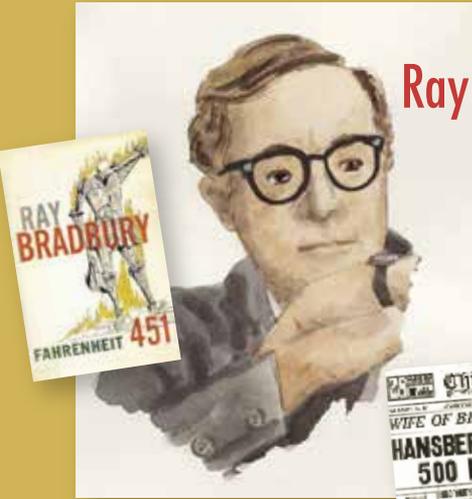


Chicago Literary Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony Class of 2021



Ray Bradbury



Ethel Payne

November 3, 2022

6:30 - 7:45 pm

City Lit Theater

1020 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.
Chicago, IL 60660

Free and open to the public
Registration is required



Carol Shields



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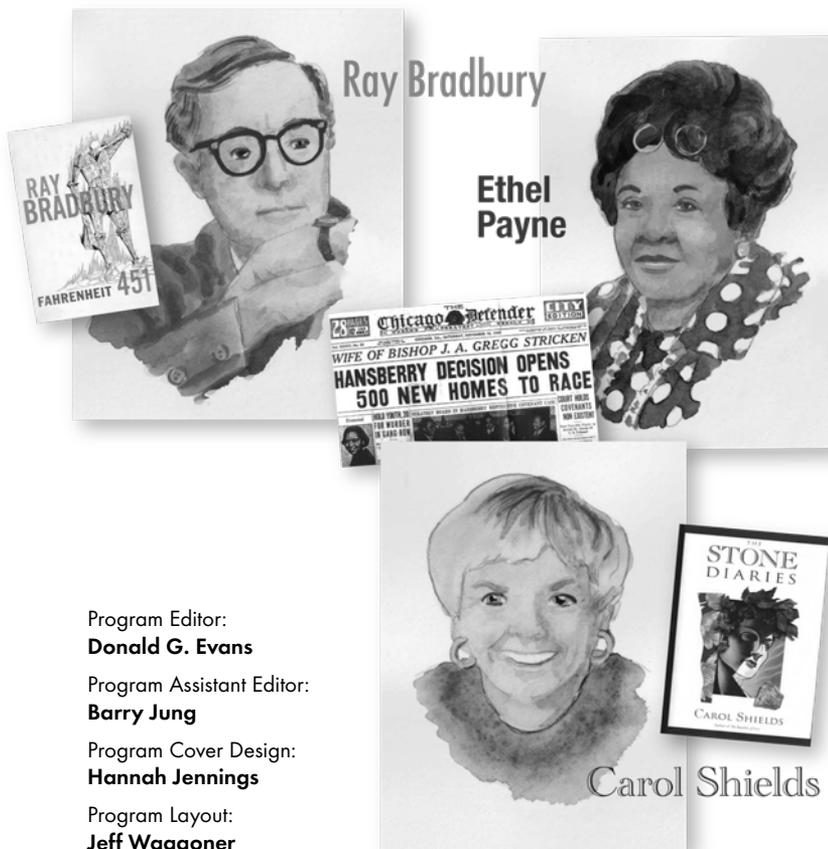
RAY BRADBURY CENTER

The Ray Bradbury Center is one of the larger single-author archives in the United States, and a hub for scholarship on the work of Ray Bradbury and science fiction. The Center is home to more than 100,000 pages of published and unpublished literary works stored in thirty-one of the author's filing cabinets; forty years of Bradbury's personal and professional correspondence (an additional 10,000 pages); and author's copies of Bradbury books, including extensive foreign language editions, and his working library (a combined 4000 volumes).

liberalarts.iupui.edu/centers/bradbury-center

TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

Donald G. Evans	About the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame
Dr. Jason Aukerman	Presenting for Ray Bradbury
Paul McComas	Reading Ray Bradbury
Tammy Gibson	Presenting for Ethel L. Payne
Sylvia Peters	Accepting for Ethel L. Payne
Susan Swan	Presenting for Carol Shields
Anne Collins	Reading Carol Shields
Natalie (Warner) Beglen	Accepting for Carol Shields



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CHICAGO LITERARY HALL OF FAME



The Chicago Literary Hall of Fame (CLHOF) honors, celebrates, preserves, and promotes the development of Chicago's great literary heritage—past, present, and future. CLHOF seeks to realize this purpose by annual inductions of selected great writers from the past; ceremonies honoring living writers whose lifetime contributions to the literary arts warrant the highest recognition; literary awards to young people; classes, panels, and other literary endeavors designed to encourage the development of writers at all ages. CLHOF also creates written materials that record the lives and works of Chicago's most important literary figures and presents these and other materials on its website, in exhibits, author events, public art installations, literary tours, and programming relevant to the organization's goal of promoting Chicago's vibrant literary tradition and culture. CLHOF formed as a project of the Chicago Writers Association in 2010, and splintered into its own nonprofit 501c(3) entity in 2014.

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OUR HOST:

CITY LIT

L I T E R A T E ★ T H E A T E R

City Lit Theater is a non-profit organization founded in 1979 with the mission of bringing adaptations of literary material to the stage, and was the only theater in the nation devoted to this at the time. Founders Arnold Aprill, Lorell Wyatt, and David Dillon pooled together \$210 to launch this theater. In the more than four decades since, it has taken in—from ticket sales, individual donations, and other sources—almost five million dollars. More than \$1.7 million of that has been used in direct payments to the artists who come to City Lit to put up the 139 shows they’ve thus far produced.

City Lit has explored fiction, non-fiction, biography, essays and drama in performance while also presenting a wide array of voices, including diverse casts, to present work by and about underrepresented groups.

It is also a theater that respects and amplifies the voices of many Chicago writers. City Lit has staged productions like *Chaos Doesn’t Run the Whole Show*, which Aprill adapted and directed based on the work of Chicago Literary Hall of Fame inaugural inductee Saul Bellow. City Lit has also staged work by or based on such esteemed Chicago-affiliated authors as Charles Johnson (*Faith and the Good Thing*), Lynda Barry (*The Good Times are Killing Me*), Archibald MacLeish (*J.B.*), April Sinclair (*Coffee Will Make You Black*), Barbara Kensey (*Claiming the Cat’s Eye and Other Stories*), and Douglas Post (*Forty-Two Stories and Somebody Foreign*). The legendary writer and director John Logan (*Hauptmann*) has also been involved in City Lit productions. Among resident playwright Kristine Thatcher’s four plays that have been or will be produced, two (*The Bloodhound Law* and *Emma’s Child*) feature Chicago settings.

City Lit Theater is located on the second floor of the Edgewater Presbyterian Church at the corner of Bryn Mawr and Kenmore, right around the corner from where Lake Shore Drive starts at Hollywood and Sheridan. It’s an intimate 99-seat space with great sound and sightlines.

The Chicago Literary Hall of Fame is proud and grateful to be partnering with an organization that does so much to support our literary scene and heritage, especially as regards its devotion to our theatrical writers and performers.

PARTICIPANTS



Dr. Jason Aukerman (PhD, MA, MBA) is a Clinical Assistant Professor of American Studies and English at Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis where he also serves as the Director of the Ray Bradbury Center. His research interests include Ray Bradbury, the war fiction of United States veteran authors, 20th Century American genre fiction (primarily Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror), and adult literacy advancement. At IUPUI, Dr. Aukerman teaches courses on American Supernatural, Conspiracy Theories, Science Fiction, and introductory literature courses.

As director of the Ray Bradbury Center, Aukerman oversees the curation of one of the largest single-author archives in the United States. The contents of the collection include more than 150,000 pages of Ray Bradbury's published and unpublished literary works; four decades of the author's personal and professional correspondence; remnants of Bradbury's stock of books, including an extensive array of foreign language editions; and Bradbury's working library, comprised of nearly 4000 volumes.



Natalie (Warner) Beglen is the niece of Carol Shields and the youngest daughter of Carol's brother Bob. Natalie grew up in Oak Park, Illinois and lived her early years in the same childhood home as Carol Shields. A graduate of Oak Park River Forest High School, Natalie has remained in the Chicago area and currently resides in the western suburbs with her family.



Anne Collins is the executive editor of Random House Canada, an imprint of Penguin Random House Canada, and has been a vice president of the company since 1998. Before moving into her new role in January 2021, she spent 23 years as the publisher of Random House Canada, adding responsibility for the Knopf Canada imprint in 2009. Before moving over to the world of book publishing, Anne was an award-winning writer and magazine editor, whose second book, *In the Sleep Room: The Story of the CIA Brainwashing Experiments in Canada*, won the 1988 Governor General's Award for Non-fiction. She works as an editor with an extensive list of Canadian and international authors, and is proud that Carol Shields was among them.



