

## 50-state Women Honorees for August 2012

(Read About These Talented Women!)

[www.americanwomenwritersnationalmuseum.org](http://www.americanwomenwritersnationalmuseum.org)

(\* Each month, AWWNM's 50-state Project features premier American women writers from four states)

### NEVADA

Though sharing the same name as her home state, **Nevada Barr** (1952- ) is actually named after a character in her father's favorite novel. While working as a park ranger, she got the inspiration for her famous *Anna Pigeon* mystery series. Anna Pigeon solves murders that are usually connected to natural resource issues in various parks across the country. Since 1993, Barr has written 17 books in the *Pigeon* series, as well as three other novels. She won the Agatha Award for best first novel for her book *Track of the Cat*, as well as many other accolades for her later novels.



Historical novelist **Cecelia Holland** (1943- ) began writing at twelve, creating stories for her own amusement. After dropping out of graduate school at Columbia University, Holland chose to write fulltime. Her first published novel (although not her first written novel) was *Firedrake* (1966). Some of her other works include *Corban Loosestrife*: a series of 6 novels set in the Viking world; *The Kings in Winter* (1968) and *Lily Nevada* (1999). Holland has also written science fiction and children's fiction.

Historians and poets are genres of women writers AWWNM celebrates. **Nila Northsun**, born in 1951, is a Native American poet and tribal historian. She is highly regarded as a prominent figure in the Native American Renaissance. Her 1980 work, *After the Drying Up of the Water*, is a tribal history of the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone. Some of her poetry collections are *Diet Pepsi and Nacho Cheese* (1977) and *Love at Gunpoint* (2007). In 2000 the Nevada Writers Hall of Fame awarded her the Silver Pen Award, and she was appointed to the Nevada State Arts Council.

### NEW HAMPSHIRE

Though she only lived to the age of 39, novelist **Grace Metalious** permanently left her mark on American Culture with her 1956 paperback *Peyton Place*. Dubbed "Pandora in blue jeans" Metalious' novel depicted dark secrets and behind-closed-doors actions of a fictitious small New England town. Though surrounded by controversy, her book was a success: transformed into a popular film and television series in the late 1960s. Metalious also wrote two other novels *The Tight White Collar* and *No Adam in Eden* before her death in 1964.



In addition to writing the ubiquitous nursery rhyme *Mary Had a Little Lamb*, **Sarah Josepha Hale** (1788-1879) is also considered the Mother of Thanksgiving, wholeheartedly campaigning for it to become a national holiday. Born in Newport, Hale spent most of her life as a writer and editor or "editress" as she preferred to be called. Some of her other works include *Northwood* (1827) and *The Good Housekeeper* (1839).

Born in 1969, **Virginia Heffernan** is an American journalist from Hanover. Heffernan spent most of her career at *The New York Times*, starting out as a fact-checker, eventually working her way up to columnist. She is currently a correspondent for *Yahoo!* news. She has also co-written a novel titled *The Underminer* (2005), and wrote the script for the MTV documentary *Matthew's Murder* for which she was nominated for an Emmy award.



### NEW JERSEY



The author of more than 200 books, **Harriet Adams** (1892-1982) epitomizes the word prolific. She was born in Newark and was a juvenile mystery writer and publisher. Most famously, she wrote several books in the *Nancy Drew* series (under the pseudonym Carolyn Keene of course), a few books in the *Hardy Boys* series, as well as some in the *Blythe Girls*, and *Bobsey Twins* series.

**Nancy McKenzie** (1948- ) is an historical fiction writer focusing on Arthurian Legend, set in the fifth century. Her first novel *The Child Queen* was published in 1994, and for it she received the Washington Irving Medal from the Westchester Library Association. Having reached her zenith in Arthurian novels, McKenzie intends to move onto Ancient Egyptian based novels.



**Alyssa Pierce** has reached success well beyond her years. Born in Jersey City in 1991, Pierce has been writing stories since she was in grammar school. She is widely known for her children's stories, *Caroline and Rebecca* books series, currently being used in kindergarten, first, and second grade classrooms all over America. Pierce is currently writing her first novel entitled *Carillon Chimed*.

### NEW MEXICO

**Paula Gunn Allen** (1939-2008) born in Albuquerque was a Native American poet, novelist, and literary critic. Some of her works include the novel *The Woman Who Owned the Shadows* and the poetry collection *Life is a Fatal Disease*. She has been awarded the American Book Award by the Before Columbus Foundation, the Native American Prize for Literature, as well as the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Native Writers' Circle of the Americas.



Another Albuquerque native, **Lauren Tarshis**, born in 1963, is an author of children's books in the genre of historical fiction. Her most popular set of books are the *I Survived...* series. Her latest installment in that series *I Survived the Shark Attacks of 1916* recently received the Colorado Children's Book Award. Some of her other books include *Taking Off: extraordinary ways to spend your first year out of college* (1989) and *The Making of Ironweed* (1988). Her work has been translated into many different languages, and is found in libraries all over the world.

**Denise Chavez**, born in 1948 in Las Cruces, is an author and playwright. Her first collection of short stories entitled *The Last of the Menu Girls* was published in 1986. Since that time she has published several novels and accumulated many awards such as the American Book Award and the Hispanic Heritage Award for Literature.