



Michael Carroll, Dean of Arts
 Wilfrid Laurier University
 519-884-0710 ext. 3891 or mcarroll@wlu.ca

Lori Chalmers Morrison, Acting Director
 Communications and Public Affairs, Wilfrid Laurier University
 519-884-0710 ext. 3067 or lchalmersmorrison@wlu.ca

AUG. 5, 2014 | 086-14

Shortlist announced for 2014 Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction

WATERLOO – Three books have been shortlisted for the 2014 Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction. The \$10,000 award, administered by Wilfrid Laurier University, recognizes Canadian writers for a first or second work of creative non-fiction that includes a Canadian locale and/or significance.

“The books shortlisted for this award are always impressive, and this year they represent a broad range of subject matter and approaches,” said Bruce Gillespie, an award juror and professor in the Digital Media and Journalism program on Laurier’s Brantford campus. “What they have in common is their inherent readability — these are non-fiction books that are every bit as interesting and engaging as the best novels.”

The books on the 2014 shortlist, listed alphabetically by author surname, are:

***The Oil Man and the Sea: Navigating the Northern Gateway* by Arno Kopecky (Douglas & McIntyre)**

In *The Oil Man and the Sea*, Arno Kopecky, along with photographer Ilja Herb, spends 12 weeks sailing the treacherous coastal passages of the Great Bear Rainforest, slated to become a busy oil tanker route for the proposed Northern Gateway pipeline, which would transport bitumen from the Alberta oil sands to the British Columbia coast. Along the way, the novice sailors spend time with local residents, including many First Nations members, listening to their concerns about the pipeline and how it will affect their way of life, and the rainforest’s fragile ecosystem. In an evocative, engaging way that submissions to a regulatory agency could never accomplish, *The Oil Man and the Sea* puts a human face on a complicated, controversial issue.

***The Memory of Water* by Allen Smutylo (Wilfrid Laurier University Press)**

For more than 40 years, Canadian adventurer, writer, and artist Allen Smutylo has experienced some of the wildest and most captivating waters imaginable in all corners of the globe. The 10 autobiographical stories in *The Memory of Water* — all of them accompanied by the author’s own artwork — describe his adventures in the Arctic, South Pacific, India and Ontario’s Great Lakes region. *The Memory of Water* probes a crucial and contemporary issue — that of our relationship to water, and the wildlife and human life that depends upon it.

***Confessions of a Fairy’s Daughter: Growing Up with a Gay Dad* by Alison Wearing (Knopf Canada)**

In her memoir, *Confessions of a Fairy’s Daughter*, Alison Wearing reflects on how her world turned upside down at age 12 when her father came out of the closet, disrupting what had been a carefree, conventional family life. Skillfully weaving together stories from different perspectives and using excerpts from her father’s diaries and letters, Wearing recounts her family’s history with compassion and humour. Against the background of her family’s private struggle and the stirrings of the gay revolution in Canada, Wearing recounts her own coming-of-age story, and how she came to terms with her father’s, as well as her own, identity.

The winner of the Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction will be announced in early September. Award presentations honouring the winner will take place Nov. 13, 2014 at Laurier’s Waterloo and Brantford campuses.

About the Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction

Established and endowed by writer and literary 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. Staebler, who died in 2006, was an award-winning journalist and a member of the Order of Canada. Designed to encourage new Canadian talent, the award is open to authors who have

Edna Staebler Award/Page 2

published a first or second book with a Canadian locale and/or significance. First-hand research, well-crafted interpretive writing and a creative use of language or approach to the subject matter distinguish winning books. The list of previous winners includes authors such as Linden MacIntyre, Wayson Choy, Elizabeth Hay and Carol Shaben. The award is celebrating its 23rd anniversary this year.

- 30 -