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For Immediate Release

## Seventeen Elected to Texas Institute of Letters

Members of the Texas Institute of Letters have overwhelmingly approved seventeen 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, Americas Award, International Latino Book Award, and the MacArthur “Genius” grant. Membership is based on literary accomplishments and is granted only through an election by existing members.

The 2019 honorees include three-time-Oscar-nominated screenwriter-director **Wes Anderson** (Houston); playwright and Broadway actor **Eugene Lee** (San Marcos); poets **Rosa Alcalá** (El Paso), **Robin Davidson** (Houston), and **Carrie Fountain** (Austin); and fiction writers **Tim Z. Hernandez** (El Paso), **Wendell Mayo** (Corpus Christi /Ohio), and **Ito Romo** (Laredo/San Antonio); scholars **Patrick Cox** (Wimberley), **Betty Sue Flowers** (Austin/New York) and **Ellen Clarke Temple** (Lufkin); non-fiction writers **Wes Ferguson** (Austin), **John MacCormack** (San Antonio); songwriter and children's book author **Tish Hinojosa** (San Antonio/Austin), Documentary and Feature Filmmaker **Jesús Salvador Treviño** (El Paso/ Los Angeles); children's book author **Xavier Garza** (Rio Grande City/ San Antonio); and theater critic/playwright **Robert Faires** (Austin.)

Dr. Carmen Tafolla, President of the Texas Institute of Letters states, “We are very proud of the great diversity of exceptional talents in this year's honorees. These seventeen exemplars of literary innovation span the creative gamut from stage plays to song lyrics and from history to poetry, fiction, journalism, children's works and filmmaking. The Institute has again picked the very finest representatives of what it means to be outstanding, productive and dynamically engaged in the advancement of the letters.”

New members will be inducted at the upcoming TIL annual meeting, to be held in McAllen, Texas April 26-27. For more information, please visit the TIL website: [www.TexasInstituteofLetters.org](http://www.TexasInstituteofLetters.org) or email Carmen Tafolla, [President@TexasInstituteofLetters.org](mailto:President@TexasInstituteofLetters.org).

## Texas Institute of Letters: 2019 Inductees



### Rosa Alcalá

Rosa Alcalá is the author of three collections of poetry, including the *New York Times*-acclaimed *My Other Tongue*, and three books of translated poetry. She is a 2016 Allen Ginsburg Fellow at Naropa's Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics and won the 2015 NEA Fellowship in translation. Her work has appeared in the *Oxford Book of Latin American Poetry*, *the Kenyon Review*, *tripwire*, *Barrow Street*, *the Boston Review*, and others. An Associate Professor of Creative Writing, Alcalá teaches at The University of Texas at El Paso.



### Wes Anderson

Three-time Oscar nominee, Wes Anderson is a noted Hollywood screenwriter and director. He has written seventeen feature length screenplays including 2015 Golden Globe winner *The Grand Budapest Hotel* and three Oscar-nominated films, *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, *Moonrise Kingdom*, and *The Royal Tenenbaums*. One of America's most important screenwriters and film directors, Anderson began his filmmaking and story-creation as a boy in Texas.



### Patrick Cox

Patrick Cox is a longtime journalist, former President of the American Journalism History Association, and author of *Ralph W. Yarborough The People's Senator*. He is the winner of the Texas Oral History Association Award and has been a finalist for the Robert F. Kennedy National Book Award and Western Writer's Book Award. He has written four other books of Texas political history. Cox has been named Lifetime Fellow of both the Texas State Historical Association and the East Texas Historical Association.



### Robin Davidson

Houston Poet Laureate 2015-2017, Fulbright Professor, and Guggenheim Fellow, Robin Davidson is the recipient of the Houston Art Alliance Award in Poetry, National Poetry Series, and two Houston Arts Alliance Awards. She has three books of poetry, one edited anthology, one translated book of poetry, and her poems have appeared in such publications as *The Paris Review*, *Words Without Borders*, *Gulf Coast*, and *91<sup>st</sup> Meridian*. Davidson is an Associate Professor of English and Creative Writing at the University of Houston Downtown.



## Robert Faires

Theatre Editor for *The Austin Chronicle* and later, Senior Arts Editor at *The Austin Chronicle*, Robert Faires was named by *American Theater Magazine* as one of the twelve most important theatre critics in America. Co-Chair of the Austin Critics Table and co-founder of both the Austin Young Critics Seminar and the Austin Arts Hall of Fame, he has created, in his 30-year career as writer, director, and actor, many theatrical pieces, including writing and performing a 90-minute one-man adaptation of Shakespeare's *Henry V*. He has published hundreds of elegantly crafted theater criticisms.



## Wes Ferguson

Author of two books on Texas rivers (the Sabine and the Blanco) and a third one in the works on the Camino Real, Wes Ferguson writes rollicking narratives that help excavate the people, politics, and places at the heart of Texas mythologies. Former journalist for *Texas Observer* and *Texas Monthly*, Ferguson is current Managing Editor of *Texas Highways*, and has received the Texas Press Association's 1<sup>st</sup> place Award in Feature Writing, Star Reporter of the Year, and other awards in news and feature writing.



## Betty Sue Flowers

Co-editor with Bill Moyers of four volumes (including *The Power of Myth*, with Joseph Campbell, 1988), Betty Sue Flowers is highly respected in the academic and literary worlds and has published three scholarly books and three books of poetry. Director of the LBJ Presidential Library and Museum 2002-2009, Senior Research Fellow IC2 Institute 2003- Present, Poet-in-Residence for Muse Machine Summer Workshop Dayton, Ohio, and Distinguished Teaching Professor Emeritus at the University of Texas, Flowers has received the Pro Bene Meritis, the highest recognition given by the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Texas.



