

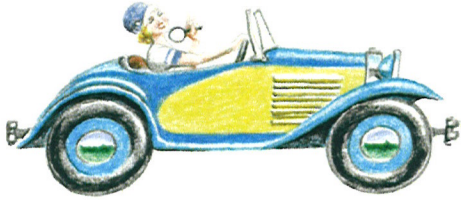
AMERICAN WOMEN WRITERS NATIONAL MUSEUM

50-state Women Honorees for May 2012

(Read About These Talented American Women!)

www.americanwomenwritersnationalmuseum.org

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



I'm Janice Law, the founder and president of the American Women Writers National Museum, whose acronym is (AWWNM). Our museum is dedicated to honoring America's brilliant, talented women writers, historical and contemporary. Our grand opening was February 13, 2012, in this temporary, startup, storefront location in downtown Washington, D.C.

AWWNM's 50 state project is designed to honor select women writers in each of the 50 states. Each month, women writers of 4 states will be honored as part of already-scheduled events at AWWNM.

The inaugural four states for May, 2012 are: KANSAS, KENTUCKY, LOUISIANA, and MAINE. Lists of prospective honorees were developed from consultations with representatives of Centers for the Book, Humanities Councils, librarians, academics, writers, and other sources.

Additional writers from each state will be selected every 13 months, as each group of 4 states rotates alphabetically. So if your favorite American woman writer is not included this month, she will probably be honored in future AWWNM presentations. Honorees for May are:

MAINE



Josephine D. Peary (1863-1955) who was the first woman to take part in Arctic explorations. Her lively journals and book record her 7 Arctic Expeditions, recounting her adventures hunting in the frozen wilderness, and interacting with native populations. Her husband, explorer Robert Edwin Peary, accompanied her.

Sarah Orne Jewett (1849-1909) one of Maine's best-loved and most well-known novelists and short story writers, noted for her sensitive portrayal of women's lives in rural New England, such as "*The Country of The Pointed Firs*."

The spectacular work of these brilliant women, and many other talented American women writers, is part of The Maine Women Writers Collection, curated by Cathleen Miller, and available on line at www.une.edu. This information will also be posted on the AWWNM website.



LOUISIANA

In Louisiana, we have selected contemporary poets, because AWWNM also honors poets, screenwriters, historians and categories in addition to authors.



Ava Leavell Haymon, won the 2003 Louisiana Literature Prize, and other major literary awards. Her most recent book is *Why the House is Made of Gingerbread*. She teaches poetry writing in Baton Rouge.

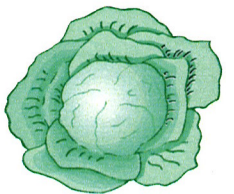
Julie Kane, Louisiana's current Poet Laureate, won the Donald Justice Poetry Prize and other major recognitions. Famous radio personality Garrison Keillor read two of Julie Kane's poems on The Writer's Almanac.

Julie Kane

KENTUCKY

Effie Waller Smith, poet, (1879-1960) was the daughter of former slaves. *Rhymes from the Cumberlands* (1909) is representative of her poetry she collected into 3 books, published in major literary magazines.

Alice Hegan Rice (1870-1942) produced one of the best-selling novels ever written, and set in Kentucky, "*Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch*" (1901), based on her philanthropic work in a poor area of Louisville.



KANSAS

Mary Francis Shura (1923-1991), past president of the Mystery Writers of America (1990), who wrote 50 novels. In 1985, she won the Carl Sandburg Literary Arts Award.

Laura Abbot, popular romance writer.

Helen Brockman (1902-2008) who wrote *The Theory of Fashion Design*, published in 1965, remains in use today as the definitive work on that topic.



To conclude, using an excerpt from the AWWNM Grand Opening remarks of Carol Riordan, executive director of the American Press Institute:

"Their voices ... and countless others ... will resonate in this special museum in the months and years to come. Their work will be celebrated, discussed, promoted and made more visible. They are part of our history and heritage. Through their many contributions, women writers have inspired and educated us ... and, along the way, helped us to find our own voices."