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For Immediate Release

Nineteen Elected to Texas Institute of Letters

Members of the Texas Institute of Letters have overwhelmingly approved nineteen writers to join the ranks of the TIL, a distinguished honor society founded in 1936 to celebrate Texas literature and recognize distinctive literary achievement.

The TIL's membership consists of the state's most respected writers – including winners of the Pulitzer Prize, National Book Award, Academy Award, Tony Award, and MacArthur “Genius” grants. Membership is based on literary accomplishments and is granted only through an election by existing members.

This marks the first year the TIL has recognized a songwriter based on literary accomplishments: **Willie Nelson**.

Other 2018 honorees are Oscar-nominated screenwriter-director **Richard Linklater**, fiction writers **Daniel Chacón** (El Paso), **Bret Anthony Johnston** (Corpus Christi/Austin), **Guadalupe Garcia McCall** (Eagle Pass/San Antonio), **José Skinner** (Puerto Rico, Rio Grande Valley.) Nonfiction authors **Marcia Hatfield Daudistel** (El Paso), **Michael Hurd** (The Woodlands), **Mary Beth Rogers** (Dallas.) Filmmaker-playwright **Severo Perez** (San Antonio/Los Angeles.) Playwrights **Kirk Lynn** (Austin) and **Ted Shine** (Dallas.) Journalist **Alfredo Corchado** (Dallas/Mexico City.) Poets **Katherine Hoerth** (Beaumont), **Sheryl Luna** (El Paso/Denver), **Sasha Pimentel** (Phillipines/El Paso), **José Antonio Rodríguez** (Rio Grande Valley), **Steven Schneider** (Rio Grande Valley), **Christian Wiman** (Snyder, New Haven, CT)

“We have a record number of distinguished writers elected this year,” said TIL President Steven L. Davis. “The bar to get elected to the Institute is high, so this shows that the Texas is now home to a number of major writers that we should be very proud of. Our literary arts are flourishing.”

New members will be inducted at the upcoming TIL annual meeting, to be held in San Antonio April 6-7. For more info visit the TIL website:

www.texasinstituteofletters.org



Texas Institute of Letters: 2018 Inductees



DANIEL CHACÓN

Author of five books of fiction and editor of two more. Recipient of the Hudson Prize, the American Book Award, a Christopher Isherwood Foundation Grant, and the Southwest Book Award. Heads the creative writing program at UT-El Paso.



ALFREDO CORCHADO

Mexico City bureau chief of *The Dallas Morning News* and author of *Midnight in Mexico*. Specializes in covering the drug wars and border issues. A past Neiman Fellow at Harvard and recipient of a Maria Moors Cabot prize from the School of Journalism at Columbia University, which cited his “extraordinary bravery and enterprise.”



MARCIA HATFIELD DAUDISTEL

Nonfiction writer and editor of four books, including the anthology, *Literary El Paso* (winner of the Southwest Book Award) and *Authentic Texas: People of the Big Bend* (co-authored with photographer Bill Wright.) Longtime associate director of Texas Western Press, where she established the bilingual imprint Frontera Books.



KATHERINE HOERTH

Author of two books of poetry, winner of the TIL's 2015 Helen C. Smith Memorial Award for Best Book of Poetry Poet for *Goddess Wears Cowboy Boots*. Incoming director of Lamar University Literary Press.



MICHAEL HURD

Longtime journalist, sports historian and author of several books, including *Thursday Night Lights* (2017) that tells the largely unknown story of African American high school football in Texas. Director of Prairie View A&M University's Texas Institute for the Preservation of History and Culture, which documents the history of African American Texans.



BRET ANTHONY JOHNSTON

Author of the novel *Remember Me Like This* (a New York Times Notable Book of the Year) and the story collection, *Corpus Christi: Stories*. Winner of three TIL awards. Grew up in Corpus Christi, taught at Harvard for eleven years, is now the Director of the Michener Center for Writers at the University of Texas in Austin.



RICHARD LINKLATER

Academy Award-nominated director and screenwriter of several acclaimed films, including *Boyhood*, *Bernie*, *Slacker*, *Dazed and Confused*, *School of Rock*, and the *Before* trilogy. Founder of the Austin Film Society. Several of his films have Texas settings.



SHERYL LUNA

Poet born and raised in El Paso. Her first collection, *Pity the Drowned Horses* (2004), won Notre Dame's Andres Montoya Poetry Prize and was a finalist for the National Poetry Series. Her second collection, *Seven*, was published by 3: A Taos Press in 2013.



KIRK LYNN

Head of UT-Austin's Department of Theatre & Dance Performance and Production division, as well as playwright-in-residence and one of six co-producing artistic directors of Austin's Rude Mechs. Has written and adapted more than a dozen plays. Author of the 2015 novel *Rules for Werewolves*.



GUADALUPE GARCIA MCCALL

Author of three books for young readers and winner of many honors, including the ALA's Pura Belpre Author Award and the Tomas Rivera Children's Book Award. Recognized on "best books of the year" lists from *Kirkus* and *School Library Journal*. Grew up in Eagle Pass and teaches high school English in San Antonio.



WILLIE NELSON

He's Willie. Do we need to say anything else?



SEVERO PEREZ

Screenwriter and director from San Antonio whose productions have won more than 50 awards. Creator of the classic Chicano film, "...and the earth did not swallow him." Also a recognized playwright who worked with Luis Valdez's Teatro Campesino and the author of two novels.



SASHA PIMENTEL

Author of two books of poetry, including *Want of Water*, winner of the 2016 National Poetry Series. Previous book, *Insides She Swallowed*, won the 2011 American Book Award. Born in Manila, Philippines and raised in the U.S. and Saudi Arabia. Teaches creative writing at UTEP.



JOSÉ ANTONIO RODRÍGUEZ

Poet, memoirist, translator and author of several books. Winner of several awards, including a TIL award for poetry. Has appeared in the *New Yorker*, *Poetry*, and many other publications. Born in Mexico and raised in South Texas, he teaches creative writing at The University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley.



MARY BETH ROGERS

A former political strategist turned author of four books, including *Barbara Jordan: American Hero* and *Turning Texas Blue*. Inducted into the Texas Women's Hall of Fame. Taught at LBJ School of Public Affairs at UT-Austin and was CEO of Austin PBS affiliate. Currently lives in Dallas.



STEVEN SCHNEIDER

Author of several collections of poetry. His poems have been widely anthologized and featured in *American Life in Poetry*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Critical Quarterly*, *The Literary Review* and numerous other international journals. Teaches creative writing at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.



THEODOIS "TED" SHINE

The dean of African American playwrights in Texas. Author of over thirty plays including off-Broadway productions. Grew up in Dallas, graduated from Howard University in 1953, earned his doctorate from UC-Santa Barbara and taught for more than 50 years before retiring as head of the theater department at Prairie View A&M University.



JOSÉ SKINNER

Author of two acclaimed short story collections about hard times on both sides of the border. Born in Puerto Rico and raised in Mexico and New Mexico, graduated from the Iowa Writers' Workshop, co-founded and directed the MFA program at the University of Texas-Pan American in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Now lives in Austin.



CHRISTIAN WIMAN

Prominent American poet born and raised in West Texas. Author of many books. His poems, criticism, and personal essays have appeared in *The Atlantic*, *Harper's*, *The New Yorker*. Served as editor of *Poetry* magazine for a decade. Now teaches Literature and Religion at Yale University.