



AELAQ

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**For immediate release**

## **REPORT FINDS ENGLISH-QUEBEC WRITERS OVERLOOKED**

### **VIBRANT PRIZEWINNING LITERATURE IGNORED BY NATIONAL MEDIA**

(Montreal) A new research report released today finds that Quebec English-language writers—many of them winners of major prizes—tend to be overlooked by book review editors, festival organizers and the rest of the Canadian literary establishment.

Researchers found that despite the fact that over the last 10 years English-language writers from Quebec have been finalists for 18 Governor General's Literary Awards and won three, twice made the short list for the Dublin/Impac Literary Prize, and won a Giller, a Man Booker Prize, and a Commonwealth First Novel Award, few in the national book-related media outside of Quebec could name anyone other than Mordecai Richler as a Quebec English-language writer. That lack of awareness has translated into very few invitations to Quebec English-language writers to appear in literary festivals and few reviews of their books outside of Quebec.

The study was a joint initiative of the Quebec Writers' Federation (QWF) and the Association of English-language Publishers of Quebec (AELAQ), and was funded by Canadian Heritage's Book Publishing Industry Development Program. The research was carried out by author and book industry journalist Mary Soderstrom. The Toronto-based firm Omikron Marketing Services, a book trade marketing specialist whose previous clients have included McClelland & Stewart, Kids Can Press and Cormorant Books, carried out further market analysis.

“What we found was what we feared,” says QWF president Ian Ferrier. “The vibrant literary production in English in Quebec is in danger of becoming Canada's best kept literary secret.”

The reason English-language Quebec writers are overlooked is not difficult to understand, says Ferrier. “Quebec is officially a French-speaking province with a lively Francophone culture. When book page editors, radio producers, festival artistic directors

and conference organizers across Quebec decide to include a Quebec writer they invariably think of French-language writers.”

The remedy, says Ferrier, is to launch a promotional campaign designed to increase the regional and national visibility of Quebec’s minority-language writers on book review pages, in other media, at literary festivals and conferences and among literary agents and publishers in English Canada.”

Simon Dardick of the publishers’ group agrees. “I think it is time for all of us, Quebec English-language publishers as well as writers, to work together to develop a brand that will counteract our invisibility. We must raise our profile across Canada, so the country can see what remarkable literary work is being done here.”

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