



Richard Nemesvari, Dean of the Faculty of Arts
Wilfrid Laurier University
519-884-0710 ext. 3891 or rnamesvari@wlu.ca

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

OCT. 2, 2017 | 145-17

Sonja Larsen named 2017 winner of the prestigious Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction

WATERLOO – Author **Sonja Larsen** is the winner of the 2017 Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction for her memoir, *Red Star Tattoo: My Life as a Girl Revolutionary* (Random House Canada).

Red Star Tattoo is a compelling story of the writer's unconventional and transient youth, as well as her personal experience in counterculture organizations, including her association with a clandestine wing of the Communist Party of USA.

"As is the case with lives themselves, all memoirs are unique, but this seems especially true of Sonja Larsen's *Red Star Tattoo: My Life as a Girl Revolutionary*," said [Bruce Gillespie](#), an award juror and professor in Wilfrid Laurier University's [Digital Media and Journalism](#) program. "In this coming-of-age story, she looks back at a childhood and adolescence spent searching for a sense of connection and purpose beyond her family, first in a commune and later as part of what she eventually recognized as a cult whose purported goal was to incite an American communist revolution. She captures the environment of paranoia, violence, and futility in which she grew up in a stark, frank style that never tugs on readers' heartstrings or asks for their pity. Instead, Larsen presents a clear-eyed look at her almost unbelievable past and crafts a character study in resilience that is eminently engaging."

In addition to *Red Star Tattoo*, the shortlist for the 2017 Edna Staebler Award included: *The Shoe Boy* by Duncan McCue (Nonvella) and *The Elephants in My Backyard* by Rajiv Surendra (Random House Canada).

Sonja Larsen will be celebrated at two public events Nov. 9 and 10 at Wilfrid Laurier University, which administers the Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction. These events include:

Thursday, Nov. 9, 3:30-5:00 p.m.: Award presentation and book reading in the Robert Langen Art Gallery and Library on the **Waterloo** campus of Wilfrid Laurier University.

Friday, Nov. 10, 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.: Meet the author in Room CB 100 (Reid Lounge) of the Carnegie Building on Laurier's **Brantford** campus.

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.