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KINGSOLVER, HOLTON, AND NYSTROM RECEIVE LITERARY AWARDS

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(Richmond, Virginia) – The Library of Virginia is pleased to announce the winners of the 13th Annual Library of Virginia Literary Awards. This year's awards celebration was hosted by award-winning Virginia author Adriana Trigiani. Awards categories were fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and literary lifetime achievement. Winners of the Library of Virginia's Annual Literary Awards and the People's Choice Awards receive a \$3,500 prize and a handsome engraved crystal book.

Barbara Kingsolver is the recipient of the fiction prize for *The Lacuna*, which the judges felt "was the achievement of a literary artist at the peak of her skills." Kingsolver's Mexican-American protagonist encounters characters as diverse as the artist Diego Rivera, the exile Leon Trotsky, and Senator Joe McCarthy's House Un-American Activities Committee in places as varied as Mexico, Washington D.C., and the Appalachian Mountains.

Kingsolver grew up in rural Kentucky and now lives in southwest Virginia. *The Poisonwood Bible* was a finalist for both the Pulitzer Prize and the Orange Prize and won the national book award of South Africa. *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* won numerous prizes including the James Beard Award. In 2000 Kingsolver received the National Humanities Medal, our country's highest honor for service through the arts. *The Lacuna* won the 2010 [Orange Prize for Fiction](#), awarded to the best work of fiction written in English by a female author.

The other finalists for the fiction prize were Ramola D for *Temporary Lives: Stories*, 10 short stories set in southern India and northern Virginia that portray the bleak existence and forlorn hopes of characters constrained by class and gender, and Josh Weil for *The New Valley*, three novellas set in contemporary Virginia that explore the loneliness of silent men coping with an agrarian world.

The judges also selected an honorable mention in this category: *Basil's Dream* by Christine Hale.

The winner of the 2010 literary award for the best work of nonfiction is Woody Holton for *Abigail Adams*. The judges praised Holton for his lively prose that raises his biography above other books. Holton's *Abigail Adams* presents new insights about her opinions of the major controversies of the revolutionary period, her effective management of the household, and her surprising talent for speculation in the bond market.

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Holton, an associate professor of history and American studies at the University of Richmond, is the author of two other award-winning books: *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (1999) and *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution* (2007). Holton won the 2009 Bancroft Prize for *Abigail Adams*.

The other finalists for the nonfiction prize were David A. Taylor for *Soul of a People* and Melvin I. Urofsky for *Louis D. Brandeis: A Life*. Taylor's fresh and accessible book focuses on the American authors sustained by the WPA Writers' Project of the 1930s. Urofsky's comprehensive and authoritative biography demonstrates that Louis Brandeis and his legal reasoning still influence our republic nearly 70 years after his death.

Debra Nystrom, professor of poetry writing at the University of Virginia, received the poetry prize for *Bad River Road*, her third collection of verse. The judges praised *Bad River Road* as a searching and beautifully composed collection, notable for its ability to make private anguish communicable, while at the same time confronting pressing issues of class, race, and culture as they exist in her native South Dakota. The book understands that the emotive basics—the speaker's relationship to her dying mother, the decline of her father's health, and the suffering of her imprisoned brother—resonate beyond the personal to the political and the universal.

Nystrom has published two previous collections of poetry, *Torn Sky* and *A Quarter Turn*. She has received two grants from the Virginia Commission for the Arts and won the 2004 Library of Virginia Poetry Award and the James Dickey Prize for Poetry.

The other poetry prize finalists were Fred D'Aguiar, a professor of English at Virginia Tech, for *Continental Shelf* and Sarah Kennedy, author of five books of poetry, for *Home Remedies*. D'Aguiar's *Continental Shelf* is a powerful and sustained collection whose most notable feature is an elegiac sonnet sequence written in the aftermath of the Virginia Tech shootings. Kennedy's *Home Remedies* is a remarkably inventive and ambitious volume that attempts to re-envision and honor a series of previously unheard women's voices.

The judges also selected an honorable mention in poetry category: *Illustrating the Machine that Makes the World* by Joshua Poteat.

The winner of the People's Choice Award in the fiction category Jeannette Walls's true-life novel, *Half Broke Horses*, and in the nonfiction category, *Haunted Plantations of Virginia* by Beth Brown. The finalists for People's Choice Awards are selected by a panel of independent Virginia booksellers and librarians from the list of books nominated for the Library's Literary Awards. Winners are decided by readers voting online and in libraries.

Also honored at this year's Literary Awards was Jacqueline Jules for *Unite or Die: How Thirteen States Became a Nation*, which was selected as the winner of the annual Whitney and Scott Cardozo Award for Children's Literature. The engaging picture book features children dressed in state-shaped costumes acting out a play called "Unite or Die." The book traces the challenges and compromises that shaped the United States Constitution. In selecting this book, a juried panel

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reviewed 21 nominated titles from authors whose works focused on literature for children ages four through eight. Nominated titles with a publication date of 2009 were accepted from the greater mid-Atlantic region.

Henry Hart, a professor of English at the College of William and Mary, won this year's Carole Weinstein Prize in Poetry. He is the author of two books of poetry and an editor of *Verse*, an international poetry journal. His book *James Dickey, The World as a Lie*, a biography, was runner-up for the Southern Book Critics Circle Award in 2000. The Weinstein Prize, established in 2005, is awarded each year to a poet with strong connections to central Virginia. The annual prize recognizes significant recent contribution to the art of poetry and is awarded on the basis of a range of achievement in the field of poetry. There is no formal application process or competition. Selection and notification of the annual prize will be made by a three-member board of curators.

The recipient of the 2010 Library of Virginia Lifetime Achievement Award is Lee Smith. Smith, a retired professor of English at North Carolina State University, is the author of numerous novels including *Fair and Tender Ladies*, *Oral History*, *Saving Grace*, *The Last Girls*, *On Agate Hill*, and *Mrs. Darcy Meets the Blue-Eyed Stranger*. A native of Grundy, Virginia, Smith attended St. Catherine's School in Richmond, Virginia, and graduated from Hollins College.

Next year's Literary Awards Celebration will be held on October 15, 2011.

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