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## Laurier announces shortlist for the 2015 Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction

WATERLOO – Three books have been shortlisted for the **2015 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.

"This award celebrates non-fiction writing that reads like the best literature, and all three of this year's finalists are truly great reads," said **Bruce Gillespie**, an award juror and professor in the Digital Media and Journalism program on Laurier's Brantford campus. "While they explore different subjects — the discrimination faced by people with Down syndrome, the power of forgiveness across generations, and even bird-watching — they are anchored in deeply engaging personal stories."

The books on the 2015 shortlist, listed alphabetically by author surname, are:

### ***Writing with Grace: A Journey Beyond Down Syndrome* by Judy McFarlane (Douglas & McIntyre)**

In *Writing with Grace: A Journey Beyond Down Syndrome*, Judy McFarlane confronts her fears and misconceptions about people who are "different from the norm," as she helps Grace Chen, a young woman with Down syndrome, write and publish her first novel. Drawing from her experiences with Chen, as well as a range of other sources, including the writing of Jean Vanier, McFarlane's book treats a difficult subject in a positive but realistic manner, providing a helpful step toward realizing our common humanity.

### ***Forgiveness: A Gift from My Grandparents* by Mark Sakamoto (HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.)**

Mark Sakamoto's *Forgiveness: A Gift from My Grandparents* skillfully juxtaposes accounts of his grandparents' experiences during the Second World War. His maternal grandfather, a member of the defeated Hong Kong garrison, spent the rest of the war as a Japanese prisoner; his paternal grandmother, born in Vancouver to Japanese parents, was dispossessed and interned in Alberta. His grandparents' intense experiences, and their respect for each other as their families are bound together years later, mould Sakamoto's responses to events of his own life in this compelling book.

### ***Birding with Yeats: A Memoir* by Lynn Thomson (House of Anansi Press)**

*Birding With Yeats* recounts Lynn Thomson's efforts to support her son, Yeats, a solitary young man who has trouble finding his way in the world. She gamely embraces his passion for bird-watching, which leads them across the country and as far the Galapagos Islands, which she describes in evocative detail. Along the way, Thomson rediscovers the solace that can be found in the natural world. As much about the bond between a mother and a son as it is about bird-watching, *Birding With Yeats* is an elegantly written, engaging memoir.

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 in November at Laurier's Waterloo and Brantford campuses.

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

Established and endowed by writer and award-winning journalist Edna Staebler in 1991, 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.

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