Written by Virginia Freedman
Wednesday, 23 May 2007 19:00 -

BILLIE HARPER BUIE OF ASHEVILLE WINS THOMAS WOLFE PRIZE

Final judge Sharyn McCrumb selected Billie Harper Buie of Asheville, NC as the winner of the 2007 Thomas Wolfe Fiction Prize of the N.C. Writers Network, for her short story, "Shining Rock Wilderness." McCrumb praised Buie's story highly, saying, "This was a moving story, well told, and without a pat happy ending. . . . This story read as if one were hearing a real housecleaner talk about her day, and it is the convincing voice of this character, coupled with the poignant vignette of an abused child, that made 'Shining Rock Wilderness' such a memorable work." Buie will receive a $1,000 prize from the Network, and her story will be considered for publication by The Thomas Wolfe Review. In addition to Buie, McCrumb gave honorable mentions to Jason Mott of Bolton, NC, for his story, "The Dream that was Arcadia," and to Leslie McCray of Cartersville, GA, for her story, "Climbing the Sphinx."

McCrumb, the highly acclaimed author of two NASCAR novels, Once Around the Track and St. Dale, is perhaps best known for her Appalachian "Ballad" novels set in the North Carolina/Tennessee mountains. Her novels include New York Times Best Sellers *She Walks These Hills* and *The Rosewood Casket*, which deal with the issue of the vanishing wilderness. Other novels include *The Ballad of Frankie Silver* and *Ghost Riders*, an account of the Civil War in the Appalachians. St. Dale won a 2006 Library of Virginia Literary Award as well as the AWA Book of the Year Award. *Once Around the Track* will be published this June.

Billie Harper Buie, who lives in Asheville with her husband and three children, is a member of the Great Smokies Writing program at UNC-Asheville where she has been a member of its advanced prose workshop for six years. Buie has recently had a story published in CALYX journal. She is a graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill and has an MA in landscape architecture from N.C. State. Jason Mott received his BFA from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, where his is also pursuing his MFA. McCrumb said of his story, "This story was like a day trip into a disordered mind. Creating a believable OCD character who is neither absurd nor extreme is a difficult task, and this writer managed it well." Of Leslie McCray, McCrumb wrote, ". . .this is the writer I voted 'Most Likely to Be Able To Quit Her Day Job Someday.' She writes likeable

characters, and she tells a good story with a clear point to it." McCray and her husband operate a community theatre in Cartersville, GA, where she is involved in local arts organizations. She has finished a collection of short stories, started another, and is polishing her first novel.

The North Carolina Writers' Network serves writers at every stage of development through programs that offer ample opportunities for professional growth in skills and insight. The Network builds audiences for literature, advocates for the literary arts and for literacy, and provides information and support services. For further information or if you are interested in becoming a member please call (919) 967-9540.