



## **Media Background: 2008 BC Award**

## Quick Facts

**Name:** The BC Award for Canadian Non-Fiction (short form: the BC Award)

**Value:** \$40,000 (up from \$25,000 in previous years)

**Age:** This is the fourth year of the annually presented award

**Funding:** The British Columbia Achievement Foundation

**Shortlist announced:** November 22, 2007

**Winner announced:** February 7, 2008

**2008 jury:** David Mitchell (chair), Patrick Lane, Sandra Martin

**2008 shortlist:**

Donald Harman Akenson for *Some Family: The Mormons and How Humanity Keeps Track of Itself*

Lorna Goodison for *From Harvey River: A Memoir of My Mother and Her People*

Jacques Poitras for *Beaverbrook: A Shattered Legacy*

**Past winners:**

2007: Noah Richler for *This Is My Country, What's Yours?*

2006: Rebecca Godfrey for *Under the Bridge*

2005: Patrick Lane for *There Is a Season*

## What's the Story?

### Story and coverage ideas for the 4th annual BC Award for Canadian Non-Fiction

#### **Prize Jury at Work**

How do book prize jurors make their selections? What goes on behind closed doors as the jurors sort through all the nominated books, then argue their choices for the finalists and, eventually, the award winner? Interview past juror Max Wyman, or any of the current jury members for this year's prize—David Mitchell, Sandra Martin, or Patrick Lane—to get the inside scoop on jury life.

#### **You Win Some, You Choose Some**

The inaugural winner of the BC Award, Patrick Lane, is serving on this year's jury panel for the award. Lorna Goodison, a finalist for the BC Award this year, was on the 2007 Giller Prize jury. What's it like to go from the podium to the jury room? Check in with Patrick and Lorna to find out.

#### **And The Winner Is...**

Major book prizes can be stressful for the juries, but what about for finalists? What's it like to sit in a crowded room and wait for your name to be called, or not called? How does it feel to win? How does a major prize win affect your career and your writing? Interview previous BC Award winners—such as Patrick Lane, Rebecca Godfrey, or Noah Richler—and/or winners of other major prizes, for an insider view of the highs and lows of the literary prize sweepstakes.

#### **Boom Time in Lotus Land: Vancouver's Burgeoning Arts Scene**

Vancouver has one of the highest concentrations of cultural workers in Canada—roughly 14% of the city's workforce is engaged in the arts—and is home to a renowned visual and contemporary arts scene, one of the most vibrant writing and publishing communities in North America, and is in the running to be designated a World City of Literature by UNESCO. What gives? How is it that Vancouver is the only city in Canada, outside of Toronto and Ottawa, to host national literary prize? Interview leaders in Vancouver's arts and culture community to find out what makes this creative centre tick.

## About the Jury

**David Mitchell** (jury chair), a well-known political commentator and historian whose career has spanned both the public and private sectors. Mr. Mitchell is currently Vice-Principal, Advancement at Queen's University. His published work includes the notable biography, *W.A.C. Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia*.

**Patrick Lane**, one of Canada's finest poets. Mr. Lane's award-winning works of poetry, fiction, and non-fiction have been published around the world. In 2005, Mr. Lane won the BC Award for Canadian Non-Fiction for his memoir, *There Is a Season*.

**Sandra Martin**, a senior features writer for the *Globe and Mail*. Ms. Martin is a past winner of the Atkinson and Canadian Journalism Fellowships and gold and silver National Magazine Awards, as well as the author of the just-published book, *The First Man in My Life: Daughters Write about Their Fathers*.

## About the Award

The BC Award for Canadian Non-Fiction, one of Canada's largest literary awards, was established to honour Canada's finest writers of literary non-fiction. A vital part of Canadian culture, literary non-fiction provides a forum for writers to provoke thought and explore new ways of understanding. The BC Award celebrates the best work in this important genre.

The \$40,000 award originates in BC, and is presented annually.

