



Canada's History Awards Creates New Annual Celebration of Country's Past

--Inaugural Awards presentation to be held at Rideau Hall--

WINNIPEG - (November 17, 2009)- Canada's National History Society today announced that this year's ceremonies to celebrate the *Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History* would be broadened to include six additional history award presentations. The event will bring together students, teachers, historians, and producers of popular history in a national celebration of achievement in Canadian history.

In addition to the *Governor General's Teaching Awards*, the Rideau Hall ceremony will include six other presentations as part of the newly named *Canada's History Awards* program. They include:

Paul Gross, producer and driving force behind the film *Passchendaele* will receive the 2009 *Pierre Berton Award* honouring excellence in popularizing history in public media. The award includes a \$5000 cash prize.

Zoé Banville, (age 12, Red Deer, Alberta) and *Charlotte McNeely* (age 9, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia) are the winning authors of the new *Kayak Kids' Illustrated History Challenge* which encourages Canadian students between the ages of 7-14 to create their own illustrated story based on any aspect of Canadian history. The two students will receive a \$1000 R.E.S.P. generously donated by TD Bank Financial Group.

Amy Wu (Burnaby, BC) and *Mathieu Sasseville* (Ottawa, Ontario) are the winners of *The Begbie Canadian History Contest's* annual national high school competition which provides students with the opportunity to test their skills in history against those of students from schools across Canada. This year's recipients are Amy Wu from Burnaby, British Columbia and Mathieu Sasseville from Ottawa, Ontario.

Tim Mak (West Vancouver, BC) and *Katharine Ann St-Louis* (Montreal, Quebec) are the winners of the *Historica-Dominion Institute's Great Canadian Questions Essay Competition*, which was established in 1999 as a way to encourage students to contribute to the dialogue of Canadian identity. The competition encourages high school and undergraduate university students to voice their opinions on six key debates about Canadian history and culture. The award includes a cash prize of \$2000.

Ian McKay, this year's recipient of the *Sir John A. Macdonald Prize* will have his award presented in absentia. *The Canadian Historical Association* is also a partner in the expanded awards program.

"We're committed to ensuring this awards program raises the level of public awareness for the exceptional work being done to foster a deeper understanding of our history," said Deborah Morrison, President and CEO of Canada's National History Society.

"But one of the best outcomes for these new awards is the potential to bring the whole history community together. Although it seems like an obvious thing to do, the opportunities for writers, producers, historians and teachers to share ideas and concerns, and explore opportunities to collaborate on Canadian history projects are very rare." Ms. Morrison added "We're very grateful for the enthusiastic support we've received from other partnering history organizations and to the federal government for their financial support to this initiative.

Detailed biographical information and photos of each of the recipients are available for download through the press room of the History Society's website:

www.historysociety.ca/abo.asp?subsection=new&page=pre

Members of the media are invited to attend the presentation of Canada's History Awards as well as the 2009 Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History on Friday, November 20, 2009 at 10 a.m. at Rideau Hall.

Participating agencies include the British Columbia-based Begbie Contest Society, the Historica-Dominion Institute in Toronto and the Canadian Historical Association in Ottawa. Over the next two years, the goal is to establish two more awards for achievement in community-based public history to complete the group of history awards.

The Government of Canada has provided multi-year funding of \$561,000 under the Canadian Studies Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage. Through this program, the Department supports the development of learning materials and activities that help increase Canadians knowledge about Canada.

Media Information:

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