Donald G. Evans is the author of a novel and short story collection, as well as editor of two anthologies of Chicago literature, most recently *Wherever I'm At: An Anthology of Chicago Literature*. He is the founding executive director of the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame.



Tammy Gibson is an entrepreneur, travel historian, re-enactor and author. Tammy earned her BA in African American Studies from Chicago State University. Tammy's increasing interest in African American history has led her to travel extensively to explore Africa and several cities throughout the United States to gather information about the hidden treasures of African Americans that are erased from history. Journaling the path of her ancestors, Tammy has visited national parks, historical landmarks, museums, markers, cemeteries, and slave plantations, while examining the findings of the Underground Railroad, sleeping in slave cabins to honor the enslaved, and meeting historical leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. Tammy is the host of "History Unsung," "Black Graves Matter," and a contributing writer for the *Chicago Defender*. Tammy's website is www.sankofatravelher.com. Follow Tammy on social media at @SankofaTravelHer



Paul McComas is a two-time *Chicago Reader* Critic's Choice recipient in Theatre and Performance; the author of six critically acclaimed books of fiction; and an American Film Institute and international-prize-winning filmmaker. His current film project is an animated feature adaptation of his novel *Unplugged*, starring the voices of (among others) Christina Ricci, Louis Gossett Jr., Jeri Ryan and—in his final performance—the late Edward Asner. As a musical artist, Paul is on the indie Chicago label *CAUDog Records*. An educator in media arts, creative writing, literature, and theatre, he has won teaching awards from Northwestern and National Louis universities. Recognized by the legislature of his native Wisconsin for melding the arts, healing, and progressive activism, Paul served for a decade on the National Leadership Council of the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network; collaborates with The Kennedy Forum for mental health; and founded the *Fool for Love* Performance Project, memorializing Sam Shepard while combating ALS.



Sylvia Peters, the eldest niece of Ethel L. Payne, is a nationally recognized educator and Chicago Public Schools principal who relocated to Knoxville to be a Founding Partner of the Edison Project. She has planned three White House Character Education Conferences; worked with members of Congress from both sides of the aisle to pass legislation funding character education programs in 43 states; and helped launch The Character Education Partnership in Washington DC, for which she served two years as its president. Mrs. Peters served as the Education Director of the Enterprise Foundation and led the implementation of community collaborative initiatives in Baltimore, Los Angeles, and Atlanta. Peters served as a dean for Teach for America at the University of Southern California. She graduated from National College, Evanston, IL and received a master's degree from Roosevelt University in Administration and Supervision. Among her many honors, Mrs. Peters was awarded the Whitman Leadership Award for Outstanding Principals in Chicago.



Susan Swan is a Toronto novelist with international publications whose fiction has been published in eighteen countries and translated into eight languages. Swan is the co-founder of The Carol Shields Prize Foundation, an annual award that debuts May 4, 2023 at Ann Patchett's fabled bookstore in Nashville. It has one of the largest literary purses in the English language publishing world and is open to Canadian and American women fiction writers. The winner receives \$150,000 US and the four nominees receive \$12,500 US each. The Shields Prize Foundation also sponsors 11 mentoring programs in the US and Canada. These programs award grants and residencies to emerging female writers from diverse backgrounds.

Swan has published two story collections and six novels including her bestseller, *The Wives of Bath*, which was adapted as the film *Lost and Delirious* starring Piper Perabo, Mischa Barton and Jessica Paré. It debuted at Sundance and was shown in 32 countries.

Swan is a retired Humanities professor from York University and currently mentors MFA students in the Creative Writing program at the University of Toronto.



Ray Bradbury

(August 22, 1920 - June 5, 2012)

by Dr. Jason Aukerman

Ray Bradbury was a child of the Midwest. Born in Waukegan, Illinois in 1920, Bradbury spent his formative years playing in ravines, collecting Buck Rogers comics from the local newspaper, and haunting the public library. In this small corner of what many regard as “fly over country” Bradbury’s gothic imagination ignited and then exploded onto the pages of pulp fiction magazines. And what sparked this remarkable imagination? His hometown where he met Lon Chaney on the silver screen at his local theater. The man of 1,000 faces terrified a very young Bradbury, and Bradbury loved him for it. This love lasted a lifetime. According to Bradbury, Chaney “was someone who acted out our psyches. He somehow got into the shadows inside our bodies; he was able to nail down some of our secret fears and put them on-screen.” Bradbury explained that “the history of Lon Chaney is the history of unrequited loves. He brings that part of you out into the open, because you fear that you are not loved, you fear that you never will be loved, you fear there is some part of you that’s grotesque, that the world will turn away from.”

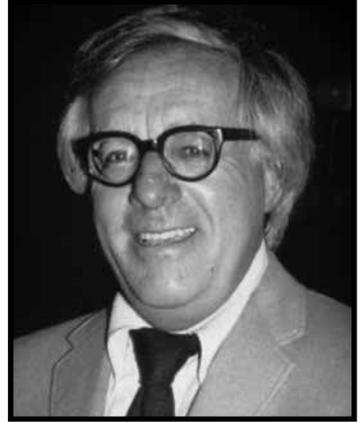


Photo by Alan Light 1975

Compare Bradbury’s description of Chaney’s genius to how Damon Knight described Bradbury’s weird tales

Bradbury’s strength lies in the fact that he writes about things that are really important to us—not the things that we pretend to be interested in—but the fundamental prerational fears and longings and desires: the rage at being born; the will to be loved; the longing to communicate; the hatred of parents and siblings, the fear of things that are not the self.¹

¹ Damon Knight, “When I Was in Knee-Pants: Ray Bradbury,” in *In Search of Wonder*, First Edition (Chicago: Advent Publishers, 1956). Originally from Knight’s review of *The Illustrated Man* in his “Readin’ and Writhin” column, *Science Fiction Quarterly* 1.2 (Feb. 1953), 82

Bradbury's deeply affectionate nostalgia for his Midwestern roots helped him reach international acclaim for his ability to reimagine the American gothic tradition and the dark fantastic. Many of his eerie tales, after all, take place in Green Town—a setting patterned after his childhood hometown which is located only an hour outside of Chicago. Horror writers from Stephen King and Peter Straub to Clive Barker, Neil Gaiman, and Dan Chaon were particularly influenced by Bradbury's ability to refashion gothic tale settings in Midwestern American small towns and suburbs. Other notable authors such as Margaret Atwood, Steven Barnes, Charles Johnson, Michael Chabon, and the recent two-time Pulitzer Prize winner Colson Whitehead were all inspired by Bradbury's imagination, style, and ability to cleverly depict human encounters with the unknown.

While Bradbury's professional writing career unfolded in Los Angeles, California, he started writing at age 12, several years before the Great Depression forced his family to look for work outside of Bradbury's beloved hometown. Waukegan is where he met Mr. Electrico—the mysterious carnival actor who commanded an adolescent Bradbury to “live forever!” It was here that Bradbury discovered how to become immortal: by living alongside his favorite authors on the bookshelves. His quest for immortality launched Ray Bradbury's seven-decade career—a career that intersected an impressively broad spectrum of American cultural history. In addition to becoming one of the most well-known writer's of our time, Bradbury



was deeply connected with Hollywood, where his stories and books were adapted for feature films and television. But his influence reached even broader cultural stages as he wrote for radio, film, television, and stage theater production. Throughout his life he defended public libraries and First

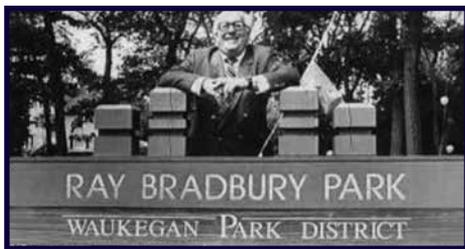


Photo courtesy of the Waukegan Park District

Amendment rights, and eventually became one of the most prominent public advocates for space exploration. Bradbury is most well-known for his fiction, having published more than 400 stories and 27 book-length works, including *The Martian Chronicles*, *The Illustrated Man*, *The Golden Apples of the Sun*, *The October Country*, *Dandelion Wine*, *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, and *Fahrenheit 451*. In these works, he engaged real-world issues such as racial and political intolerance, freedom of the imagination, the threat of nuclear war, the need to fund the American Space program, and the vital importance of literacy.

Bradbury's most famous work, *Fahrenheit 451*—a classic tale of authoritarian government overreach and cultural devaluing of literacy culminating in censorship and book burning—remains a best seller after nearly seven decades in print. In 2006, *Fahrenheit 451* became a primary reading selection of the National Endowment for the Arts Big Read program. Other Bradbury works, particularly his short stories, have been published in over 1000 literary anthologies featured in the curriculum of schools throughout the United States.

Infusing his work with prose poems and rich metaphors, Bradbury used his literary craft to probe the human condition, often bypassing the technological terrain of more traditional “hard science fiction” narratives. His unconventional approach to genre fiction, shirking the formulas used by his contemporaries when writing for pulp fiction magazines, propelled Ray Bradbury to new heights as he became a catalyst for bringing the often-marginalized science fiction genre into the literary mainstream.

