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Contact: Texas Institute of Letters
Steve Davis, President, (president@texasinstituteofletters.org)
Website: texasinstituteofletters.org

Winners Announced for Texas Institute of Letters Literary Prizes

Paulette Jiles' bestselling novel, *News of the World*, received the major fiction award in Texas Institute of Letters' literary competition for works published in 2016, claiming the \$6,000 Jesse H. Jones Fiction award. "*News of the World* is an exquisitely crafted and beautifully rendered tale of 1870 post-Civil War Texas," said the judging committee. "This precise and fascinating novel recounts the four hundred-mile journey across Texas by seventy-two-year-old Captain Jefferson Kyle Kidd, who transports a ten-year-old white girl who has spent the previous four years living as a captive of Kiowa Indians."

Longtime *Texas Monthly* writer Skip Hollandsworth won the Carr P. Collins Award for Best Book of Nonfiction (\$5,000) for *The Midnight Assassin*, an account of 19th century serial murders in Austin. The judging panel praised Hollandsworth's "excellent job of narrating a story about a key moment of Texas history, when urban life in Texas came into being and the isolated life of the frontier began to recede. Hollandsworth's research was exhaustive, the structure was finely wrought, and the result was a genuine thriller based in history."

These awards, along with the TIL's other major literary prizes, will be presented at the 81st meeting of the organization in El Paso on April 7-8. Other major writers recognized during the TIL banquet will include Pat Mora, Stephen Harrigan, Benjamin Alire Sáenz, and writer-musician Joe Ely.

The Texas Institute of Letters is a nonprofit honor society founded in 1936 to celebrate Texas literature and recognize distinctive literary achievement. The TIL's elected membership consists of the state's most respected writers – including winners of the Pulitzer Prize, National Book Award, and MacArthur "Genius" grants.

Pat Mora, one of the most beloved and acclaimed authors from Texas, will receive the TIL's Lon Tinkle Award for Lifetime Achievement at the El Paso awards banquet. Mora, who was born in El Paso, is the author of numerous books and has received over a dozen major national awards for her work.

More than \$20,000 in prize money will be presented by TIL to writers in the categories of fiction, non-fiction, history, poetry, children and young adult, short stories, journalism, along with a special award recognizing book design. The competition is limited to those who have lived in the state for at least two years or have entries pertaining to Texas subjects.

Attached is the complete list of winners and honorees:

Jesse H. Jones Award for Best Work of Fiction.

Winner: Paulette Jiles, *News of the World*.

Finalists: Karan Mahajan, *The Association of Small Bombs*; Dominic Smith, *The Last Painting of Sara de Vos*.

Carr P. Collins Award for Best Book of Nonfiction.

Winner: Skip Hollandsworth, *The Midnight Assassin*.

Finalists: Shelley Armitage, *Walking the Llano: A Texas Memoir of Place*; Dan Slater, *Wolf Boys*.

Ramirez Family Award for Most Significant Scholarly Book.

Winner: Max Krochmal, *Blue Texas: The Making of a Multiracial Democratic Coalition in the Civil Rights Era*.

Finalists: Glen Sample Ely, *The Texas Frontier and the Butterfield Overland Mail, 1858–1861*; Kenneth Hafertepe, *The Material Culture of German Texans*.

Helen C. Smith Award for Best Book of Poetry.

Winner: Bruce Bond, *Gold Bee*.

Finalists: Jonathan Fink, *Barbarossa*; William Wenthe, *God's Foolishness*.

Bob Bush Memorial Award for First Book of Poetry.

Winner: Miriam Bird Greenberg, *In the Volcano's Mouth*.

Finalists, Stan Crawford, *Resisting Gravity*; Chera Hammons, *Recycled Explosions*.

Steven Turner Award for Best Work of First Fiction.

Winner: Amy Gentry, *Good as Gone*.

Finalists: Paul Pedroza, *The Dead Will Rise and Save Us*; J. Todd Scott, *The Far Empty*.

Edwin "Bud" Shrake Award for Short Nonfiction/Journalism.

Winner: Stephen Harrigan, "Off Course," in *Texas Monthly*.

Finalists: Debbie Nathan, "What Happened to Sandra Bland?" (*The Nation*); C. W. Smith, "Faux Haubeaux" (*Southwest Review*)

Kay Cattarulla Short Story Award.

Winner: David Meischen, "Cicada Song," in *Salamander*.

Finalists: Octavio Solis, "The Want" (*Huizache*); Jerry Whitus, "Restitution" (*Ploughshares*.)

H-E-B/Jean Flynn Award for Best Children's Book.

Winner: Kathi Appelt and Alison McGhee, *Maybe a Fox*.

Finalists: Diana López, *Nothing Up My Sleeve*; David Liss, *Rebels*.

H-E-B Award for Best Young Adult Book

Winner: Phillippe Diederich, *Playing for the Devil's Fire*.

Finalists: Kathryn Ormsbee, *Lucky Few*; Joe Jiménez, *Bloodline*.

Denton Record-Chronicle Award for Best Children's Picture Book

Winner: Dianna Hutts Aston, *A Beetle is Shy*.

Finalists: Chris Barton, *Whoosh!: Lonnie Johnson's Super-Soaking Stream of Inventions*;
Nicolás Kanellos, *El Torneo de Trabalenguas / The Tongue Twister Tournament*.

Fred Whitehead Award for Design of a Trade Book.

Winner: Kristie Lee, designer. *From Tea Cakes to Tamales* (Texas A&M University Press.)

Finalists: Mary Ann Jacob, designer. *Explore Texas: A Nature Travel Guide* (Texas A&M University Press); Derek George, designer. *How to Be a Texan: The Manual* (University of Texas Press.)

In addition to recognizing the winners of these major awards, the TIL has elected fifteen new members into the Institute. These 2017 honorees will be inducted in El Paso: Celeste Bedford Walker (Houston), David Bowles (Rio Grande Valley), Bobby Byrd (El Paso), Lee Merrill Byrd (El Paso), Cary Clack (San Antonio), Joe Ely (Austin), Alicia Gaspar de Alba (El Paso/Los Angeles), Elizabeth Harris (Austin), Cliff Hudder (Conroe), Baine Kerr (Houston/Boulder, CO), Attica Locke (Houston/Los Angeles), C.M. Mayo (El Paso/Mexico City), Elaine Scott (Houston), Thad Sitton (Austin), Rosalyn Story (Dallas).

For more information about the Texas Institute of Letters, visit its website at:

www.texasinstituteofletters.org