



Media release
For immediate release

September 21, 2005

The Canadian Conference of the Arts announces its National Arts Award winners for 2005

OTTAWA – The Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA) is pleased to announce Nini Baird and Roch Carrier as its national arts award winners for 2005. The 2005 National Arts Awards ceremony will take place at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa on September 28, 2005 from 6-9pm.

The Keith Kelly Award for Cultural Leadership will be presented to one of Canada's long time arts advocate Nini Baird. A West Vancouver resident for many years, Nini Baird has devoted 40 years to the management; promotion and funding of the arts and educational broadcasting in British Columbia, with extensive experience on the municipal, provincial, federal and international levels. Her career reflects her commitment to the importance of art and artists in the lives of Canadians of all ages. She was a founding member of the BC Arts Council in 1996 (Vice Chair 1998-2001, Chair 2001-2003). She currently serves as Chair of the TELUS Vancouver Community Board as well as on the boards of British Columbia Film and the Leon and Thea Koerner Foundation. She was TELUS Foundation Advisory Board (Chair) until 2004 and board member of Vancouver Arts Stabilization (VAST) until 2005. In 1993 she was named a member of the Order of Canada.

Oksana Dexter, Cultural Services Manager for West Vancouver said of Baird, "For many of us, Nini Baird has been a role model. She has successfully navigated through the political shoals in a variety of high-level roles to achieve key milestones in cultural leadership, and I believe that this award more than any others would honour the essence of her lifetime commitment to the cultural development of Vancouver, British Columbia and Canada."

The Keith Kelly Award for Cultural Leadership has been awarded annually since 1998, when it was established to recognize the leadership shown by the former National Director of the CCA during his tenure from 1989-98. It is presented to a Canadian who has made a significant contribution to the arts through advocacy work or the development of cultural policy, or who has otherwise demonstrated leadership in the field. The award is an inscribed medal designed by Ottawa medallist artist Susan Taylor.

The Diplôme d'honneur will be presented to a prolific contemporary Quebecois author, Roch Carrier. Roch Carrier has a number of works to his credit, and has received many prizes and honours, among them the 1991 Stephen Leacock Prize for humour for

Prayers of a Very Wise Child. His inspiration often has an autobiographical source, and he likes to describe the lives of people here and elsewhere. Roch Carrier is also known for his books for children, most notably *The Hockey Sweater*. Roch Carrier is, without doubt, one of the most-read Quebecois authors in Canada. He has served as Canada's National Librarian from October 1, 1999 to May 25, 2004.

"Through his writings and his actions, Roch Carrier, the Quebec author who has also lived in New Brunswick and Ontario, touches people of all ages and all backgrounds. He has an ability to tell stories based on characters and situations well grounded in reality that depict deep concerns. He is also very committed to the development of permanent cultural institutions. Both aspects crystallize, in my view, the fundamental role that the artist plays in community development," says filmmaker Marie Cadieux about Roch Carrier.

The Diplôme d'honneur is presented annually to in recognition of a sustained contribution to the cultural life of the country, whether through volunteer activity, mentoring, patronage, individual arts practice or other recognized support. More than 70 of the visionaries and creators of Canada's rich cultural identity, including Glenn Gould, Maureen Forrester, Oscar Peterson, and Pierre Juneau have been recognized since the award's inception in 1954. The award is in the form of a silver talisman designed by the late West Coast craftsman, Bill Reid.

Recipients of the Canadian Conference of the Arts National Arts Awards are selected by the CCA's Awards Committee, based on nominations received from CCA members.

For more information on the CCA Awards, see <http://www.ccarts.ca/en/awards/>

This year's ceremony will be held Thursday, September 28, 2005 from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at the National Arts Centre (53 Elgin Street, Ottawa). Tickets for the CCA's 60th anniversary dinner and awards ceremony can be purchased for \$60.00 by contacting Jessica Pancoe by phone at: 613.238.3561 ext.10 or by email at: jessica.pancoe@ccarts.ca.

Sixty years strong, the Canadian Conference of the Arts is the national forum for the arts and cultural community in Canada. It serves as a leader, authority, and catalyst to ensure that artists can contribute freely and fully to a creative, dynamic, and civil Canadian society.

- 30 -

For more information, please contact:

Laura Coletta
Director of Communications / Directrice des communications
Canadian Conference of the Arts / Conférence canadienne des arts
804 – 130 rue Albert Street
Ottawa ON K1P 5G4
Tel: (613) 238-3561 ext. 21 Fax: (613) 238-4849
lcoletta@ccarts.ca; www.ccarts.ca