## Carrie Fountain

Author of two books of poetry, the first of which *Burn Lake* won the National Poetry Series First Book Award, and *I'm Not Missing*, a young adult novel, Carrie Fountain has taught at the Michener Writers' Center and most recently at the 2018 Poetry at Round Top Festival. She has been published in *The American Poetry Review*, *Poetry*, *The New Yorker*, *Texas Observer*, and *Austin-American Statesman*. Fountain is writer-in-residence at St. Edward's University.



## Xavier Garza

Author of eleven children's and YA books, Xavier Garza has been honored with the NAACS Tejas Young Adult Book Award, the TIL Children's Book Award, and is a 3-time winner of the Tejas Star Book Award. His books, including *Lucha Libre: The Man in the Silver Mask* and *Maximilian and the Mystery of the Guardian Angel*, have received distinctions as Américas Honor Book and Pura Belpré Honor Book. His stories have appeared in many periodicals, including *El Mañana*, *The Monitor*, *TABE*, *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, *Mesquite Review* and the *Milwaukee Spanish Journal*.



## Tim Z. Hernandez

Award-winning poet, novelist and nonfiction writer, Tim Z. Hernandez is the author of six books. He won the 2006 American Book Award for his first book, *Skin Tax*, and his debut novel, *Breathing in Dust*, won the 2010 Premio Aztlán and was featured on NPR. He has received the Zora Neal Hurston Award, the Colorado Book Award, the Luis Leal Award for Distinction in Chicano/Latino Literature, and the International Latino Book Award for Historical Fiction. Hernandez is an Assistant Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Texas at El Paso's Bilingual Creative Writing Program.



## Tish Hinojosa

Tish Hinojosa has authored scores of songs on her eighteen CDs blending folk, country, Latino, and pop. Hinojosa received the NAIRD Indie Folk Album of the Year and her children's book/CD combination won the Southwest Book Award, the American Library Association's Notable Children's Book Award, and the National Parenting Publication Association Award. She has performed throughout Europe, Korea, and the U.S., as well as in the White House, *Good Morning America*, Austin City Limits, and the Prairie Home Companion. Her song lyrics reflect a poetic and articulate telling of the cultures and experiences of the peoples of the borderlands.



## Eugene Lee

A nationally acclaimed playwright and actor, Eugene Lee has written plays that have been produced on stages from Los Angeles to New York to London's Royal Court. The author of *East Texas Hot Links* and *Killingsworth*, Lee has penned eight stage plays and numerous screenplays and episodes for television series. An Artist-in-Residence at Texas State University and Artistic Director of the Black and Latino New Play Festival, he is currently on Broadway in *American Son*.



## John MacCormack

Recipient of the Pedro Joaquín Chamorro Award from the InterAmerican Press Association, John MacCormack is a 27-year veteran of the *San Antonio Express-News* and has written thousands of stories about San Antonio and South Texas. When Madalyn Murray O’Hair went missing, he pursued an unflagging investigation that resulted in murder convictions, and is credited with “persisting when others, including police, ignored the unfolding story.” He has been praised for his “deep research, eye for detail, and plain, easy-flowing eloquence,” which unfold stories that would have remained hidden were it not for his professional skills.



## Wendell Mayo

The author of six books and short stories that have appeared in more than 150 publications, Wendell Mayo won the Premio Aztlán Literary Prize for his first book, *Centaur of the North*. A Professor of Literature at Bowling Green State University, Mayo has won a Fulbright Scholarship, the Subito Press Award for Innovative Fiction, the Individual Excellence Award from the Ohio Arts Council, and an NEA Creative Writing Fellowship. He has been short-listed for the International Rubery Book Award in Fiction.



## Ito Romo

Spotlighted in *Texas Monthly*’s “Ten Writers to Watch,” Ito Romo is the recipient of the Arts Foundation of San Antonio Award, the Nebrija Prize of the Universidad Alcalá in Madrid, Spain, and the *San Antonio Express-News* Best Books of 2013. Sometimes described as Chicano Gothic, Romo writes to explore issues of working-class citizens of the border region. He is the author of two novels, *The Border is Burning* and *El Puente/The Bridge*, which was also published in German by Europa Verlag. He teaches Creative Writing and Mexican-American Literature at St. Mary’s University.



## Ellen Clarke Temple

Ellen Clarke Temple pioneered much of the publication of Texas women writers in the 1970’s and 1980’s, publishing numerous key books in the history of Texas women, as well as the eye-opening traveling exhibit and its accompanying book on women in Texas History. She served on the Texas Committee for the Humanities from 1983 to 1989, chaired it in 1988, and served on the Editorial Board of University of North Texas. A longtime advocate for libraries and the humanities in education, Temple received the Pro Bene Meretis Award, highest award given by University of Texas’s College of Liberal Arts. She is a current member of the Advisory Board to *The Handbook of Texas Women*.



## Jesús Salvador Treviño

Jesús Salvador Treviño is Director and Producer of nine feature and documentary films, author of three short story collections and a memoir, an award-winning filmmaker, and is founder and publisher of the website [Latinopia.com](http://Latinopia.com), a Latino website focused on the advancements made by others in the literary and performing arts. Treviño wrote and directed the American Playhouse documentary *Seguin*, broadcast nationally over PBS, and produced through PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts the documentary, *Chicano: History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*.