Yet, in spite of all of these accomplishments, Ray Bradbury never forgot where he came from. Green Town is an “everytown”—a fictional place that will seem familiar to anyone who grew up in a Midwestern small town residing in the shadow of a large city. Bradbury captures this sense of place eloquently in his Green Town novels—*Dandelion Wine*, *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, and *Farewell, Summer*—and numerous short stories. And while most of Bradbury's Midwestern tales take

place in small towns, it's clear that he also looked fondly on Chicago. He grew up hearing his grandfather tell stories about the World's Columbian Exposition that Chicago hosted in 1893. In 1933, around the time Bradbury met Mr. Electrico and a few years after his silver screen idol, Lon Chaney, passed away, he spent some time at A Century of Progress International Exposition, also known as the Chicago World's Fair, which celebrated the city's centennial. Against the backdrop of the Great Depression, which would soon displace Ray Bradbury and his family from their home in Waukegan, the fair provided an experience of much-needed optimism by imagining a brighter, not-to-distant future. Decades later, Bradbury would write a short story about a bleak, post-apocalyptic future riddled with 1984-esque government overreach and surveillance. In that dark future, it is illegal to reminisce about the past, about better times. But in that setting there is one place on the North American continent where those who wish to recall aloud and dream of better days are safe and off-the-grid—the ruined city of Chicago. It's not hard to imagine that Bradbury's experience at the Chicago World's Fair inspired him to write "To the Chicago Abyss" which appears in his collection *The Machineries of Joy*. The optimism of that Fair is replete in Bradbury's stories—whether they be set on Mars, Venus, abandoned sets in Hollywood studio lots, or a charming, oft-overlooked, small town.

"Every morning I jump out of bed and step on a landmine. The landmine is me. After the explosion, I spend the rest of the day putting the pieces together."



Growing Up With Ray Bradbury's Ghost in Waukegan, Illinois

Colleen Abel on the Inescapable Distortions of Childhood Nostalgia

By Colleen Abel

When I was a child, I thought Ray Bradbury lived in my grandmother's basement. The misunderstanding was born over the opening credits of *Ray Bradbury Theater*, a half-hour horror anthology heavily indebted to the *Twilight Zone* or *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* (both of which based episodes on stories by Bradbury). Most Saturday nights in the 80s, my parents and I would head to my grandmother's for dinner and after pot roast and potatoes, we'd sit and watch *Saturday Nightmares* on the USA Network. I'd sit on the carpet at my grandmother's feet, a child too small to be watching shows so scary, even if they were on network television.

The opening credits of *Ray Bradbury Theater* gave me a particular thrill: like some sort of eerie *X-Files* precursor, synth-drenched music plays while a shadowy figure climbs out of a clanging old elevator and makes his way through a series of cluttered rooms. It's Bradbury, intoning gravely over shots of the artefacts: People ask, *Where do you get your ideas? Well, right here.* As the camera pans, Bradbury says, *Somewhere in this room is an African veldt. Beyond that, the small Illinois town where I grew up.* He sits at a typewriter and the keys clatter. One night, watching these credits, my grandmother said to me, "You know, he's from here." She meant, of course, from Waukegan, "that small Illinois town" where he grew up and where we sat now in her neighborhood of tiny homes called The Gardens. But I, at age seven, thought she meant here, here in the house we sat in, that he had grown up in the house, perhaps even still lived in the basement which resembled, in its murk and books and clutter, the same office Bradbury sat down to write in during the opening credits of his tv show.

It wouldn't be a bad premise for a Bradbury story: a young girl, bookish and morbid, discovers an author living in her grandmother's musty basement. And in a way, he was there. My father's old room was part of that basement, still set up the way it had been when he lived there, commuting to college and working part-time at a bookstore. One room was floor to ceiling bookshelves and by the time I was in junior high school, I would go down there regularly and pick something out to read. Most of the books were yellowed and falling apart, their covers marked with their original prices: fifteen cents. Among these were a few volumes of Bradbury's short stories. I would pick one, often *The Illustrated Man*, and take it back upstairs to the velour armchair and settle in. I'd

never get very far, but I gave it a great many tries; I must have read the opening line “It was a warm afternoon in early September when I first met the Illustrated Man” a half dozen times at least. But my tastes at that age ran more toward Christopher Pike and R.L. Stine. I wasn’t ready for Bradbury yet. And the older I got, the more I felt that I was obliged to love him simply because he was my town’s most famous son. And with typical teenage rebellion, I was not interested in loving anything that felt like an obligation.

One source of my skepticism had to do with the fact that I couldn’t square what I did know of Bradbury and his work with my own experience of Waukegan. Even listening to the opening credits of *Ray Bradbury Theater* and hearing him describe Waukegan as a “small Illinois town” didn’t ring true for me. Waukegan was not a small place even in 1930, when Bradbury would have been ten years old; that year’s census lists its population as a touch over 40,000 people. By the time I was ten, in 1990, the population had nearly doubled; it’s currently one of the ten most populous cities in Illinois. The vast majority of that population increase has been Black and Latinx residents: today, Waukegan is a little over half Latinx population, the other half divided about equally between Black and white residents. The Waukegan I grew up in was a working- and lower-middle-class place, racially diverse, but unable often to capitalize on that diversity, rough around the edges and, to tell the truth, rough everywhere else, too. Our employment rates and poverty rates were, and are, significantly higher than the national average.

The truth is that I wasn’t sure I trusted Waukegan’s worship of Bradbury, a man who, it seemed to me, had abandoned us for California, for wealth, and for fame and who,



Photo credit: raybradbury.com

in his nostalgia-soaked adulthood, wrote books that made growing up in Waukegan sound like Dorothy's trip to Oz. When I was in high school, I was taught that Bradbury rewrote Waukegan into Green Town, Illinois, and that it featured prominently in a number of his works, including *Dandelion Wine*, *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, and *Farewell Summer*. The excerpts we read in my high school English classes seemed nostalgia-soaked, idyllic, and I was baffled by the gap between the Waukegan I saw around me and the one I thought Bradbury had grown up in.

I'm not the first, either, to have trouble squaring Bradbury's rosy vision of Waukegan with the reality. In the 1974 introduction in my copy of *Dandelion Wine*, Bradbury notes that a critic took him to task for growing up in Waukegan and not noticing "how ugly the harbor was and how depressing the coal docks and railyards down below the town." Bradbury's explanation is that he is a poet: of course he noticed these things, but found them beautiful too. Bradbury then includes a poem to underscore his point, a riff on Yeats' "Sailing to Byzantium" and labelling Waukegan, by its proper name, as his Byzantium:



Photo credit: raybradbury.com

A name with neither love nor grace
Was Waukegan, there I came from
And not, good friends, Byzantium.
And yet in looking back I see
From topmost part of farthest tree
A land as bright, beloved, and blue
As any Yeats found to be true.

I understand what Bradbury's going for, I suppose: the source of an artist's soul is, in part, the place where that soul came into consciousness of itself and learned to see the world for the first time, the way Douglas Spaulding does laying in the grass after picking fox grapes, looking up at the prairie sky early on in *Dandelion Wine*.

But that anyone should compare Waukegan to Byzantium, or invoke Yeats in describing a family on a dusky summer lawn at night there, strikes me as surreal to the point of disorientation. I think of the gypsum plant that squats on our lakefront disgorging steam, the abandoned railway, the factories drooling asbestos into the water. When Bradbury was ten, he was sending up fire-balloons into the twilight sky with his grandfather, tearful at their beauty. When I was ten, the harbor I swam in was declared a Superfund site. Even after I read "Sailing to Byzantium" in high school, it certainly would have never occurred to me looking at Lake Michigan from the vantage of my town that these were like the waters Yeats sailed on to get to the holy city. How did it occur to Bradbury?



**"The magic is only
in what books say,
how they stitched
the patches of the
universe together into
one garment for us."**

Photo credit: raybradbury.com

Clearly, Bradbury loved the past, the way he also loved the future: they are spaces where the imagination can be more expansive. The canvas of the past isn't entirely blank—events did happen; there are facts to grapple with—but we must fill in the spaces around them, narrativize them to make them make sense, just as much

as we need a narrative imagination to invent a future of Martian colonists. And I do believe that Bradbury came to writing because he loved the world: each wonder-soaked sentence he wrote makes that clear. And my city has benefitted from his generosity. He came back again and again: when we dedicated the festival to him, when we dedicated Ray Bradbury Park, which contained the famous ravine featured in *Dandelion Wine*.

That ravine, it's true, introduces a dark note into the idyll of Green Town. Part of that darkness is the terra incognita of the natural world, the "wilderness on the edge of town." (This wilderness no longer exists, either; Waukegan is firmly an exurb, a far stop on the northern line out of Chicago through the suburbs, straggling into the station after you've passed through the leafy, wealthy towns where Chicago athletes buy mansions and send their kids to school). But the ravine is also home in the novel to the serial killer, "The Lonely One." This figure, Bradbury says in his introduction, was real; Bradbury explains he "moved around my town at night" and was never caught. This is both true and not.

