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Laurier Stedman Prize competition offers \$10,000 in prizes to high school-aged writers of short fiction

BRANTFORD – The [Laurier Stedman Prize](#) is returning in 2022 and awarding a total of \$10,000 in prizes to six talented high school students for their creative fiction work.

The biennial competition is hosted by the [Faculty of Liberal Arts](#) at Wilfrid Laurier University's Brantford campus and is open to students living and studying within the geographic boundaries of the Grand Erie District School Board and Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board.

Through their schools, participants are asked to submit original, unpublished works of fiction up to 1,500 words in length. The entries are submitted anonymously and vetted by a series of sub-juries. The top 10 entries are passed on to a prize jury, which ranks the finalists and selects a winner. A total of \$10,000 will be awarded to the top winners, including one first-place prize of \$3,000, two second-place prizes of \$2,000 each and three third-place prizes of \$1,000 each.

"We see this competition as a chance to help foster the writing talent of high school students in this area," said [Ken Paradis](#), coordinator of the Laurier Stedman Prize and associate professor of English at Laurier's Brantford campus. "It's also a chance for us at the university to forge connections with the English teachers of this region who do such a great job preparing their students."

Laurier's Brantford [English program](#) is liaising with local high schools to share details about how students can participate. The deadline for entries will be in April 2022, with winners announced during a special virtual celebration in May. All entries will be evaluated by juries administered by faculty members at Laurier's Brantford campus. A jury made up of authors, local politicians and university administrators will evaluate the finalists. The winning story will be published on the university's website, wlu.ca.

The Laurier Stedman Prize is funded through an endowment and estate gift to Wilfrid Laurier University from Mary Stedman, who passed away in 2014. Stedman, a well-known philanthropist, was the managing director of Stedman's Bookstore Ltd. from 1950 to 1974 and a champion of Laurier's Brantford campus. The university created the Laurier Stedman Prize under the guidance of the English department in the Faculty of Liberal Arts to honour Stedman's wish to celebrate and promote arts and culture in the community. The competition is the largest prize of its kind for creative fiction open to high school students.

Full details on the Laurier Stedman Prize can be found on the [Laurier Stedman Prize page](#). Read the 2020 Laurier Stedman Prize winner, Samiha Sanjida's [The Year I Dreamt](#), and 2018 winner, Abby Traina's [The Lechton Wanderer](#).

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About Mary Stedman: Members of the Stedman family were active in the business, social and cultural fabric of Brantford and the County of Brant for more than a century. Mary Stedman's father, Samuel W. Stedman, went into business with his brothers in 1904, establishing the first Stedman's Bookstore on Colborne Street in Brantford. They went on to create a chain of five- and 10-cent department stores with locations across Canada.

The Stedman name has become synonymous with generosity and community building in Brantford. Mary Stedman served as managing director of Stedman's Bookstore Ltd. from 1950 to 1974 and was a member of the executive of the Canadian Booksellers Association. She was also the director and former chair of the bursary committee of the Samuel W. Stedman Foundation.

Mary Stedman was an early supporter of the idea of a university in Brantford, providing an important kick-start as one of the first donors to Laurier's fledgling campus in 1999. The university's bookstore bears the Stedman family name in recognition of its exceptional generosity. Gifts from Mary Stedman and the estate of her sister Ruth Stedman supported the construction of the university's Research and Academic Centre. Honouring the Stedmans' wishes, the Brantford campus bookstore is open not only to Laurier students, but the entire Brantford-Brant community.

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