



Ute Lischke, Professor  
 Department of English and Film Studies  
 519-884-0710 ext. 3607 or ulischke@wlu.ca

Kevin Crowley, Director, Communications & Public Affairs  
 Wilfrid Laurier University  
 519-884-0710 ext. 3070 or kcrowley@wlu.ca

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## Carol Shaben named winner of the 2013 Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction

WATERLOO – Carol Shaben has won the 2013 Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction for *Into the Abyss: How a Deadly Plane Crash Changed the Lives of a Pilot, a Politician, a Criminal and a Cop* (Random House Canada, 2012). Award receptions to honour Shaben will take place Nov. 13 at Laurier’s Waterloo and Brantford campuses.

In *Into the Abyss*, Shaben reconstructs a 1984 commuter plane crash in northern Alberta that killed six passengers and wounded four others—including Shaben’s father, a prominent cabinet minister.

“It’s a stylishly written, fast-paced tale of redemption that’s more gripping and engaging than you might expect,” said Ute Lischke, award juror and Laurier professor of English and Film Studies.

While the story is an expertly researched, detailed reconstruction of the crash and a call for better oversight of small, commuter airlines, its heart lies in the portraits Shaben draws of the crash’s survivors: her father, the pilot and an RCMP officer and the prisoner he was transporting. Through interviews and written documents, she paints a haunting portrait of the bond created among the survivors and how the crash affected their lives.

Shaben is a freelance writer who lives in Vancouver with her husband and son. In 2005 she left a business career to focus on her long-time passion for writing, and in 2009 she was nominated for three National Magazine Awards, winning two: a Gold Medal for Investigative Reporting and a Silver Medal for Politics and Public Interest. *Into the Abyss* is her first book.

In addition to *Into the Abyss*, the shortlist for the 2013 Edna Staebler Award also included: *Intolerable: A Memoir of Extremes* by Kamal Al-Solaylee (HarperCollins, 2012) and *A Thousand Farewells: A Reporter’s Journey from Refugee Camp to the Arab Spring* by Nahlah Ayed (Viking, 2012).

On Wednesday, Nov. 13, the award presentation will take place from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the Senate and Board Chamber on Laurier’s Waterloo Campus, followed by a reception at 8 p.m. A reception will also be held on Laurier’s Brantford campus earlier in the day; details will be available at [wlu.ca/staebleraward](http://wlu.ca/staebleraward).

### **About the Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction**

Established and endowed by writer and award-winning journalist Edna Staebler, the Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction is administered by Wilfrid Laurier University, the only university in Canada to bestow a nationally recognized literary award. The \$10,000 award encourages and recognizes Canadian writers for a first or second work of creative non-fiction that includes a Canadian locale and/or significance. Winning books are distinguished by first-hand research, well-crafted interpretive writing and a creative use of language or approach to the subject matter. Previous winners include authors Linden MacIntyre, Wayson Choy and Elizabeth Hay. The award is celebrating its 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary this year.