The Lonely One was, according to the Waukegan Historical Society, a cat burglar, not a serial killer. He broke into Waukegan stores and gas stations, helping himself to money from the tills and merchandise, and leaving notes for police signed "The Lonely One." This is thrillingly eerie: it's easy to see how it looms large in a mind like Bradbury's, who wrote from that nexus of creepiness and compassion. But the Lonely One was caught in 1928 and spent a year behind bars. Perhaps Bradbury never knew this. In any case, the Lonely One isn't really a representation of Waukegan's dark side, lurking in that shadowy ravine. That, I would have recognized, finally reading *Dandelion Wine* in my thirties, having put down roots in a town hours from where I grew up.

The Lonely One is no more specific than the specter of Death itself, the fear of loss that thrums just underneath our happiest moments, something most of us first realize in childhood, like Douglas and his brother in the novel. When Douglas' brother and mother fear that he's been lost in the ravine, his brother thinks, as they search in the

dark, “There were a million small towns like this all over the world ... Oh, the vast swelling loneliness of them. The secret damp ravines of them ... threatened by an ogre called Death.” But for Douglas, Bradbury’s alter ego, that threat snaps like a soap bubble, and Douglas comes running out of the dark, breathless and cheerful, having simply lost track of time playing with friends.

This is Bradbury all over, always reaching after Big Ideas, after archetypes and morals, using Green Town as a ladder to climb to the bigger truths written across the entire world, and even beyond. But did he do this at the expense of the real struggles of the place he came from? It’s not that I expect the Waukegan of 1928 to look like the Waukegan of 1988 when I sat on my grandmother’s brown carpet and watched Saturday Night Horrors.

But I also know that the seeds of what Waukegan would become would have been obvious in 1928, just eight years after, to give one example, a well-publicized incident when a white lynch mob from the nearby Great Lakes Naval Base terrorized a predominantly Black hotel on the city’s south side (where Bradbury grew up), after an alleged incident of Black teens throwing rocks at passing cars. And if Bradbury was unaware of Waukegan’s struggles in his youth, they would have certainly been clear in 1957 when Bradbury was writing *Dandelion Wine*, or in 1974, writing the intro to a new edition.

Perhaps it’s that the political climate of the past four years has reminded us to be wary of nostalgia, with the ways it’s been politicized and coded, though of course, that’s nothing new. (Bradbury himself claimed to hate politics and government, though in the years before he died he expressed admiration for conservative politicians like George W. Bush and Ronald Reagan). Bradbury’s anachronism, on the page and in real life, could seem charming or curmudgeonly. The refusal to use computers or the internet, for example, and his advice that writers “should do very little reading in [their] own field” suggest someone who prefers to live in a world like the one depicted in the opening credits of *Ray Bradbury Theater*: full of sentimental personal objects and blocking out any beams of light from the outside.

The last time I attended the Dandelion Wine festival, I walked around to the different artist booths, talking to the weaver and the watercolorists displaying their work. Park district employees were grilling hot dogs. A drum circle sent its off-kilter rhythms off into the trees while a boy I knew from high school joined them, playing a didgeridoo. I said the only thing there was to say, “Great festival! Nice turnout!” And it wasn’t untrue. The festival is a nice thing, run by lovely people in a tough town.

But I know by now another truth about Waukegan: we often seem unable to face our own dark places. In 2016, when actress America Ferrera visited as part of the *National Geographic* series “Years of Living Dangerously” to document the city’s active coal plant and the environmental toll the city’s industries have taken on its primarily Black and brown citizens, the one small article that ran in the local paper is gently defensive, the journalist noting glumly that the outdoor shots were done on a “particularly bleak day.”

When you grow up in Waukegan, even if you never read a word he’s written, you’ll contend with Ray Bradbury somehow, running through the park that bears his name or driving past the mural from which his face smiles down, overlooking one of the city’s most crime-ridden streets. But especially when it comes to those who have held power there, part of me can’t help but wonder if Bradbury’s rosy view of Waukegan plays any role in the city’s blinkered sense of itself. Would we be more willing to address the ways we’ve failed the people there if Bradbury had held up a mirror to us instead of shot us in soft focus like a Hollywood film? I know that some of what I feel is just a keen difference between Bradbury and me as people, as writers, a difference of taste and of temperament. I’m not much given to sentiment or romance—or nostalgia. But if I’m unsentimental, it’s because Waukegan, my Waukegan, raised me to be. There is too much truth there.

This essay was originally published on lithub.com on April 21, 2020. Reprinted with permission of the author.

<https://lithub.com/growing-up-with-ray-bradburys-ghost-in-waukegan-illinois/>



Ray Bradbury Experience Museum

IL, and beyond. Always inspired by his Waukegan boyhood, Ray Bradbury immortalized the city as “Green Town.” He developed his creative vision and wrote more than 500 books, stories, and screenplays, including his groundbreaking works *Fahrenheit 451*, *Dandelion Wine*, *The Martian Chronicles*, “A Sound of Thunder,” and “The Veldt.”

raybradburyexperiencemuseum.org

Through its programs and exhibits, RBEM celebrates and champions his legacy to ensure that the celebrated writer will “Live Forever” in his childhood hometown, Waukegan,



Ray Bradbury Bibliography

Novels and Story Collections

- Dark Carnival* (1947)
- The Martian Chronicles* (1950)
- The Silver Locusts* (1950)
- The Illustrated Man* (1951)
- Fahrenheit 451* (1953)
- The Golden Apples of the Sun* (1953)
- Switch on the Night* (1955)
- The October Country* (1955)
- Dandelion Wine* (1957)
- A Medicine for Melancholy* (1959)
- The Day It Rained Forever* (1959)
- R Is for Rocket* (1962)
- Something Wicked This Way Comes* (1962)
- The Small Assassin* (1962)
- The Machineries of Joy* (1964)
- The Vintage Bradbury* (1965)
- S Is for Space* (1966)
- Twice 22* (1966)
- I Sing the Body Electric!* (1969)
- Six Masterpieces of Tomorrow* (1969)
- The Halloween Tree* (1972)
- Ray Bradbury* (1975)
- Long After Midnight* (1976)
- The Best of Bradbury* (1976)
- The Best of Ray Bradbury* (1977)
- The Mummies of Guanajuato* (1978)
- To Sing Strange Songs* (1979)
- The Stories of Ray Bradbury* (1980)
- Dinosaur Tales* (1983)
- A Memory of Murder* (1984)
- Death is a Lonely Business* (1985)
- Ray Bradbury* (1987)
- The Toynbee Convector* (1988)
- A Graveyard for Lunatics* (1990)
- Classic Stories 1* (1990)
- Classic Stories 2* (1990)
- Green Shadows, White Whale* (1992)
- Quicker Than the Eye* (1996)
- Driving Blind* (1997)
- The Golden Apples of the Sun and Other Stories* (1997)
- A Medicine for Melancholy and Other Stories* (1998)
- Ahmed and the Oblivion Machines* (1998)
- I Sing the Body Electric! and Other Stories* (1998)
- From the Dust Returned* (2001)
- Let's All Kill Constance* (2002)
- One More for the Road* (2002)
- Bradbury Stories* (2003)

Poetry

- When Elephants Last in the Dooryard Bloomed* (1973)
Where Robot Mice and Robot Men Run Round in Robot Towns (1977)
This Attic Where the Meadows Green (1979)
The Haunted Computer and the Android Pope (1981)
The Complete Poems of Ray Bradbury (1982)
Death Has Lost Its Charm For Me (1987)
They Have Not Seen the Stars (2001)
I Live by the Invisible (2002)

Stage

- The Anthem Sprinters and Other Antics* (1963)
The Day It Rained Forever—A Comedy in One Act (1966)
The Pedestrian—A Fantasy in One Act (1966)
The Wonderful Ice Cream Suit and Other Plays (1972)
Pillar of Fire and Other Plays (1975)
The Martian Chronicles (1986)
The Flying Machine (1986)
The Wonderful Ice Cream Suit (1986)
Kaleidoscope (1986)
A Device Out of Time (1986)
Fahrenheit 451 (1986)
Dandelion Wine (1988)
To the Chicago Abyss (1988)
The Veldt (1988)
Falling Upward (1989)
The Day It Rained Forever (1990)
Ray Bradbury on Stage (1991)

Radio

- Forever and the Earth* (1984)

Ray Bradbury Awards and Recognitions

1977: World Fantasy Award for Life Achievement

1979: Honorary Doctor of Letters (Litt.D.) degree from Whittier College

1984: Prometheus Award for *Fahrenheit 451*

1989: Bram Stoker Award for Lifetime Achievement in horror fiction from Horror Writers Association

1989: Named Grand Master by Science Fiction Writers of America

1994: Peggy V. Helmerich Distinguished Author Award, presented annually by the Tulsa Library Trust

1994: Emmy Award for the screenplay *The Halloween Tree*

1999: Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame induction

2000: Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters from the National Book Foundation

2002: Star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for contributions to the Hollywood film industry

2003: Honorary doctorate from Woodbury University, where he presented the Ray Bradbury Creativity Award each year until his death

2004: National Medal of Arts, presented by President George W. Bush and Laura Bush

2004: Retro Hugo Award (1954) for Best Novel (*Fahrenheit 451*)

2005: Awarded Doctor of Laws degree (honoris causa) by the National University of Ireland, Galway

2007: Sir Arthur Clarke Award's Special Award, given by Clarke to a recipient of his choice.

