



INNAUGURAL CAROL SHIELDS PRIZE FOR FICTION ANNOUNCED

NEW PRIZE FOR NORTH AMERICAN WOMEN WRITERS INCLUDES \$200,000 IN PRIZE MONEY, MENTORSHIPS, WRITERS-IN-RESIDENCIES, AND MORE

February 7, 2020—The Carol Shields Prize for Fiction, the first English-language literary award to celebrate creativity and excellence in fiction by women writers in the United States and Canada, was announced today. The inaugural Carol Shields Prize for Fiction will be awarded in 2022 and will be open to women and non-binary fiction writers in the US and Canada for a short story collection or a novel. The mission of the award is to acknowledge, celebrate, and promote fiction by Canadian and American women writers. The winner will receive \$150,000* and four nominees \$12,500 each.

“American-born and Canadian-based author Carol Shields was committed to the wider recognition of writer’s voices and lives,” said Carol Shields Prize co-founder Susan Swan. “And so the Carol Shields Prize for Fiction was born: her name a perfect match for the new preeminent literary prize for writers in the United States and Canada.”

Adds co-founder Janice Zawerbny, “By putting the work of women writers in the spotlight — and by creating charitable grants and mentorships for marginalized and under-represented writers — this new annual literary award will acknowledge, celebrate and promote fiction by a wider, more diverse, and inclusive group of women writers.”

At \$200,000, The Carol Shields Prize for Fiction is one of the largest awards for literature anywhere and is the richest prize for women who write in the English language. It will be an annual prize and have one of the largest literary purses in North America. Works of translation published in Canada or the US in English, translated from Spanish or French, will be eligible for consideration.

The Carol Shields Prize for Fiction is co-founded by novelist, teacher, activist and journalist, Susan Swan and editor Janice Zawerbny, in addition to several founding [board members](#) in Canada and the United States. In addition, the prize is supported by distinguished Honorary Patrons who have pledged their commitment to the prize: American writers Marilynne Robinson, Ann Patchett, Louise Erdrich, Erica Jong, Francine Prose, and Jane Smiley, along with Margaret Atwood, Dionne Brand, Alice Munro and Marie-Claire Blais from Canada. Additional literary patrons will be added as the prize is developed.

Funds so far have been raised to support the prize monies of \$200,000 for the first three years of the prize.

About Carol Shields

Carol Shields was born in Oak Park, Illinois, in 1935, and moved to Canada in 1957 to attend university. She was the author of more than twenty books, including novels, plays, poetry, essays, criticism, short fiction and biography. Her books were nominated, and won, numerous international prizes. Most notably, her novel *The*



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Stone Diaries won the Governor General's Award for Fiction (Canada), the Pulitzer Prize (US), and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize (UK).

In 1997, her novel *Larry's Party* won the Orange Prize (now called the Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction), which is given to the best book by a woman writer in the English-speaking world. She edited, along with Marjorie Anderson, two highly successful anthologies of essays by women called *Dropped Threads*, in which women were encouraged to write about private and personal experiences that they hadn't shared with others before.

In addition to her career as an author, Shields worked as an academic, teaching at the University of Ottawa, the University of British Columbia and the University of Manitoba. In 1996, she became chancellor of the University of Winnipeg. She raised five children with her husband, Don, and died from complications of breast cancer in Victoria, B.C., in 2003, at the age of sixty-eight.

For more information about the Carol Shields Prize for Fiction, visit: <https://carolshieldsprizeforfiction.com/>

*All dollar amounts are in Canadian dollars

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