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Laurier awards first annual Gunn Award in immigration research

WATERLOO – Stephen Fielding, a PhD student at the University of Victoria, is the inaugural winner of the Gunn Award for best essay on international migration in Canada, to be presented Friday, Sept. 24 at Wilfrid Laurier University's Waterloo campus.

Administered by Laurier's International Migration Research Centre (IMRC) and the Canadian Immigration Historical Society (CIHS), the Gunn Award is a \$1,000 national award in immigration research named after Al Gunn, the late secretary of the CIHS and former Canadian immigration officer.

Fielding's winning essay is titled, "*We are Promoting an Up-to-date Image of Italy: The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Italian Ethnicity in Vancouver, Canada, 1973-1998*". The paper, which explores the interplay between the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Italian community in Vancouver, and multiculturalism in the 1970s–80s, was well researched and superbly written, said Laurier professor Jenna Hennebry, associate director of the IMRC.

"It's a wonderful snapshot of one particular immigrant community," said Hennebry. "We tend to think of immigrants as having fixed identities tied to their homeland, but this paper illustrates how identity is more fluid. This idea is important when thinking about issues of immigration and belonging – issues still very relevant today."

The IMRC and CIHS established the Gunn Award to highlight contemporary immigration issues and support research from multiple disciplines. Essays entered into the competition included those from anthropologists, geographers, political scientists and historians.

Fielding, a PhD candidate in history, will be presented with his award Friday, Sept. 24 at 3 p.m. in the Paul Martin Centre at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Gery Van Kessel from the CIHS board of directors and Raphael A. Girard, former Canadian ambassador and foreign services immigration officer, will attend the ceremony, as well as members of the Gunn family.

"Al Gunn was an active promoter of research and communication on immigration issues in Canada," said Michael Molloy, director of CIHS. "His career as an immigration officer abroad and his tireless work to establish the CIHS are what we recognize in creating this new award in his name. Stephen Fielding is a worthy inaugural laureate."