2007: Special citation from Pulitzer Prize jury "for his distinguished, prolific, and deeply influential career as an unmatched author of science fiction and fantasy"

2007: Named Commandeur of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government

2008: Named Science Fiction and Poetry Association Grandmaster

2008: Inaugural J. Lloyd Eaton Lifetime Achievement Award in Science Fiction

2008: Illinois Literary Heritage Award presented by the Illinois Center for the Book.

2009: Honorary doctorate from Columbia College Chicago

Ethel L. Payne

(August 14, 1911 - May 29, 1991)

Forgotten Heroine, Ethel Payne: Pioneer of the Black Press

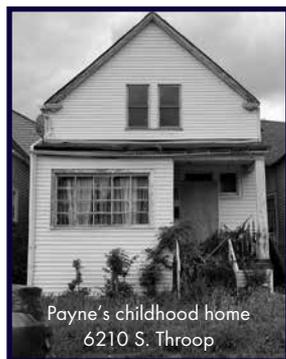
by Tammy Gibson



Ethel L. Payne had a front seat to history. Known as the First Lady of the Black Press, Payne's career as a ground-breaking journalist and civil rights activist paved the way for future black journalists. With all of Payne's accomplishments, contributions, and breaking of racial barriers in journalism, she is an unsung hero who has been largely forgotten.

Twenty miles south from Payne's childhood home in the Englewood neighborhood, she is buried in an unmarked grave at Mt. Glenwood Memory Gardens South. Payne cared for her community and touched the lives of many people that led to lifelong friendships. Marianne Jordan, a Hazel Crest resident, met Ethel Payne at the First International Women's Year Conference in 1975 in Mexico City. Jordan was an Illinois delegate and remembered her first encounter with Payne, who was covering the conference. "I sat next to Ethel Payne at the conference. She was always warm and special. Ethel loved talking to people. I was overwhelmed because she was there, and I was sitting next to her, having a conversation. I loved Ethel. She was a special person, and I miss her dearly," says Jordan.

Ethel Lois Payne was born on August 14, 1911, on Chicago's South Side. Her father was a Pullman porter, and her mother was a stay-at-home mom. Growing up, Payne was an avid reader. Her favorite writer was Paul Laurence Dunbar. Payne attended Lindblom Technical High School in Englewood. She learned to write from her English teacher, who had also taught Ernest Hemingway. After graduating from high school, Payne had ambitions to be a civil rights lawyer. She applied at the University of Chicago Law School but was denied due to her race. Payne had a short-lived career working for the Chicago Public Library as a senior library assistant.



Payne's childhood home
6210 S. Throop

Photo by Tammy Gibson

Payne became active in civil rights. She joined the NAACP Chicago Chapter and worked with Asa Philip Randolph's March on Washington in 1941. In 1948, Payne left for Japan to work as a hostess for the Army Special Services Club. Her role was coordinating entertainment

and recreation for black troops stationed in Japan. Payne kept a diary, writing of her experience in Japan. She wrote about racism in the military. President Truman issued an Executive Order to desegregate military quarters and clubs, which General MacArthur ignored. Payne also wrote about babies who were left abandoned because their parents were black soldiers and Japanese women.

In Tokyo, Payne met L. Alex Wilson, a reporter for the *Chicago Defender*. Wilson, a World War II veteran, was assigned to cover the black soldiers in the Korean War. Payne shared her diary with Wilson. After reading a few of Payne's excerpts, Wilson was impressed with her detailed accounts and desire for writing. So, with Payne's permission, Wilson took her notes to the *Chicago Defender*, one of the major black newspapers, founded by Robert Sengstacke Abbott.

The *Chicago Defender* published excerpts from Payne's diary. The front-page article received backlash from the military in Japan. Payne described the mistreatment of the black troops and their relationships with Japanese women. Impressed with Payne's writing skills, the *Chicago Defender* hired her in 1951. During Payne's 27-year career with the *Chicago Defender*, she was at the forefront of several historic events. Payne covered *Brown v. Board of Education*, Little Rock Nine desegregation, March on Washington, desegregation at the University of Alabama, and the murder of Emmett Till.

Payne became a Washington correspondent for the *Chicago Defender*. Along with Alice Dunnigan, Payne was one of the first two black women to hold White House press passes. Payne asked the tough questions about segregation and racism that many reporters ignored. At her first White House press conference, Payne questioned President Dwight D. Eisenhower why the police banned Howard University from a Washington Coliseum dinner. President Eisenhower said the

"If you have lived through the black experience in this country, you feel that every day you're assaulted by the system. You either go along with the system, which I think is wrong, or else you just rebel, and you kick against it."





incident was a misunderstanding. Five months later, Payne angered President Eisenhower by asking if he supported desegregating interstate travels.

Payne was in attendance when President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. President Johnson recognized Payne with two presidential pens for her civil rights activism. Payne's career covering racial injustices took her to countries abroad. She was the first black reporter to cover the Vietnam War and visited China after President Nixon's

trip in 1972. From 1972 to 1982, Payne became the first black woman hired as a radio and television commentator for CBS's "Spectrum" and "Matters of Opinion."

After 25 years with the *Chicago Defender*, Payne served as a professor in the School of Journalism at Fisk University for one year. Payne advocated the importance and viability of the black press. "I stick to my firm, unshakeable belief that the black press is an advocacy press," she once said, "and that I, as a part of that press, can't afford the luxury of being unbiased ... when it comes to issues that really affect my people, and I plead guilty because I think that I am an instrument of change."

Payne was inducted into the District of Columbia Women's Hall of Fame and won several awards from the Chicago Council on Foreign Affairs, the National Association of Black Journalists and more. Ethel Payne passed away on May 29, 1991, at age 79. In her memory, Payne was honored for her journalism career. In 2015, Lindblom Math and Science Academy dedicated an innovative classroom to honor Payne. In addition, the National Association of Black Journalists created the Ethel Payne Fellowship that annually awards \$5,000 to a worthy journalist.

In 2002, Payne was one of four journalists honored with a US postage stamp. Her life and career are chronicled in three books including *The Power of Her Pen: The Story of Groundbreaking Journalist Ethel L. Payne*, *Pioneering Journalist Ethel Payne*, and *Eye on the Struggle: Ethel Payne, the First Lady of the Black Press*. Ethel Payne was a fearless journalist and dedicated her life to raising awareness of racial injustices despite obstacles stacked against her. Payne was the voice of the people and deserves a prominent place in history.

This article originally appeared in the Oct. 8, 2021 edition of the *Chicago Defender*

Ethel Payne Bibliography

Chicago Defender correspondent, 1951 - 1978

CBS "Spectrum" commentator, 1972 - 1978

WBBM "Matters of Opinion" commentator, 1978 - 1982

A Profile on Black Colleges: Roots, Rewards, Renewal (1980)

Chicago Defender selected feature writing:

"Japanese Girls Playing GIs for Suckers, 'Chocolate Joe' Used, Amused, Confused"
(Occupied Japan)

"The South at the Crossroads" (Civil Rights Movement)

Ethel Payne Awards and Recognitions

1954: Newsman's Newsman Award

1956: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, World Understanding Award

1967: Newsman's Newsman Award

1972: Fisk University, Ida B. Wells Distinguished Journalism Chair (first recipient)

1973: Delta Sigma Theta sorority, honorary member

1980: National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Club,
named "Woman of Action" for achievement in journalism

1982: Johnson Publishing Company, Gertrude Johnson-Williams Award

1982: National Association of Black Journalists, Lifetime Achievement Award

1988: National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Candace Award

1990: Hampton University, Kappa Tau Alpha Award

"I stick to my firm, unshakeable belief that the black press is an advocacy press, and that I, as a part of that press, can't afford the luxury of being unbiased . . . when it come to issues that really affect my people, and I plead guilty, because I think that I am an instrument of change."



Carol Shields

(June 2, 1935 - July 16, 2003)

Carol Shields was born in Oak Park, Illinois, in 1935, and grew up in a house at 700 S. Kenilworth Avenue. “I attended Nathaniel Hawthorne School and Ralph Waldo Emerson School,” Shields said in a May 23, 1988 interview with the Academy of Achievement. “I knew the schools were named after writers — both were male writers, both were dead. I wondered if there were any female writers, live female writers. Perhaps it was then that I started to question the dominance of males in our lives.”



