

## Winners Announced in Texas Institute of Letters Competitions

Austin resident Tom Zigal took top prize Saturday evening in the Texas Institute of Letters' literary competition for works published in 2013, claiming the \$6,000 Jesse H. Jones Fiction award for his novel, *Many Rivers To Cross*, published by TCU Press, Institute President W.K. Stratton said.

The award was presented at the 78<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the organization in San Marcos at the Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center. The Wittliff Collections at Texas State University played host to the event. The Texas Institute of Letters (TIL) was funded in 1936 to recognize literary achievement and to promote interest in Texas literature.

This year's meeting was dedicated to the memory of John Graves, author of the Texas classic *Goodbye To A River* and other books. In addition, Graves was a past TIL president, a fellow of the Institute, winner of its Lon Tinkle Award, and for many years was an important presence on TIL's governing Council.

TIL member Rolando Hinojosa-Smith, a past recipient of the Lon Tinkle Award, was recognized for his recent honor of being named winner of the National Book Critic Circle's Ivan Sandrof Lifetime Achievement Award.

Austin authors Lawrence Wright and John Taliaferro split the nonfiction Carr P. Collins prize, Wright winning for his book *Going Clear: Scientology, Hollywood, and the Prison of Belief*, published by Knopf, and Taliaferro winning for his book *All the Great Prizes: The Life of John Hay from Lincoln to Roosevelt*, published by Simon and Schuster. Wright and Taliaferro split the prize of \$5,000. Co-winners are rare in TIL competition.

Author and journalist Jan Reid of Austin received the Lon Tinkle Award for a distinguished career in letters associated with Texas. Reid is the award-winning author of numerous books, both fiction and nonfiction, including the Jesse H. Jones Fiction award winner *Comanche Sundown* and the acclaimed biography of Ann Richards *Let the People In*. Reid is also known as one of the first contributors to *Texas Monthly*, publishing his first

article in the magazine the year it was founded. Early on in his writing career, Reid was a Dobie Paisano Fellow. The Dobie Paisano Fellowship program is administered by the University of Texas and the Texas Institute of Letters.

Last year's Lon Tinkle Award winner, Stephen Harrigan, introduced Reid.

More than \$20,000 in prize money was distributed to authors in the categories of fiction, non-fiction, scholarly, short stories, poetry, short nonfiction, book design, and children and young adult. The competition is limited to authors who have lived in the state for at least two years or have entries pertaining to Texas subjects.

Veteran Texas novelist Zigal lived for four years in New Orleans and drew from that experience in writing *Many Rivers To Cross*. It deals with the brutal reality of a submerged and all but destroyed New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and the suffering the survivors must endure. It is the second volume of a trilogy of New Orleans novels Zigal is writing, and in the TIL competition, it beat out powerful competition from finalists Philipp Meyer and Rick Bass.

Scholar Raúl Coronado from the University of California, Berkeley, won the newly renamed Ramirez Scholarly Book competition for *A World Not to Come: A History of Latino Writing and Print Culture* (Harvard University Press). The landmark study focuses on how Spanish Americans in Texas used writing as a means to establish new sources of authority, and how a Latino literary and intellectual life was born in the New World. This award carried a prize of \$2,500. It was renamed the Ramirez Scholarly Book Award after South Texas business and civic leader Renato Ramirez and his family, who are now the donors sponsoring the award.

Other winners were Nan Cuba, Steven Turner Award for best first published fiction, *Body and Bread*; Pattiann Rogers, Helen C. Smith Award for poetry, *Holy Heathen Rhapsody*; Sasha West, Bob Bush Award for Best First Book of Poetry, *Failure and I Bury the Body*; John MacCormack, Edwin "Bud" Shrake Award for Short Nonfiction, "Life on the Shale," *San Antonio Express-News*; Bret Anthony Johnston, Kay Cattarulla Short Story Award, "To a Good Home," in *Virginia Quarterly Review*; Lindsay Starr, Fred Whitehead Award for Design of a Trade Book, *Two Prospectors: The Letters of Sam Shepard and Johnny Dark*, edited by Chad Hammett; Xavier Garza, H-E-B/Jean Flynn Children's Book Award, *Maximilian and the Mystery of the Bingo Rematch*; Kathi Appelt, H-E-B Young Adult Book Award, *The True Blue*

*Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp*; and David Bowles, Soeurette Diehl Fraser Award For Best Translation Of A Book, for *Flower, Song, Dance: Aztec and Mayan Poetry*.

Twelve new members were inducted into the organization. They are Alan Lee Birkelbach, Pamela Colloff, Max Evans, Gene Fowler, Christine Granados, Diana Lopez, Domingo Martinez, Steven Saylor, William Seale, Ann Weisgarber, Lowell Mick White and David Marion Wilkinson.

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