### Eligibility Guidelines:

1. All entries must be first print editions published in Canada in English between January 1 and October 31, 2007, and be widely available to Canadian readers in bookstores and libraries. Books not published by August 31 but to be published by October 31, 2007 may be submitted as bound galley proofs.
2. All entries must be authored by a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada.
3. Entries may be authored by one or two individuals. Multi-authored titles are not eligible.
4. Only works of literary non-fiction are eligible. Entries should demonstrate a high standard of craft and quality of thought, whatever their subject or category within the genre.
5. Self-published books are not eligible. These are understood to include books authored by a senior officer of the book's publishing firm, and/or whose publication was underwritten in part or whole by the author. Such books as textbooks, how-to books, photographic books, etc. are not eligible.
6. Posthumously published books are not eligible.
7. The jury may request submissions at its discretion.



*BC Celebrates Canada's Best*

### **About the Foundation**

The British Columbia Achievement Foundation was established in 2003 to celebrate excellence and achievement. It is dedicated to recognizing outstanding community, creative, intellectual, and cultural contributions and to promoting a climate of possibility and encouragement.

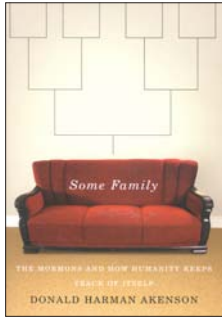
The foundation is independent, established with an endowment of \$8 million from the Province of British Columbia.

The BC Award for Canadian Non-Fiction is one of five initiatives of the foundation. The others are the BC Community Achievement Awards, the BC Creative Achievement Awards for Applied Art and Design, the BC Creative Achievement Award for Aboriginal Art, and Time To Read: The BC Achievement Foundation Award for Early Literacy.

For further information, please contact:

British Columbia Achievement Foundation

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2008 FINALIST

*Some Family: The Mormons and How Humanity Keeps Track of Itself*

By Donald Harman Akenson

McGill-Queens University Press | Hardcover | 360 pages | ISBN 978-0-7735-3295-3

*“Most genealogists, it is safe to say, use the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints’ material with unquestioning gratitude. Akenson’s evaluation of the material—how it has been collected, and how it is used—should give them pause.”*

—Montreal Review of Books

*“Tracing lineage is a universal cultural imperative, Akenson notes in his marvelous book Some Family ... our prime means of keeping our sense of collective self from dissolving into ‘swirl and flux.’”*

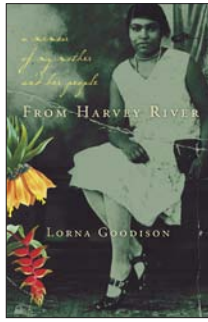
—Maclean’s

Most people are curious about their ancestry—in our age of information, genealogical research has become one of the most popular activities in the world and the Family History Library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is one of the most important resources. Started in 1894, the Mormon genealogical project has grown to include 2 billion names, 2.4 million rolls of microfilm, and 278,000 books—making it the world’s largest collection of genealogical information. Donald Akenson explains and evaluates the history and functioning of this massive undertaking, in the process providing an insightful study of the Mormon scriptures and their implications for genealogical work.

One of his central arguments is that there are four basic genealogical forms. The supporting evidence runs from the Solomon Islands to classical China to ancient Ireland. Highly significant on its own, it also provides the information needed to assess the Latter-day Saints’ efforts to provide a single narrative of how humanity keeps track of itself. Appendices cover topics of vital interest to historians, genealogists, and ethnographers—the use and limits of genetic data in genealogy, the reality of false-paternity as a widespread phenomenon in genealogical lines, the vexing matters of incest and cousin-marriage.

Taking a unique perspective on a neglected topic, Akenson draws far-reaching conclusions about the stories cultures tell themselves. *Some Family* will be of interest not only to religious scholars but also to anyone who has ever used the Family History Library of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to explore their ancestry.

DONALD HARMAN AKENSON is Douglas Professor of Canadian and Colonial History, Queen’s University, the world’s leading scholar on the Irish diaspora, and the author of several major works on the history of Judaism and Christianity.