Shields was the youngest of three children. Her mother worked as a school teacher, her father in a downtown office. In that same interview, Shields said she wrote as a child, but didn’t imagine that as her calling. “I felt like wanting to be a movie star,” she said.

During those childhood and adolescent years in Oak Park, Shields did write. “I did the class poem and the class play,” she said. “There’s always one of those girls. Worked on the literary magazine.”

But more so she read.

She has chronicled her intense relationship with the Oak Park Public Library, writing, “All the Saturdays of my childhood were spent at story hours, and I remember one terrible, cold and stormy Saturday when only four or five of us turned up. Instead of going down to the library basement where there was a tiny theatre, we sat around one of the little tables. I looked into the eyes of those other children at the table, ardor clearly stamped on their faces, with fanaticism too. We were different. Other children loved these Saturday mornings, too, but we, for some reason, needed it.”



Shields commenced with Oak Park-River Forest High School’s Class of 1953, 36 years after Ernest

Hemingway had graduated from the same school. Her graduating class, more than 700 students, was all white, a reflection of the conservative and parochial values, as well as the relative affluence, that characterized her hometown during those years. It was, according to Shields, this vague itch to experience a broader world that led her to seek out stories from an early age, and also, like Hemingway before her, to leave.

She obtained an undergraduate degree in English, with a minor in history, at Hanover College in Hanover, Indiana. Then she moved to Canada in 1957 after marrying a Canadian, Donald Shields, in her childhood home. Shields stopped writing early in her marriage, but Donald encouraged her to revive her pursuit after the birth of their second child. Even as she cared for young children, Shields attended a writing course at the University of Toronto, where she wrote short stories and poems, including those collected in *Others* (1972) and *Intersect* (1974). At the University of Ottawa, where Shields pursued an MA in Canadian Literature starting in 1969, she completed a thesis on Susanna Moodie that would be the basis for her first novel, *Small Ceremonies*. That novel, published in 1976, focused on biographer Judith Gill, who desires to write fiction. At 40 years old, the devoted mother of five children had herself launched a literary career in earnest; she also established her gift for making the ordinary into the riveting.

Another novel, *The Box Garden*, came out a year later, and then her third novel, *Happenstance*, followed in 1980. Shields wrote steadily -- novels, plays, poetry, essays, criticism, short fiction and biography, receiving numerous recognitions and awards, including the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.

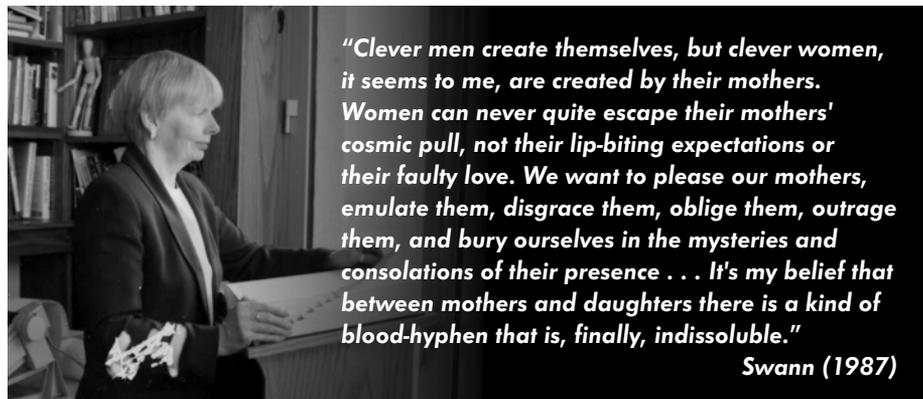
“Carol Shields wanted to write away the invisibility of women’s lives,” said Susan Swan, author and co-founder of the Carol Shields Prize for Fiction. “So she wrote beautifully crafted fiction, plays, poetry, essays and biography about women. She also edited anthologies like *Dropped Threads* which featured essays by women from all walks of life talking about things they wished they’d been told.”

High praise from authors such as Alice Munro and Margaret Atwood accompanied Shields’ publications, even early on. Her reputation grew to more of an international status after the publication of her novel, *Mary Swann* (1987). Even as Shields became firmly ensconced as one of the most important literary figures of her generation, she was frequently called a Canadian writer. But her work often crossed those boundaries. Unlike Hemingway, whose body of published work included just one obvious Chicago setting, Shields used her hometown and the larger city on its border

in several novels, namely *Mary Swann*, *Larry's Party*, and the unfinished *Segue*. The short story "Dolls, Dolls, Dolls," recalled the murder of a ten-year-old girl in Chicago and was, according to Shields, her only autobiographical piece of writing. In 1995, Shields received the Tradition of Excellence Award in Literature from her alma mater, Oak Park-River Forest High School.

In addition to her career as an author, Carol Shields worked as an academic editor; taught at the University of Ottawa (where she earned a Master of Arts degree), the University of British Columbia, and the University of Manitoba; and served as Chancellor of the University of Winnipeg. She received fifteen honorary degrees.

"There are so many qualities to value and appreciate in Carol Shields' work that many different prize juries have honored it and book-length critical evaluations have been written about it," said Anne Collins, Carol's publisher and editor in Canada. "Her sentences are so fine they still feel freshly minted. But what makes me put her in the category of novelists whose work will reward readers even hundreds of years from now is something only the greatest of writers are able to do. Her fiction not only has the power to move a reader immediately—to make you feel every nuance of every bind her characters find themselves in, every joy, every sorrow—but also to give you just that little necessary distance, somehow, a vantage point that launches you into larger reflection on how we humans live. Our vanities, the ephemerality of our lives—how fleeting, and therefore precious, our time is. Carol had a wicked eye for human foibles, and the stories we tell ourselves, and for what happens when life strips those stories away, but also such generosity. I felt this all again, and keenly, as I was recently rereading the published fragment of her last, unfinished novel, *Segue*, set in her birthplace of Chicago, a place that was clearly much on her mind as she approached the end of her own life. Even in twenty short



pages, her characters are fully fleshed, setting off cascades of speculation and empathy in the reader—exactly what we look for in fiction, and what only a novelist with Carol’s gifts can bring us.”

“I guess I am interested in the unrecorded voice. The voice that doesn’t make the public record is much more interesting to me than the one that does.”



The Carol Shields Prize for Fiction—co-founded by Swan, editor Janice Zawerbny, and arts activist Don Oravec—was announced in 2020. The new English-language literary award celebrates creativity and excellence in fiction by women writers in the United States and Canada. The inaugural Prize will be awarded on May 4, 2023. Four finalists will each receive \$12,500 US, with the winning author to be awarded the sizable \$150,000 US purse. The Prize is managed by the Carol Shields Prize Foundation, which encourages participation of women in the literary arts. The Foundation provides scholarships, bursaries, and other forms of financial assistance to women writers to support the production of high-quality literary works.

“In her writing and her life [Carol Shields] stands for the mission of our prize: to support and honor the voices of women writers,” said Swan. “As soon as we named the prize after her, the pushback we’d been experiencing stopped. No one would say a word against her. She was a beloved author and activist widely admired for her writing.”

Anne Giardini, author and daughter of Shields, contributed to this profile



This new, English-language literary award celebrates creativity and excellence in fiction by women writers in the United States and Canada.

The Long Journey Home for Carol Shields

By Julia Keller

This article originally appeared in the April 5, 2003 edition of the *Chicago Tribune*. It has been reprinted with the permission of the author.

The weather's in a tricky mood these first few days of April. From inside, the sun appears warm, almost sensuously so, but if you leave the house and linger too long, look out. There's a distinct, vaguely menacing chill. The wind can't keep its fingers out of your hair.

Still, Carol Shields wants to see Chicago, the great geographical grab bag of it, the city and its ever-spreading nimbus, from Old Town to Oak Park to Andersonville to Winnetka. As much as she can pack into four days, with dwindling stores of energy.

It is research for her 11th book -- a book she never thought she'd live to write -- and it is something else as well: a quiet and reflective homecoming for the Pulitzer Prize-winning author who, at 67, is dying of breast cancer.

"Things do come back to me," Shields says of the Chicago area, which has lived vividly in her memory since she left in 1957, with occasional trips back to visit friends and family members. She hears a certain sound -- the clack and roar of an "L" train, for instance, shouldering its way through the city as if it owned the place -- or sees a particular image and it all comes back, all of it, the private library of memories that furnishes her mind.



And Shields returns the favor, putting Chicago in her fiction. Several of her major characters -- Larry in *Larry's Party* (1997), Sarah Maloney in *Swann* (1987) -- call the area home, while others talk about it or visit it or dream about it. Shields has lived in Canada for more than four decades, but Chicago lingers at the periphery of her work like an ink smudge in the margin.

That work, you realize, resembles this early April weather. On the surface, it's all polished warmth, the depictions of domestic life cozy and soothing. Dig past that serene exterior, though, and you're into rougher, darker, colder territory: a land of thwarted lives, muted desperation and the recognition that love, in the end, changes nothing and saves no one.



