

50-state Women Honorees for July 2012

(Read About These Talented Women!)

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

MISSISSIPPI



Iconic **Eudora Welty** (1909-2001), though best known for her Pulitzer Prize winning novel *The Optimist's Daughter*, was a prolific writer of short stories based in the American south. Through her lifetime, Welty received numerous awards and honors including the Presidential Medal of Freedom and was named Mississippi's Woman of the Year in 1983. She was honored as a Knight of France in 1987, and was the first living author to have her works published by the Library of America. Since her death, Welty has remained a prominent figure in the literary world maintaining a devoted fan following who praise her seamless blend of serious and humorous themes.

AWWNM also heralds women poets. One such poet is **Winifred Hamrick Farrar** (1923-2010), the Poet Laureate of Mississippi from 1978 until her death in 2010. She began her 30-year career as an English teacher in Meridian Public Schools. After her retirement in 1976, she became a fulltime writer. Her poetry was widely published in collections such as *Cry Life* and *The Seeking Spirit*. Many honors were bestowed upon Farrar including acknowledgements of distinguished service from the World Congress of Poets and the International Poets Academy. She is a member of Mississippi's Hall of Fame.



Natasha Trethewey (1966-) is Mississippi's current Poet Laureate and was recently appointed as the United States Poet Laureate. She is the only person to hold both positions simultaneously. Much of her work focuses on race relations in the U.S. as well as facets of the American Civil War. In fact, she won the Pulitzer Prize for her collection of poems entitled *Native Guard* which center around an all black regiment in the Union Army. Her other collections include *Domestic Work* and *Beyond Katrina: A Meditation on the Mississippi Gulf Coast*.



MISSOURI

Playwright screenwriter **Zoe Akins** (1886-1958), a native of Humansville developed a love of literature at a young age. Only fifteen when she wrote her first screenplay, Akins evolved into a prolific writer, creating more than forty plays in her lifetime. Her play *The Old Maid* netted her a Pulitzer prize, and several of her other plays such as *The Greeks Had a Word For It* (1930) were later transformed into successful films. Akins also authored poetry collections and novels.

The work of playwright **Diane Glancy** delves into personal themes. Born in Kansas City in 1941, Glancy is a descendent of German and Cherokee ancestry. Though she began as an English professor specializing in Native American literature at Macalaster College, Glancy has devoted much of her time to her narratives. Critics tout her writing as "refreshingly honest" as many of her works are based on her own life with central themes of mixed-heritage, colonialism, and feminism. Her works include *The Words of My Roaring* (play) and her 1992 autobiography entitled *Claiming Breath*.

Dorothy B. Hughes (1904-1993) was a crime writer best known for her novel *In a Lonely Place* which was later made into a lucrative film starring Humphrey Bogart. Hughes also worked as a crime writer reviewer for various papers including the *Los Angeles Times*. Throughout her lifetime she received several awards including a Grand Master Award in 1978 from the Mystery Writers of America.

MONTANA



Maile Meloy (1972-) is a fiction writer from Helena. Most of her novels are set in the American West and are described by critics as "tenacious" and "gracefully confident." *The Apothecary* is her first novel for young readers. Meloy has received the Aga Khan prize for fiction for her story *Aqua Boulevard*, and in 2007 was named one of the best young novelists by the literary magazine *Granta*.

Alma Hogan Snell (1923-2008) was a historian whose Crow Indian ancestry was the basis for most of her work as she mainly focused on American Indian tribal history. Snell also worked as an educator and authored two books: *A Taste of Heritage* and *Grandmother's Grandchild: My Crow Indian Life*.

Laurel Winter (1959-) is an author of fantasy and science fiction novels as well as a few poetry collections. Her first story, *Mail Order Eyes*, was published in 1988. Winter has won two Rhysling Awards as well as a World Fantasy Award in 2000.



NEBRASKA



Iconic **Willa Cather** (1873-1947) on whom AWWNM presents a March 2013 panel, began her career writing articles in home journals. She soon shifted to writing novels using her books to depict her frontier life and living on America's Great Plains. She is often praised for her great use of drama and clever dialogue. Several buildings and institutions carry her name, including a library branch in Omaha. Cather has been inducted into the National Cowgirl Museum and the Nebraska Hall of Fame. Her work *One of Ours*, won the 1922 Pulitzer Prize.



M. Miriam Herrera is a Chicano author and poet who has published her works in various journals and magazines within the past decade. Herrera is a descendent of Mexican-American and Native-American ancestry and bases many of her poems on her mixed-heritage. Some of her works include *Kaddish for Columbus* a 2009 book, and *At the Edge of Town* a collection of poetry.

Jonis Agee was born in Omaha in 1943. She has penned short stories, novels, essays, and even screenplays. Though an alumna of the University of Michigan, many of her stories are set in her home state of Nebraska. Some of her works include the short story collection *Pretend We've Never Met*, the novel *South of Resurrection*, and the screenplay *Full Throttle*. Agee has won the Distinguished Artist Award in fiction from the Nebraska Arts Council in 2009, as well as the Notable Book of the Year Award from the New York Times for her novel *Strange Angels*.

