

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier University



Edna Staebler's million-dollar bequest will help support writers

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WATERLOO — Before her passing in late 2006, Canadian author Edna Staebler made one final generous gesture to Wilfrid Laurier University: a bequest of more than \$1 million to support developing writers at Laurier.

The gift will establish the Edna Staebler Writer-In-Residence Program, which will bring distinguished authors to campus to help and encourage developing writers. While pursuing their own writing projects, the writers-in-residence will become part of the university community. They will be involved in a number of activities, including readings; consultations with members of the community and the university; appearances at schools, libraries, writers' organizations and other institutions in Ontario; and visits to creative writing and Canadian literature classes. The university hopes to announce the first writer-in-residence in early 2008.

"Throughout her life, Edna Staebler dedicated her time and attention to new writers," says Dr. Robert Rosehart, Laurier's president and vice-chancellor. "Through her foresight and generosity in making this legacy gift to the university, generations of writers will benefit from her support."

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Staebler died on September 12, 2006 at the age of 100. Born in Berlin, Ontario (now Kitchener) in 1906, Staebler began her writing career in mid-life, contributing to magazines such as Maclean's, Chatelaine and Saturday Night. But it was her series of cookbooks — *Food That Really Schmecks*, *Schmecks Appeal*, and *More Food That Really Schmecks* — that won her national attention. Much more than a collection of recipes, the books invited readers into the kitchens and lives of Staebler's Mennonite neighbours.

"Edna was a great believer in the value of writing and a supporter of the writing of others," says Brian Henderson, director of Wilfrid Laurier University Press, which has published three of Staebler's books.

Also with the bequest from Staebler's estate, starting in 2008 the value of the Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction will increase to \$10,000 a year from \$3,000. Established in 1991, the annual award encourages and recognizes a new Canadian writer whose work features a Canadian location or has particular significance to Canadians.