And you realize, if you hadn't already, that Shields -- a shy-seeming, self-effacing woman, petite and polite -- is also a fierce realist, able to look into the abyss of life's deeper mysteries with a clear, unblinking gaze.

Consider the moment in *The Stone Diaries* (1993), which won the Pulitzer Prize and brought Shields international fame, when 80-year-old Daisy Flett is stricken with illness: "Suddenly her body is all that matters. How it's let her down. And how fundamentally lonely it is to live inside a body year after year and carry it always in a forward direction, and how there is never any relief from the weight of it, even when sleeping, even when joined, briefly, to the body of another."

In 1998, just before Christmas, Shields was diagnosed with advanced breast cancer. The usual arsenal was deployed: mastectomy, chemotherapy, radiation. But the cancer has been relentless, and Shields and her family -- husband Don, a retired civil engineer and university administrator, five children and 10 grandchildren -- have come to terms with her imminent death.

"I've stopped writing several times, through some of the worst phases" of cancer treatment, Shields says. "But I always start again. It's a kind of consolation. And there's something about wanting to go home to write that final book."

Co-existing peacefully

And come home she has, to test her memories against the city's realities. Shields and her husband hoped to be able to cover a lot of ground, seeing Chicago from pavement level, but her frail health intervenes; the touring has been in a car, with frequent breaks. Shields doesn't complain, but her fatigue is obvious: There is a flat

pallor to her skin, a hint of distance in her eyes. She sometimes looks away before replying to a question, as if gathering the strength to speak. Her voice is steady, but possesses the gossamer quality of tissue paper.

Shields is sitting on a dark sofa in the parlor of the Old Town Chicago Bed & Breakfast Inn, a spacious, comfortable room that backs up against the Brown Line tracks. The noise of the frequent trains -- here one comes again -- would, you might think, easily drown out the author's soft, non-insistent voice. Oddly, though, it does not; the small woman and the big train manage to co-exist peacefully. It's almost as if the train, too, wants to lean in and give a listen.

"I feel when I write as if I'm doing the only thing I can do, with this illness," Shields says. Asked if cancer has changed her writing, she quickly replies, "Oh, yes." She adds, "I tend to be very optimistic. That optimism got blown away when I became ill."

Until the blindsided blow of her diagnosis, Shields admits, she had little to be pessimistic about. She was born in Oak Park and lived in a big house on Kenilworth Avenue, the third child of Robert and Inez Warner, he the manager of a candy company, she a 4th-grade teacher.

"It was an absolutely wonderful place to have grown up," she says. She put a White Sox sticker on her chest of drawers, wrote for the Crest, at that time the name of the literary magazine of Oak Park and River Forest High School, and dreamed of becoming a writer. "I got this reputation as the 'literary kid.' I was encouraged [to be a writer] by my parents and my teachers. I think writers must live in a place where writing is honored."



And when she brought home her first serious boyfriend, a lanky, long-haired Canadian whom she had met while both were college students studying in England, her mother had a single request for him, Shields recalls. "She said she hoped he would encourage my writing. He said, 'Her what?'"

Shields had never told him about her literary aspirations. But that was typical of the day, she says; women put their own dreams away in a cupboard, like carefully folded linen, and focused instead on their husbands and children -- which is why Shields' first novel was not published until she was 40.

Best-seller ranks

After that, though, the work tumbled out: novels, short stories, plays, poetry, a biography of Jane Austen. Always cherished by critics, she made the leap into the best-seller ranks with *The Stone Diaries* -- a work whose vast success made her feel “as if it was all happening to someone else,” Shields recalls with a tiny, bemused smile. “It brought me lots of mail, lots of invitations.” When a story about her appeared in *People* magazine, she heard from dozens of Oak Park friends. “It was rather thrilling,” she admits.

On her visit to Chicago last week, Shields and her husband drove past what had been the Warner family home on Kenilworth Avenue. “It was white in our day. Today, they’ve called in the color consultants,” she says. “It’s taupe with slashes of fuchsia and deep blue.” She is tempted to knock on the door and ask the present occupants if she might go inside and look around, but never works up the nerve.

“I love to read about Chicago. I read Saul Bellow’s biography and I loved the Chicago bits -- but it did seem to me that his life had much more freedom than mine had, going everywhere with his mates,” Shields muses. “I was huddling in Oak Park with my girlfriends.”

There it is again, then, the gentle but ever-present reminder that women’s lives are different from men’s lives, more pinched, narrower. Shields’ novels are filled with the same sort of quiet, insistent feminism. In *The Stone Diaries*, she writes, “Men, it seemed to me in those days, were uniquely honored by the stories that erupted in their lives, whereas women were more likely to be smothered by theirs. Why? Why should this be? Why should men be allowed to strut under the privilege of their life adventures, wearing them like a breastful of medals, while women went all gray and silent beneath the weight of theirs?”

Make no mistake: Shields is not complaining. She has had a splendid life, she will tell you, raising a family with her husband, a handsome, courtly man with a twinkle in his eye and a way with a wisecrack. They have lived in various Canadian cities -- Vancouver, Toronto, Winnipeg -- as his career progressed. Two years ago, they settled into a rambling house in Victoria, British Columbia, where they will await the end of Shields’ life.

First, though, there will be another novel. She assumed *Unless* (2002) -- a critically acclaimed story about a woman whose daughter drops out of college to beg on the streets -- would be her last, and told people so. Yet an unexpected burst of energy

after her final chemotherapy treatment has enabled her to undertake *Segue*, the working title for her novel about a woman in her 60s who lives in Andersonville and writes sonnets.

Most writing about the old is done by the young, Shields says. “We don’t hear it expressed by the people who are there. They [older people] want to write about other things -- as if to prove that there’s living tissue up there,” she says, pointing to her head with a rueful smile.

The next day, Shields and her husband are driven to Winnetka, where she addresses a crowd of about 50 people at The Book Stall, a local bookstore. In attendance are several friends from her Oak Park childhood -- friends with whom she’s kept in touch for more than half a century, Shields tells the delighted audience.

“I should tell you that I’m a Chicago girl,” she declares, explaining that she is in the area as a “tourist” for several days, to gather material for a forthcoming work. Then she reads from *Unless*, which will be published in paperback early next month. Her work is splendid when read aloud -- the language clear and unadorned, the imagery fresh. With every paragraph, Shields proves what she says about her education in Oak Park public schools: “I learned how to write a sentence.” That sounds like damning with faint praise, but it is not; literature is built with sentences, and Shields’ are among the best around.

Clive Priddle, publicity director for her publisher, Fourth Estate, makes the same point. “We admire the quality of her phrases,” says Priddle, a slender Englishman with dark spectacles and a dapper gray vest, who flew from New York to attend the Winnetka event.

Savoring the small things

By week’s end Shields will have left Chicago once more; most likely, she knows, she will have left it for the last time. She has become accustomed to doing things for the last time, which is both sad and happy: sad for the obvious reasons, happy because it makes one savor the small things.

She returns to Victoria, where she will continue to write a bit each day, when she has the energy and the inclination, because she is a writer -- not, apparently, because she has any faith in the endurance of art. “I don’t think literary reputations live on,” she told an interviewer last year. “Books fall out of the public eye. So I don’t have a sense of leaving anything permanent. Naturally I like to write books that people enjoy reading, but the literary legacy, no, it’s very unimportant to me.”

Whether important to her or not, the legacy exists, and it is impressive. Shields has won major prizes in Canada, the United States and around the world, from the Pulitzer to the National Book Critics Circle. She has bagged honorary degrees. Her style of writing -- the careful, well-crafted sentences about seemingly ordinary things that, upon reflection, prove to be far more extraordinary than flashy, shattering events rendered in melodramatic prose -- is more in favor today than ever. The world has come round to Shields' way of writing, just as Shields prepares to leave the world.

Roberta Rubin, owner of The Book Stall for 21 years, says Shields' work creates an unusual bond of intimacy with readers. "She has a position in peoples' hearts. So many readers, for instance, knew she was ill. The good readers, the serious readers, know about her."

Men and women alike appreciate her work, Rubin says. "She writes about feminism, yes, but I don't classify her as a 'woman's read.' In fact, I'm sending *Unless* to a male friend who's looking for something to read."

Rubin says readers are drawn to Shields' "optimism and wisdom, and her straight, simple prose. She's a name, very respected." Her work entertains as well as illuminates, Rubin believes, a point on which many critics insist. *Time* magazine recently noted that Shields "swings easily from comedy to tragedy and back again." A critic for the *London Observer* says her "large and varied fan base" looks forward to the fact that in her fiction, "humankind seems to be revealed in all its mundane, wonderful glory."

What matters to her now, it seems, is what has always mattered to her: family and work. She is lovingly tended to by her husband, who remembers precisely the first moment he saw her. A group of students was vacationing in Scotland at a small country inn. "There was a fire burning with huge logs," Don Shields recalls, "and this beautiful young woman walked in, wearing a green woolen dress."

