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TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2020 • TORONTO, ONTARIO: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## RBC TAYLOR PRIZE EMERGING WRITERS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM RETURNS

**L**AUNCHED TO GREAT SUCCESS in 2018, the RBC Taylor Prize and the RBC Foundation today announced the return of this professional development program to support the next generation of Canadian writers.

Five emerging writers, selected from the nation's many fine writing programs, will be paired with the finalists for the 2020 RBC Taylor Prize, an award that honours and celebrates the pursuit of excellence in literary non-fiction. The program is curated by Joe Kertes, Dean Emeritus of the Humber College School of Creative Arts & Performance.

Nadina Taylor, trustee of the Charles Taylor Foundation and daughter of the late Charles Taylor, is one of the main champions of the program. "The mentorship program has been so successful, giving aspiring writers the opportunity to learn from and make connections with the finalists, and indeed the microcosm of the publishing world that is the RBC Taylor Prize."

"At RBC Wealth Management, we believe in supporting the next generation of Canadian artists who are helping to create change and shape our communities by telling our country's unique stories", said Vijay Parmar, President of RBC PH&N Investment Counsel. "That's why we support programs like the RBC Taylor Emerging Writer Mentorship program, which provides an important platform to help advance emerging writers career trajectories."

The five "emergent" writers, who each have an existing body of work, and a non-fiction manuscript close to completion, will correspond with their mentors prior to travelling to Toronto for the Prize weekend, Feb 27 through March 2. They will meet with their mentors, participate in an intensive day of professional development, accompany their mentors through media and events, and participate in the Awards Luncheon on Monday March 2nd.

THE FIVE EMERGENT WRITERS FOR THE 2020 MENTORSHIP PROGRAM ARE:

### MARTIN BAUMAN — UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

Martin Bauman is an award-winning journalist and interviewer, whose work has appeared in the *Globe and Mail*, *Calgary Herald*, and *Waterloo Region Record*, among other places. As host of the Story Untold Podcast, he has interviewed some of Canada's most notable figures, including Rick Hansen and Juno Award-winner Shad. A passionate speaker and mental health advocate, Bauman has been a youth panelist for the Canada-wide Spotlight on Invisible Disabilities Partnership and bicycled solo across Canada to raise funds for services in his hometown of Waterloo, ON. He is writing a memoir about men, depression, and the ways they cope with trauma – told through the 7,000 kilometres he spent on the road.



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#### SHEIMA BENEMBAREK — DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY / KING'S COLLEGE

Sheima Benembarek is a Moroccan Canadian writer and a magazine publishing professional. She has a Centennial College graduate degree in publishing and is completing a University of King's College MFA in creative nonfiction. Her writing has appeared in the *Literary Review of Canada*, *This*, *Maisonneuve*, *Torontoist*, and *Broadview*. She writes about immigrant narratives and intersectional feminism. Her book, *Unveiling*, is a collection of accounts about the experiences of Muslim women reconciling sexual freedoms and Islam in North America. Are these women truly living in a country that separates church from state or have religious restrictions immigrated along with the community? *Unveiling* investigates this question.

#### KATE BLACK — UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Kate Black's literary journalism has appeared in *Eighteen Bridges*, *Glass Buffalo*, *New Trail* and *Maisonneuve*, and has won an Alberta Magazine Award. Originally from St. Albert, AB, she now lives in Vancouver, BC. She's completing an MFA in creative writing at the University of British Columbia, where she's writing a short story collection. During the RBC Taylor Prize mentorship program, Kate will be working on a series of essays exploring the social history of West Edmonton Mall and coming of age in suburban Alberta.

#### SIMONE DALTON — UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

Simone Dalton is a writer born in Trinidad-Tobago. She holds an MFA from the University of Guelph, where she received the Constance Rooke and Board of Graduate Studies Research Scholarships. Named by *Room Magazine* in 2018 as one of the "20 Black Writers to Read All Year Round," her work has been published in *The Unpublished City: Volume I*, a 2018 Toronto Book Awards finalist, and in the anthology, *Black Writers Matter*. In 2019, her inaugural short play, *VOWS*, debuted at Souleppper as part of RARE Theatre's production, *Welcome to My Underworld*. She is now working on her first memoir.

#### GILLIAN GRANT — HUMBER COLLEGE

Gillian Grant completed the Humber School for Writers Graduate Certificate in Creative Non-Fiction with a Letter of Distinction in 2019. She was the featured student writer in the Black Box Session: Humber School for Writers, Love & Defiance Podcast at the Toronto International Festival of Authors in 2019. She has had a long career as a broadcast journalist including *Mind, Body & Spirit* on WTN, *The Health Show* and *Living in Toronto*, both on CBC TV. Gillian is currently working on her memoir: *Living without Knowing. Life with cancer and the unexpected healing from a First Nations Leader*. She lives in Toronto.

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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, 2020 marks the nineteenth, and final, 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 Prize Manager is Sheila Kay.

TO DOWNLOAD high-resolution images of mentorship program participants:  
[http://www.rbctaylorprize.ca/2020/rbctp\\_2020\\_mentorship\\_program\\_participants.zip](http://www.rbctaylorprize.ca/2020/rbctp_2020_mentorship_program_participants.zip)

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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