

Paul Byall of Savannah Wins 2010 Thomas Wolfe Fiction Prize

Written by Administrator

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NORTH CAROLINA—Final judge Sheri Reynolds, best-selling author of five novels, named Paul Byall of Savannah, Georgia, the winner of the 2010 Thomas Wolfe Fiction Prize for his story “Sequestered.” Reynolds said of this story, whose main character, Maggie, finds herself sequestered as a jury member at a murder trial, “This writer brilliantly controls the story’s tempo, moving between scene and summary, between details of the murder and the trial itself. The story is controlled, complicated, and graceful.” Byall will receive \$1,000 from the NC Writers’ Network and possible publication in the *Thomas Wolfe Review*.

Paul Byall was raised in Ohio and studied at Miami University (Ohio) and the University of California. He is the 2008 recipient of the New South Short Story Award and has been a finalist for numerous fiction awards. His first published story, written while a student at the University of California, was selected as one of the one hundred distinguished stories of the year by *The Best American Short Stories* anthology. He currently lives and writes in Savannah, where he has recently completed a novel, *Salvation’s Fire*.

Reynolds also selected two honorable mentions: “Official Business” by Mark Connelly of Madison, Wisconsin, and “Burial Ground” by Tracy Knight of Raleigh, North Carolina. Of “Official Business” Reynolds wrote, “Set in post-war Poland, this story follows a single day in the life of a doctor and researcher who is relieved of his duties and taken into custody by the government. In prose both spare and vivid, this writer provides a snapshot of place, time, and politics through a very compelling character.”

And of Knight’s story Reynolds said, “In ‘Burial Ground’ an eleven-year-old watches her brother struggle to bury a beloved dead cat. The narrative voice here is lush, poetic, mysterious, insightful—and still believable. I love the visionary quality of the writing.”

Both Connelly and Knight are experienced fiction writers. Connelly has an MA in creative writing and a PhD in English from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. His fiction has appeared in numerous journals and his novella, *Fifteen Minutes*, received the 2004 Clay Reynolds Novella Prize from Texas Review Press. Knight is a native North Carolinian, who lives and works in Raleigh. Two of her stories were selected in 2008 as finalists for the Reynolds Price Short Fiction Award sponsored by the Salem College Center for Women Writers. She has a BA in English from Meredith College and has studied fiction writing at North

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Carolina State University.

Final judge Sheri Reynolds is the author of five novels, the most famous of which, *The Rapture of Canaan*, was an Oprah's Book Club selection and *New York Times* bestseller in 1997. Her most recent novel is *The Sweet In-Between* (2008). She is a graduate of Davidson College and Virginia Commonwealth University. She teaches creative writing and literature classes at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, where she won the Outstanding Faculty Award from the State Council for Higher Education of Virginia in 2003.

Preliminary judge, David Radavich of Charlotte, North Carolina, also named six finalists, whose stories were read by Reynolds: "The Changeling" and "Let Us Plough, Let Us Build" both by Mark Connelly; "The Once and Missing Captain of Commerce" by Rodney Nelsestuen of Woodbury, Minnesota; "Rainbow" by Gary Powell of Cornelius, North Carolina; "Brea's Tale" by Karen Pullen of Pittsboro, North Carolina; and "Lying" by Allen Smith of Alexandria, Virginia.

The nonprofit North Carolina Writers' Network is our state's oldest and largest literary arts services organization devoted to writers at all stages of development. For additional information, visit <http://www.ncwriters.org>.