Of their life together, of the long and eventful years, he might say, as Shields says on behalf of a character in *The Stone Diaries*: "His body at the end of the afternoon is pleasantly tired, but he cherishes each minor ache of bone and muscle, knowing that his day, even an ordinary Monday like today, will be rounded by rapture."

Carol Shields Bibliography

Novels

Small Ceremonies (1976)

The Box Garden (1977)

Happenstance (1980)

A Fairly Conventional Woman (1982)

Mary Swann (1987, aka *Swann: A Mystery*)

A Celibate Season (1991, with Blanche Howard)

The Republic of Love (1992)

The Stone Diaries (1993)

Larry's Party (1997)

Unless (2002)

Duet (2003)

Collections

Others (1972, poems)

Intersect (1974, poems)

Various Miracles (1985, short stories)

The Orange Fish (1989, short stories)

Coming to Canada (1992, poems)

Dressing up for the Carnival (2000, short stories)

The Collected Stories (2004, short stories)



*"Well, a childhood is what anyone wants to remember of it.
It leaves behind no fossils, except perhaps in fiction."
The Stone Diaries (1993)*

Plays

Women Waiting (1983)

Departures & Arrivals (1988)

Fashion, Power, Guilt and the Charity of Families (1993, with Catherine Shields)

Thirteen Hands (1997)

Anniversary: A Comedy (1998, with Dave Williamson)

Larry's Party - the Musical

(adapted by Richard Ouzounian with music by Marek Norman) (2001)

Thirteen Hands and Other Plays (2002)

Non Fiction

Susanna Moodie: Voice and Vision (1977)

Jane Austen: A Life (2001)

A Memoir of Friendship: The Letters Between Carol Shields and Blanche Howard (2007)

The Staircase Letters (2007, with Elma Gerwin and Arthur Motyer)

Anthologies

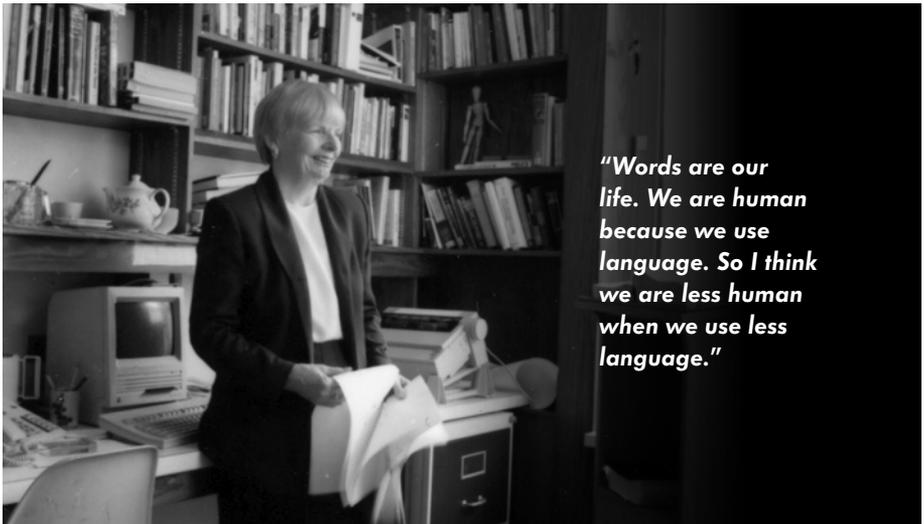
Dropped Threads: What We Aren't Told (edited with Marjorie Anderson) (2001)

Dropped Threads 2: More of What We Aren't Told

(edited with Marjorie Anderson) (2003)

Essays

Startle and Illuminate: Carol Shields on Writing (2016)



"Words are our life. We are human because we use language. So I think we are less human when we use less language."

Carol Shields Awards and Recognitions

1977: Canadian Authors' Association Award for the Best Novel of 1976 (*Small Ceremonies*)

1988: Arthur Ellis Award for Best Canadian Mystery (*Swann: A Mystery*)

1990: Marian Engel Award for entire body of work

1993: Governor General's Award (*The Stone Diaries*)

1994: National Book Critics Circle Award (*The Stone Diaries*)

1995: Pulitzer Prize (*The Stone Diaries*)

1998: Orange Prize (*Larry's Party*)

1998: Officer of the Order of Canada

1998: Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada

1999: Guggenheim Fellowship for Creative Arts, US & Canada

2000: Chevalier dans l'ordres des Arts et des Lettres

2001: Order of Manitoba

2001: Winnipeg Citizen of the Year

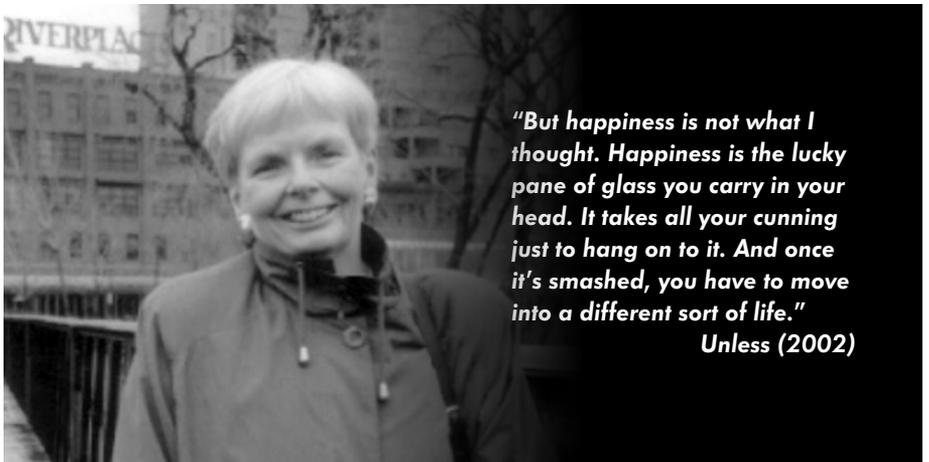
2001: MacLean's Magazine's Acclaimed Persons of the Year

2002: Companion of the Order of Canada

2002: Charles Taylor Prize for Literary Non-Fiction (*Jane Austen*)

2002: Queen Elizabeth Golden Jubilee Medal

2003: Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize (*Unless*)



THE CHICAGO LITERARY HALL OF FAME

Robert Sengstacke Abbott (2017)

Jane Addams (2012)

Nelson Algren (2010)

Margaret Anderson (2014)

Sherwood Anderson (2012)

Rane Arroyo (2015)

Margaret Ayer Barnes (2016)

L. Frank Baum (2013)

Saul Bellow (2010)

Marita Bonner (2017)

Ray Bradbury (2021)

Gwendolyn Brooks (2010)

Frank London Brown (2019)

Margaret T. Burroughs (2015)

Fanny Butcher (2016)

Cyrus Colter (2011)

Carlos A. Cortéz (2019)

Frank Marshall Davis (2018)

Floyd Dell (2015)

Theodore Dreiser (2011)

Roger Ebert (2016)

James T. Farrell (2012)

Edna Ferber (2013)

Eugene Field (2016)

Leon Forrest (2013)

Jeannette Howard Foster (2019)

Henry Blake Fuller (2017)

Sam Greenlee (2018)

Lorraine Hansberry (2010)

Alice Judson Ryerson Hayes (2015)

Ben Hecht (2013)

Ernest Hemingway (2012)

David Hernandez (2014)

Langston Hughes (2012)

Fenton Johnson (2016)

John H. Johnson (2013)

Ring Lardner (2016)

Edgar Lee Masters (2014)

Harriet Monroe (2011)

Willard Motley (2014)

Lisel Mueller (2020)

Ethel L. Payne (2021)

Harry Mark Petrakis (2020)

Salima Rivera (2018)

Carolyn Rodgers (2012)

Mike Royko (2011)

Carl Sandburg (2011)

Carol Shields (2021)

Shel Silverstein (2014)

Upton Sinclair (2015)

Studs Terkel (2010)

Era Bell Thompson (2020)

Margaret Walker (2014)

Theodore Ward (2015)

Ida B. Wells (2011)

Thornton Wilder (2013)

Gene Wolfe (2019)

Richard Wright (2010)

SAVE THE DATE

END OF THE YEAR

Fundraiser

Celebrate the season while supporting an organization
that honors, preserves, and celebrates
Chicago's great literary heritage,
as well as helps to foster new voices.

Saturday, December 3, 2022

2pm - 4pm

Beat Kitchen

2100 W. Belmont Ave, Chicago

Leading up
to the event,
the CLHOF will open
an **ONLINE SILENT
AUCTION**

- Light appetizers
- Cash bar
- Chances to win prizes
- **LIVE AUCTION**
hosted by Billy Lombardo,
Nelson Algren Award Winner



More information and registration will be available soon
on the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame website.

chicagoliteraryhof.org

Direct donations can be made at chicagoliteraryhof.org/support