



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

N E W S R E L E A S E

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For Immediate Release

Larry's Bench & new Writer-in-Residence program **to honour the late Carol Shields**

WINNIPEG— Today at a ceremony honouring the late Carol Shields, The University of Winnipeg unveiled **Larry's Bench**, a place of respite and reflection in the heart of the campus. As well, University of Winnipeg President Lloyd Axworthy, announced the donation of \$100,000 from the Shields family towards the establishment of **The University of Winnipeg Carol Shields Writer-in-Residence Program**.

Larry's Bench, in the green space at the heart of The University of Winnipeg campus, is set apart only by its bronze plaque that reads, simply, "Larry Weller, 1950 - , Winnipeg, Manitoba." The site was chosen by the Shields family for its proximity to a unique outdoor sculpture and the fact that, as one looks up, students can be seen reading and studying in The University of Winnipeg's 500,000+ volume Library.

The late author had a reputation for cultivating emerging writers. Mentoring students and members of the writing community played a large part in Carol Shields' life. With the gift of \$100,000 from the Shields family and support from Random House, the University will begin the process of raising additional funds, starting the search for the successful candidate, and establishing this exciting new Writer-in-Residence Program in time for the 2005 academic year.

"Carol Shields had the ability to find the extraordinary in the seemingly ordinary," said Axworthy. "To extract the dignity, the very essence, to uncover the extraordinary in any given individual was her gift. It is a legacy that this University, through the Shields family gift, will nurture in our emerging writers."

Chancellor of The University of Winnipeg from 1996 to 2000, Carol Shields received the Governor General Award and Pulitzer Prize for *The Stone Diaries*. The transplanted Winnipegger received the UK Orange Prize for Fiction for her 1997 *Larry's Party*. As the story winds through the streets of the city, the book's nothing-out-of-the-ordinary protagonist, Larry Weller, finds himself in and out of love and in again. Readers the world over have taken the innocuous Larry into their hearts.

The Carol Shields Writer-in-Residence Program will bring an established writer to The University of Winnipeg to mentor emerging student and community writers. In addition to devoting time to his or her own creative works, the Writer-in-Residence will read and respond to manuscripts, hold regular office hours for students and the public, organize reading series, seminars or lectures on writing, and deliver public readings of his/her work.

“Through this major program, Carol’s warmth and generosity of spirit will inspire generations of writers,” said Axworthy. “We know that the community will come forward to support this program that bears Carol’s name and honours a beloved writer and a wonderful human being.”

Carol understood the power of education, in her words: “Just being part of a university, interacting with my colleagues and students, has widened my window on the world, and this is precisely what novelists need.”

Donations to **The Carol Shields Writer-in-Residence** Program can be made to The University of Winnipeg Foundation, 515 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 2E9, www.uwinnipegfoundation.ca

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For further information, please contact:

Katherine Unruh, Director of Communications

The University of Winnipeg

T: 204.786.9872 C: 204.782.3279 k.unruh@uwinnipeg.ca