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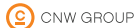
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MONDAY, MARCH 17, 2014 • TORONTO, ONTARIO: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WRITER, SCHOLAR, STORYTELLER AND FIRST NATIONS ACTIVIST **LEANNE SIMPSON** NAMED RECIPIENT OF INAUGURAL RBC TAYLOR EMERGING WRITER AWARD

L EANNE SIMPSON, A WRITER, SCHOLAR, STORYTELLER AND ACTIVIST for Indigenous Peoples has been named the recipient of the inaugural RBC TAYLOR EMERGING WRITER AWARD. Ms. Simpson was nominated for the Award by Thomas King whose book, *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America* won the 2014 RBC Taylor Prize. Established jointly by RBC and the Taylor Prize to promote emerging talent in non-fiction, the RBC Taylor Emerging Writer Award consists of a \$10,000 cash prize, as well as the opportunity to be mentored by the 2014 RBC Taylor Prize winner.

“For me, Leanne Simpson was an obvious choice,” said Thomas King. “She is a gifted writer who brings passion and commitment to her storytelling and who has demonstrated an uncommon ability to manage an impressive range of genres from traditional storytelling to critical analysis, from poetry to the spoken word, from literary and social activism to song-writing. She is, in my opinion, one of the more articulate and engaged voices of her generation.”

Leanne Simpson holds a Ph.D. from the University of Manitoba and is an instructor at the Centre for World Indigenous Knowledge, Athabasca University. She has published over thirty scholarly articles and authored five books that draw upon her extensive knowledge of Indigenous Peoples. She has also written articles for Canadian magazines and newspapers. In 2012 she won *Briarpatch Magazine's Writing from the Margins* competition for short fiction.

Ms. Simpson is a member of the Alderville First Nation (Rice Lake, Ontario). For the past 15 years, she has worked with Indigenous communities and organizations in Canada and internationally on environmental, governance and political issues. Her third book, *Dancing On Our Turtle's Back* (AK Press) stresses the importance of illuminating indigenous intellectual traditions in order to transfer that relationship to the Canadian state.

“Thomas King is a gifted writer, performer, story-teller and one of my biggest influences,” said Leanne. “His impact on my generation of Indigenous artists and writers is profound and I will be forever grateful to him for his brilliant body of work. His work lifts Indigenous peoples up, he makes us laugh out loud, and most importantly, he speaks our truths. With this award I can continue the work I started in *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back*, and along with many others, move towards creating a just relationship between Indigenous nations and Canada.”

“I am so pleased that Thomas King selected Leanne Simpson to be the first recipient of



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the RBC Emerging Writer Award,” said RBC Taylor Prize Foundation Chair, Noreen Taylor, “Mr. King has worked with Ms. Simpson in the past and has developed an evident regard for this talented individual. It is exciting to consider how this writer, with known strengths in other forms of storytelling, will find new creative strengths and develop new vehicles of communication as she ventures into the heady challenge of non-fiction writing.”

“RBC Wealth Management is proud to support the new Emerging Writer Award and the wonderful opportunity it provides aspiring Canadian authors,” Vijay Parmar, President, RBC PH&N Investment Counsel said. “Thomas couldn’t have selected a more deserving winner in Leanne Simpson. We believe this kind of artist-to-artist mentorship is simply invaluable, and key to cultivating Canada’s new generation of writers.”

THE RBC TAYLOR EMERGING WRITER AWARD was established to provide recognition and assistance to a Canadian published author who is working on a significant writing project, preferably but not limited to literary non-fiction. Through mentorship from the nominating author, and the cash award, it is intended that the writer will be able to progress toward the creation of a first draft.

THE TRUSTEES of the Charles Taylor Prize Foundation are Michael Bradley (Toronto), David Staines (Ottawa), and Noreen Taylor (Toronto). The Foundation gratefully acknowledges the support of RBC Wealth Management as its presenting sponsor; along with its major sponsor Metropia; and greatly appreciates the support of its media sponsors *The Globe and Mail*, *Maclean’s* magazine, CNW Group, *The Huffington Post Canada*; Global Television, *Quill & Quire* magazine, and CBC.ca; and in-kind sponsors Ben McNally Books, Event Source, IFOA and The Omni King Edward Hotel.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION please visit: www.thecharlestaylorprize.ca

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TO DOWNLOAD a high-resolution images of the recipient of the 2014 RBC Taylor Emerging Writer Award (photo credit: Aaron Masson), please go to:

www.thecharlestaylorprize.ca/2014/hr_images/leanne_simpson_photocredit_aaron_mason.tif