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centre of the arts

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ATTENTION: BOOKS, ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT EDITORS

Books on stolen identity in post-war Montréal, a Tour de France-winning Italian anti-Fascist, and a teenage adventure story depicting the powerful friendship between an Israeli and a Palestinian win 2013 Canadian Jewish Book Awards

TORONTO, May 2, 2013 – A wide range of Jewish themes and subjects – from the Holocaust, trauma and memory, to Yiddish, family and the Arab-Israeli conflict – are featured in the winners of the **2013 Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Awards**.

This year's jury selected 8 titles in the categories of Fiction, Biography, Children's Literature, History, Scholarship, Poetry, Holocaust Literature, and Yiddish. The awards will be presented in public ceremony on **Thursday, June 6, 8 PM** at the **Bram and Bluma Appel Salon** at the **Toronto Reference Library**. This year's awards will be hosted by former Editorial Director of Penguin Books, **Cynthia Good**.

Leading the pack is Montréal's **Nancy Richler**, winning in the Fiction category for her third novel *The Imposter Bride*. Richler's beautifully written and understated story of love, loss, betrayal, and absence tells the story of a daughter's quest to understand the mother who abandoned her soon after her birth in Montréal. Engaging with broad questions about art, memory and trauma, the Jury praised Richler's novel as both deeply Jewish and deeply Canadian.

Praised by the *New York Times* as "a narrative that speaks so astutely to the unspeakable losses inherent in the human condition," *The Imposter Bride* was also shortlisted for the 2012 Scotiabank Giller Prize.

The winner in the Biography category, sister and brother **Aili and Andres McConnon**'s *Road to Valor* presents the fascinating life of 1938 and 1948 Tour de France winning cyclist Gino Bartali. A deeply religious Catholic and anti-Fascist, Bartali risked his life to help over 600 Jews in Tuscany and Umbria to avoid capture by the Nazis. The jury lauded the McConnon's for bringing to life this little-known true story of a remarkable man who was not only a great champion but a true human being.

Sharon E. McKay is the winner in the Children's Literature category for her novel *Enemy Territory*. The action-packed novel tells the remarkable story of two teens – one Palestinian and one Israeli – who must overcome their deep-seated distrust and learn to rely on each other. Fast-paced and entertaining, the Jury recognized the important message about how conflict is passed down from generation to generation, and how it can be overcome. *Enemy Territory* is McKay's 12th book – she has won close to 20 awards including the Arthur Ellis Award and UNESCO International Youth Library Award, and has been shortlisted for the Governor General's Award twice.

Other winners include Toronto-born, Jerusalem-based **Matti Friedman** in the History category for *The Aleppo Codex: A True Story of Obsession, Faith, and the Pursuit of an Ancient Bible*. Part history and part whodunit, Friedman's fascinating book chronicles the Codex's remarkable and controversial journey from 10th century Tiberias, to Syria, and eventually Israel.

Isa Milman's *Something Small to Carry Home* is the winner in the Poetry category – the Victoria, BC-based Milman's third Canadian Jewish Book Award for poetry. *Nazi Germany, Canadian Responses, Confronting Antisemitism in the Shadow of the War*, edited by Toronto-based **Ruth Klein** is the winner in the Scholarship category.

The winner in the Holocaust Literature category is Montréal-based scholar **Julija Sukys'** *Epistolophilia, Writing the Life of Ona Simaite,* praised for presenting a new type of reading of Holocaust texts. Rounding out the 2013 awards is Montréal historian **Pierre Anctil's** winner in the Yiddish category, *Jacob-Isaac Segal (1896-1954) Un poète yiddish de Montréal et son milieu.* Written in French, it tells the story of the famous Yiddish poet and journalist, recreating the rich Montréal literary environment where Yiddish thrived in the early to mid-1900's.

"The Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Awards honour important contributions to writing on Jewish-related subjects, stimulate publishing in Canada on Jewish subjects, and advance the careers of writers of Jewish themes and content," said **Edward Trapunski**, Chair of the 2013 Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Awards Jury. "This year's eight award-winning books truly reflect the impact Jewish culture has had on all aspects of Canadian society," added Trapunski.

This year's distinguished Jury is comprised of writers, academics, editors and experts in the literary field, and includes **Barbara Berson**, **Adam Fuerstenberg**, **Judith Ghert**, **Alain Goldschläger**, **Sara R. Horowitz**, **Carla Lancit**, **Michael Posner**, **Judy Stoffman**, and **Edward Trapunski.**

The Awards ceremony takes place in Toronto on **Thursday, June 6** at **8 PM** at the **Bram & Bluma Appel Salon at the Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge Street**. The Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Awards is part of the **Toronto Jewish Literary Festival**.

Winning authors will be available for a book-signing after the ceremony. The award-winning titles will also be available for purchase.

Jury citations, full details on the event and the winners are available at **www.kofflerarts.org**

Interviews with Jury Chair Edward Trapunski and/or any of the winning authors can be arranged through the Koffler Centre of the Arts. Media contact information is below.

The 2013 winners are:

BIOGRAPHY
Aili and Andres McConnon, *Road to Valour: A True Story of World War II Italy, the Nazis, and the Cyclist Who Inspired a Nation* (Doubleday)

FICTION
Nancy Richler, *The Imposter Bride* (Harper Collins)

HISTORY
Matti Friedman, *The Aleppo Codex: A True Story of Obsession, Faith, and the Pursuit of an Ancient Bible* (Algonquin Books)

HOLOCAUST LITERATURE
Julija Sukys, ***Epistolophilia: Writing the Life of Ona Simaite*** (University of Nebraska Press)

POETRY
Isa Milman, ***Something Small To Carry Home*** (Quattro Books)

SCHOLARSHIP
L. Ruth Klein, ***Nazi Germany, Canadian Responses: Confronting Antisemitism in the Shadow of War*** (McGill-Queen's University Press)

YIDDISH
Pierre Anctil, *Jacob-Isaac Segal 1869-1954 Un poete yiddish de montreal et son milieu* (Presses de l'Universite Laval)

CHILDREN AND YOUTH LITERATURE
Sharon E. McKay, *Enemy Territory* (Annick Press)

Support for the Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Awards is provided by the **Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto**.

ABOUT THE KOFFLER CENTRE OF THE ARTS
Koffler Centre of the Arts is Canada's only multidisciplinary, contemporary Jewish cultural institution. It has a broad mandate to welcome all and present a wide range of artistic programs, through a global lens, in a distinctly Canadian context.

As part of its effort to serve the GTA with its unique brand of arts and culture, the Koffler Centre of the Arts is expanding to Artscape Youngplace in fall 2013. Koffler Gallery exhibitions and related programs will be based at Artscape Youngplace, in the vibrant downtown Queen West art and design district, as the new Koffler building at Bathurst and Sheppard awaits construction. Koffler visual art, ceramic and music classes will continue at the Prosserman JCC on Sherman Campus and at the Schwartz/Reisman Centre on Lebovic Campus in Vaughan. The Koffler also offers family arts programming presented in partnership with The Leo Baeck Day School (South Campus).

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Media Contact
Tony Hewer, Head of Communications and Marketing
Koffler Centre of the Arts
4588 Bathurst Street | Toronto | ON | M2R 1W6
t: 416.638.1881 x 4228 | f: 416.636.5813
e: **thewer@kofflerarts.org** | w: **www.kofflerarts.org**