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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2018 • TORONTO, ONTARIO: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## NEW MENTORSHIP PROGRAM ANNOUNCED FOR EMERGING WRITERS

*RBC Foundation and the RBC Taylor Prize launch RBC Taylor Prize Emerging Writers Mentorship Program*

**T**ODAY, THE RBC FOUNDATION and the RBC Taylor Prize are launching the new RBC Taylor Prize Emerging Writers Mentorship Program, a professional development program designed to support the next generation of Canadian writers on their career journeys. The program will be part of the RBC Taylor Prize Emerging Writers Award, a distinction that is given annually to a Canadian author whose work embodies the pursuit of excellence in literary non-fiction.

The Mentorship program will be made available to five Canadian non-fiction writers, who are selected in partnership with a national network of university and college writing programs. These students will then be paired with RBC Taylor Prize shortlisted authors, who will help support their career development and growth.

Nadina Taylor, a trustee of the Charles Taylor Foundation, and daughter of the late Charles Taylor, is one of the main champions of the new program. “We’ve seen great successes with the RBC Taylor Prize Emerging Writers Award and realized that perhaps a more dedicated focus on how best to prepare these talented writers for the competitive world of writing and publishing could be effective. As we’ve seen in all professions, the impact and benefit of mentorship can be potent and mutually beneficial.”

THE FIVE STUDENTS SELECTED will be required to have an existing body of work and a non-fiction manuscript that is close to completion. As part of the program, they will attend several meetings with their mentor and participate in an intensive agenda of professional development seminars focusing on the business of writing and publishing in Canada.

Students and mentors will connect several times prior to the RBC Taylor Prize event. They will also have the unique opportunity to travel to Toronto for the weekend of the RBC Taylor Prize awards (February 22-26, 2018). While in Toronto, they will meet with their mentors and be part of several sessions on professional development with individuals from Canadian cultural industries. In addition, students will accompany their mentors to various events scheduled for the shortlisted authors, including the IFOA/TPL roundtable and various media engagements.

“At RBC Wealth Management, we recognize the value of mentorship and its importance to enhancing career development,” said Vijay Parmar, President of RBC PH&N Investment Counsel. “This award is an important part of RBC’s larger commitment to bridging the gap between emerging and established artists – which will no doubt help the next generation of writers.”



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AT A GALA LUNCHEON on February 26, 2018, the members of the inaugural RBC Taylor Prize Emerging Writers Mentorship Program will be introduced, and then the winner of this year's RBC Taylor Prize will be announced.

#### 2018 RBC TAYLOR PRIZE EMERGING WRITERS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The five participants in this year's Mentorship Program are:

##### CHRISTOPHER BROWN — UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Born and raised on the Prairies, Brown is pursuing his PhD in English Literature. His intimate family history, linked to the Canadian North, has led to an interest in the spectre of the Indian Agent, the Hudson Bay Company, the RCMP, and the impact and aftermath of the Residential School system. His most recent writing can be found in *The Feathertale Review* and *Road Maps & Life Rafts Lit Magazine*, and his current project seeks to interrogate Indian Affairs archival documentation from the '50s and '60s through the space of the lyric essay.

##### ANTONIO MICHAEL DOWNING — UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

Antonio Michael Downing grew up in southern Trinidad, Northern Ontario, Brooklyn and Kitchener. He is now a musician, writer and activist based in Toronto. His 2010 debut novel, *Molasses*, was published to critical acclaim. His nonfiction manuscript, *Buttahfly*, is a memoir of his obsession for radical identity transformations and how a tragic fire forced him to invent his "baddest, boldest self: John Orpheus"

##### GENA ELLETT — UBC

Ellett's writing has appeared across North America including *Malahat Review*, *Slice*, *Canthius*, *EVENT* and *SubTerrain*. She won the 2015 *EVENT* NonFiction Prize and was nominated for a 2016 National Magazine Award for Personal Journalism. Her work-in-progress, *The Backroads*, is an essay collection that explores the finite years of young-adulthood as characterised by first encounters with death, loss, relationships, identity. She lives and writes in Vancouver

##### STEPHANIE HARRINGTON — UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

Harrington has worked as a journalist in Canada, Hong Kong and Australia, and recently completed an MFA in Creative Writing at the University of Victoria. Her manuscript in progress, *Four Blows*, explores the effect of a violent crime from the perspective of the accused's family. The incident landed her brother in prison and displaced her family, prompting them to leave their home in Hamilton, ON. Her brother later successfully appealed his conviction, pleaded guilty to a lesser charge and was released. She asks, "What do we do as a society with violent people?"



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MARTHA ROBERTS — UNIVERSITY OF KING'S COLLEGE / DALHOUSIE

Having grown up in Kingston, Roberts has an MA in sociology from Queens, specializing in crime & research methodology. She now lives in North Central Regina, which *Maclean's* labeled Canada's Worst Neighbourhood in 2007. The article inspired her to undergo a sobering re-examination of her home. Her manuscript, "Wounded" details the historical and social forces that have shaped the neighbourhood, the relationships she developed with 5 Indigenous residents whom she followed for two years and ultimately, her understanding of herself as a non-Indigenous Canadian.

#### ABOUT RBC

ROYAL BANK OF CANADA is a global financial institution with a purpose-driven, principles-led approach to delivering leading performance. Our success comes from the 80,000 employees who bring our vision, values and strategy to life so we can help our clients thrive and communities prosper. As Canada's biggest bank, and one of the largest in the world based on market capitalization, we have a diversified business model with a focus on innovation and providing exceptional experiences to our 16 million clients in Canada, the U.S. and 35 other countries. For more information, please visit [rbc.com](http://rbc.com).

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#### ABOUT THE RBC TAYLOR PRIZE

ESTABLISHED IN 1998 by the trustees of the Charles Taylor Foundation and first awarded in 2000, 2018 marks the seventeenth awarding of the RBC Taylor Prize, which commemorates Charles Taylor's pursuit of excellence in the field of literary non-fiction. Awarded to the author whose book best combines a superb command of the English language, an elegance of style, and a subtlety of thought and perception. All finalists receive \$5,000, and the winner receives a further \$25,000. All authors are presented with a custom leather bound version of their shortlisted book at the awards ceremony. All finalists receive promotional support for their nominated titles.

THE TRUSTEES of the Charles Taylor Foundation are: Vijay Parmar, David Staines, Edward Taylor, Nadina Taylor, and Noreen Taylor. The Executive Director is Su Hutchinson.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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