

Recipients of new Lieutenant-Governor's Awards for High Achievement in the Arts Announced

(Fredericton, November 9, 2009) The Honorable Graydon Nicholas will present the New Brunswick Arts Board's Lieutenant-Governor's Awards for High Achievement in the Arts in visual arts, performing arts and literary arts with a value of \$20,000 each. For the first year of these awards there will be two literary awards, one in French and one in English in 2009 to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the New Brunswick Arts Board. In subsequent years, there will be one award per year in literary arts, alternating between Anglophones and Francophones. There will also be different artistic disciplines honoured in an alternating fashion with these prizes.

The Lieutenant-Governor's Awards for High Achievement in the Arts is a program designed to recognize the outstanding contribution of certain individuals to the arts. This program was previously called the Excellence Awards Program. The objectives of this program are to recognize and reward people who have distinguished themselves by the excellence of their achievements and their contribution to the literary arts, performing arts (music, theatre and dance), and visual arts (media arts, photography and craft); and to establish standards of artistic excellence for New Brunswick residents. The Awards are in the amount of \$20,000 each and a maximum of three per year may be awarded. Funding of the Lieutenant-Governor's Awards for High Achievement in the Arts Program is provided by the Arts Development Trust Fund (lottery) and the Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport through their Book Policy Program.

The 2009 recipients are:

Raymond Fraser

Lieutenant-Governor's Award for High Achievement in English-Language Literary Arts

In poetry, fiction, or non-fiction, Raymond Fraser possesses the rare talent of truth telling. Wielding his trademark dry wit, his keen ear for dialogue, and an ability to wring truth from every line, he is, as Farley Mowat has said, "the best literary voice to come belling out of the Maritimes in decades." Notable for its sheer diversity, Raymond Fraser's career spans 50 years, and counting. The list includes eight books of fiction, seven collections of poetry, two biographies and a memoir. His novel *The Bannanbridge Musicians* was a finalist for the

Governor General's Award for Fiction. Numerous Canadian literary magazines have benefited from his insightful observations and his work is included in more than a dozen literary anthologies. Fraser's fiction and poetry has been broadcast and dramatized on CBC Radio and television. Much of his work has focused largely on small town New Brunswick, in that two-decade span between the stultifying 1950s and the 1970s burgeoning optimism, a time when class structure and religious prejudice could define one for life. Fraser has captured moments in New Brunswick's cultural and social landscape that will never return, and has, with his lucid writer's eye, given a literary context to this history. Exploring the human condition through themes of alienation, loneliness, poverty, and escape – both geographic and in the bottom of a bottle – the significance of his contribution is found in his vividly portrayed characters, real and fictional.

Rino Morin Rossignol

Lieutenant-Governor's Award for High Achievement in French-Language Literary Arts

A writer and an advocate for literature and language, he works energetically to encourage the use, quality, protection and promotion of the French language. He is also a fervent supporter of a strong Francophone identity in a world in which cultures are in constant evolution. In recognition of his outstanding contribution to the promotion of the French language, he was honoured with the 125th anniversary medal of the Confederation of Canada in 1992 and the rank of *Chevalier de l'Ordre de la Pléiade*, the *Ordre de la Francophonie et du dialogue des cultures* awarded by the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie* in 1998. Besides the unquestionable literary quality of his writing, one of Rino Morin Rossignol's fascinating qualities is his versatility. Over the last three decades, he has published works of theatre, four collections of poetry, a novel, and numerous essays. He is also a columnist with *L'Acadie Nouvelle*, the provincial French-language daily newspaper, and a much sought-after speaker. In both of these activities, he is admired for his articulate presentation of his vast knowledge. Admired for his elegant style, his wit and dry humour, his scathing and lucid criticisms, this writer has patiently built a unique, unusual and timeless body of work, marked by its genuine and uncompromising quality.

Roméo Savoie

Lieutenant-Governor's Award for High Achievement in Visual Arts

Roméo Savoie is one of Acadie's most important visual artists. As one of the first wave of contemporary Acadian artists, he has made a significant contribution to creating a richer and more dynamic cultural climate not only in New Brunswick but throughout the Atlantic region. So far, Romeo Savoie's artistic career has stretched over 45 years; during that time he has

remained steadfastly committed to a highly personal exploration in his art, which is firmly rooted in contemporary art practices. Critics and art historians remind us that he is the first abstract painter in eastern Canada. A forerunner and mentor to several generations of younger artists, Savoie's groundbreaking work has been an inspiration to countless artists. Roméo Savoie is one of the most eloquent and passionate supporters of Acadian culture and contemporary art. Known for his generosity of spirit, he is always willing to share his knowledge and contribute to the growth of his community. For the past four decades, the fruits of his labour have been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions, and his paintings are included in important public and private collections in the Atlantic provinces, Québec, and France. A prolific artist, Savoie received the Miller-Brittain Excellence Award and the Strathbutler Award, recognizing excellence in the visual arts. He also won the Éloïze prize, awarded by the *Académie des arts et des lettres de l'Atlantique*, for Visual Artist of the Year in 1998. In 1999, the Université de Moncton awarded him an honorary doctorate in visual arts, as a tribute to his highly successful career as a painter.

Marcel-Romain Thériault

Lieutenant-Governor's Award for High Achievement in the Theatre

Marcel-Romain Thériault works in theatre, dividing his time and his professional activities among acting, directing, teaching and writing. For over 30 years, he has been taking part in numerous productions, first as an actor, then as a director, and more recently as a playwright. Audiences have watched him perform in approximately ten plays produced by the *Théâtre populaire d'Acadie* (TPA), where he also directed a number of productions. His first play, *Le filet – une tragédie maritime* was met with enthusiastic success, receiving ovations not only in New Brunswick but also in Ontario and Québec, confirming that Thériault is a major talent and that his writing has universal relevance. This bold play is based on the crab crisis that occurred in Shippagan in 2003. According to the Executive and Artistic Director of the TPA, Maurice Arsenault, no other play produced by the company was as thought-provoking for the audience. Marcel-Romain Thériault's second play, *Disponibles en librairie*, was also warmly received by New Brunswick audiences and Thériault has now finished writing his newest play, *La persistance du sable*. Certainly his writing is at the centre of Marcel-Romain Thériault's work now, but the audience will have the pleasure of seeing him on stage in the winter of 2010, when he will perform in the *3 farces de Tchekhov* production by the TPA. The Chekhov play will tour the province.