 1950, Canadian National Magazine Award in 1987, Ontario Seniors Achievement Award in 1989, Silver Ladle Award from the Toronto Culinary Guild in 1991 and Lifetime Achievement Award from Cuisine Canada in 1996. She was named Kitchener-Waterloo Woman of the Year in 1980 and a Member of the Order of Canada in 1996. In 1991, Kitchener mayor Dom Cardillo proclaimed April 28 to be Edna Staebler Day.

A great deal more information is available on Staebler. Last year, Wilfrid Laurier University Press published *Must Write: The Diaries of Edna Staebler*.

Staebler has asked that guests bring nothing more than their best wishes. All guests are welcome, though the university asks that they RVSP to Sondra Schwartz at sschwartz@wlu.ca or (519) 884-0710 ext. 3139.