

BRITISH COLUMBIA
ACHIEVEMENT FOUNDATION

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Finalists Announced for 14th Annual BC National Non-Fiction Award

VANCOUVER – Finalists for the 2018 BC National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction – one of the largest non-fiction book prizes in the country – were announced today on behalf of the BC Achievement Foundation. The award carries a prize of \$40,000 and each finalist will also receive a prize of \$5,000.

The 2018 finalists are:

Ken Dryden for *Game Change: the Life and Death of Steve Montador and the Future of Hockey*; Carol Off for *All We Leave Behind: A Reporter's Journey into the Lives of Others*; Doug Saunders for *Maximum Canada: Why 35 Million Canadians Are Not Enough*; and, Tanya Talaga for *Seven Fallen Feathers: Racism, Death, and Hard Truths in a Northern City*.

An independent jury chose the four finalists from among 156 books submitted by 45 publishers from across Canada. The members of the 2018 jury are **Jan Walter**, Jury Chair, editor, publishing executive, bookseller and former Chair of the Kingston WritersFest Board; **Rick Antonson**, author, book publisher, lecturer and former CEO of Tourism Vancouver; and, **Eliza Reid**, co-founder of Iceland Writers' Retreat, writer, editor and currently the First Lady of Iceland.

Now in its 14th year, the award has featured such winners as Sandra Martin, Rosemary Sullivan, Karyn L. Freedman, Thomas King, Modris Eksteins, Charlotte Gill, John Vaillant, Ian Brown, Russell Wangersky, Lorna Goodison, Noah Richler, Rebecca Godfrey, and Patrick Lane.

"Writers are the essential lifeblood of our culture, and while they may labour in isolation, their words help us understand who we are, and our place in the world. This year's shortlist of four exceptional books of non-fiction, selected from 156 submissions, exemplifies everything our Award stands for," said Scott McIntyre, Foundation Chair. "We are very proud of our jury's final selections. And we are equally proud that the province of British Columbia continues to offer a national award of this stature."

The jury will announce the winner of the 2018 prize at a special presentation ceremony in Vancouver on February 1, 2018.

The finalists are described in the following citations from the jury panel:

Ken Dryden: *Game Change: The Life and Death of Steve Montador and the Future of Hockey*

Game Change is a compelling work of investigative journalism by an author uniquely qualified to demystify its subject. Ken Dryden's examination of the premature death in 2015 of NHL defenceman Steve Montador, a victim of chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), masterfully blends leading edge medical research and the evolving culture of professional sport with an intimate and memorable portrait of a modern hockey player's life. Montador's career accelerated just as the game itself did, but at terrible cost. Dryden eloquently challenges the thinking that has so far tolerated brain injury in professional hockey; his well-argued solutions underpin a critically important message for the future of our national game.

Carol Off: *All We Leave Behind: A Reporter's Journey into the Lives of Others*

All We Leave Behind is a timely memoir that offers both context to and a close-up of uncomfortable truths: the failures of the West's involvement in Afghanistan, the hurdles confronting refugees who seek safety in Canada, and the dilemma of a combat journalist expected to maintain professional distance from her sources. Carol Off relied on Asad Aryubwal's willingness to reveal the crimes of warlords on whom NATO pinned its hopes for stability after the reign of the Taliban, but his on-camera testimony put him and his family at risk. After precarious years in exile, the Aryubwals hoped for refugee status in Canada; Off decided she had to help. Then began a harrowing seven-year battle with corrupt or hostile bureaucracies, abroad and at home. With bracing insight and a skillfully crafted narrative, this work forces a rethinking of our attitudes to those who ask us for sanctuary.

Doug Saunders: *Maximum Canada: Why 35 Million Canadians Are Not Enough*

Maximum Canada is an homage to our country, a summary of the good and bad from our past, and concrete suggestions on what will allow us as a nation to reach – or rather, maximize – our fullest potential. In a year when debates about the movement of peoples remain contentious throughout the world, Doug Saunders makes objective and powerful arguments for the need to increase Canada's population. Saunders recognizes the challenges associated with a massive push to triple our population, but his optimism never strays to the quixotic. Thoroughly researched and compelling to read, *Maximum Canada* invites us to imagine a larger, even more inclusive Canada.

Tanya Talaga: *Seven Fallen Feathers: Racism, Death, And Hard Truths in a Northern City*

Seven Fallen Feathers is achingly blunt in confronting recurring damage that must be repaired. The book puts a human face to the headline statistics, reveals the continuing harm of unequal educational opportunity, and delivers the evidence of systemic racism in Canada with an insistent voice. Tanya Talaga draws the reader into communities of

hurt and flawed responses surrounding the deaths of seven Indigenous students, the “fallen feathers.” Talaga yanks at the reader’s complacency with her story of separated families, untethered youths, and the seemingly unbridgeable distance between cultures. She offers painful lessons while courting hope.

The BC Award is an annual national prize established by the British Columbia Achievement Foundation, an independent foundation endowed by the Province of British Columbia in 2003 to celebrate excellence in the arts, humanities, enterprise, and community service.

For more information on the award and this year's finalists, please call 604-261-9777 or visit www.bcachievement.com.

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