2008 FINALIST

*From Harvey River: A Memoir of My Mother and Her People*

By Lorna Goodison

McClelland & Stewart | Hardcover | 288 pages | ISBN 978-0-7710-3383-4 (0-7110-3383-4)

*"In Lorna Goodison's brilliant memoir, she has 'taken back her language' from the clichés and drowsy characterizations of a country and its people .... Goodison's poetic language washes over us, elevating her observations of place and people to the realm of a masterpiece."*

—Austin Clarke

*"So exquisite it stands as an example of the possibilities of the form .... A feat of history, imagination and artistic achievement .... Goodison's voice, her tone and choice of language, brilliantly reflects the mingling of African and British culture ...."*

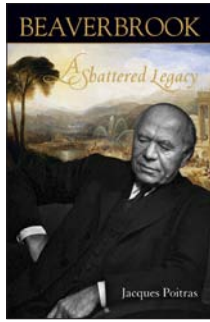
—Toronto Star

When Doris Harvey's English grandfather, William Harvey, discovers a clearing at the end of a path cut by the feet of those running from slavery, he gives his name to what will become his family's home for generations. For Doris, Harvey River is the place she always called home, the place where she was one of the "fabulous Harvey girls," and where the rich local bounty of Lucea yams, pimentos, and mangoes went hand in hand with the Victorian niceties of her parents' house. It is a place she will return to in dreams when her fortunes change, years later...

In Lorna Goodison's spellbinding memoir of her forebears, we meet a cast of wonderfully drawn characters, including George O'Brian Wilson, the Irish patriarch of the family who married a Guinea woman after coming to Jamaica in the mid-1800s; Doris's parents, Margaret and David, childhood sweethearts who became the first family of Harvey River; and their eight children, Cleodine, straight-backed and imperious; serious Albertha, called "Miss Jo" because she was missing all sense of joviality; beautiful Howard, who dies an early death; Rose, whose loveliness inspires devotion but whose own heart is never fulfilled; taxi-man Edmund, who yearns for the freedoms of the big city; Flavius, who spends his life searching for the true church of God; large-hearted, practical-minded Doris, whose bottomless cooking pot often feeds more than just her family; and vivacious, hard-headed Ann, whose gift of reading hair tells her the future.

In lush, vivid prose, textured with the cadences of Creole speech, Lorna Goodison weaves together memory and mythology to create a vivid tapestry. She takes us deep into the heart of a complete world to tell a universal story of family and the ties that bind us to the place we call home.

LORNA GOODISON is the author of eight books of poetry and two collections of short stories. She has received much international recognition, including the Musgrave Gold Medal. Born in Jamaica, Goodison has taught at the University of Toronto and now teaches at the University of Michigan.



2008 FINALIST

*Beaverbrook: A Shattered Legacy*

By Jacques Poitras

Goose Lane Editions | Hardcover | 318 pages | ISBN 978-0864-9249-2497-1 (0-8649-2497-6)

*“In the hands of New Brunswick journalist Jacques Poitras the whole sad tale becomes a riveting story of a community’s evolution from deference to defiance as it attempts to hold on to a magnificent gift of art masterpieces.”*

—Canadian Press

*“Poitras makes it clear that the man responsible for the whole sorry mess was Beaverbrook himself. He had second thoughts about his generosity, but concealed them from the gallery, while creating a paper trail to support his change of heart. In the process, he destroyed his legacy and finally exposed himself as a fraud and a cheat.”*

—Financial Post

For the first time, the fully documented story of the unravelling of the Beaverbrook legacy. From humble beginnings, Max Aitken, later Lord Beaverbrook, rose to the heights of politics and business. His philanthropy knew no bounds, or so it seemed. In the late 1950s, he built the Beaverbrook Art Gallery in Fredericton as a gift to the people of New Brunswick and stocked it with a large collection of masterworks that form the core of the Gallery’s prestigious collection. Today, the paintings are at the centre of a bitter battle between the Gallery and the two charitable Beaverbrook foundations—a battle that has rocked the art world on both sides of the Atlantic. But the “Beaverbrook dispute” is only part of this intriguing story.

In this fascinating account, Jacques Poitras explores the intertwined history of the Aitken family and the Beaverbrook Gallery. Sifting through Beaverbrook’s own correspondence, public and archival records in Canada and England, and interviews with friends and foes, including those involved in the dispute, Poitras disentangles the exploits of the original Lord Beaverbrook and the uncertain fortunes of a once-influential family.

JACQUES POITRAS has been CBC Radio’s provincial affairs reporter in New Brunswick since 2000. He has written numerous award-winning feature documentaries and has appeared on Radio-Canada, National Public Radio, and the BBC. His first book was the critically acclaimed *The Right Fight: Bernard Lord and the Conservative Dilemma*.