

OKLAHOMA **CENTER FOR THE BOOK**

For Immediate Release

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Call for Entries Announced for 34th Annual Oklahoma Book Awards

Sheldon Russell is Lifetime Achievement Award Winner

Entries are now being accepted for the thirty-fourth annual Oklahoma Book Award competition. The deadline for entering is January 6, 2023, according to the Oklahoma Center for the Book in the Oklahoma Department of Libraries.

The Oklahoma Book Award program is designed to recognize and promote Oklahoma's writers, as well as outstanding books about the state. Entries are being sought in five categories: fiction, non-fiction, poetry, children/young adult, and design/illustration/photography.

To qualify, books must have been published between January 1, 2022, and December 31, 2022. Moreover, the author must reside or have resided in Oklahoma, or the book must have an Oklahoma theme. Finalists in each category will be selected and announced in March; winners will be announced at the awards ceremony on April 22, 2023.

In addition to the five categories listed, the board of directors of the Oklahoma Center for the Book presents the Arrell Gibson Lifetime Achievement Award for a body of work contributing to Oklahoma's literary heritage. The award was named for Norman, Oklahoma, historian Arrell Gibson, who served as the first president of the Oklahoma Center for the Book. The 2023 recipient is Sheldon Russell.

Russell is the author of fifteen books, including his award-winning historical fiction novels and his popular Hook Runyon mystery series. His books have garnered two Oklahoma Book Awards for fiction as well as the Langum Project for historical literature. *Dreams to Dust: A Tale of the Oklahoma Land Rush* was selected by the Oklahoma Commemoration Commission as an Official Centennial Project in 2005. A number of finalist nominations have also been awarded over the course of his writing career. In 2022 Russell's novel, *A Forgotten Evil*, won the Spur Award for Best Historical Western from the Western Writers of America. His books have earned starred reviews from both *Book List* and *Publisher's Weekly*. *The Insane Train* was selected as one of the six best mysteries of 2010 by *Publisher's Weekly*. In 2019 *The Bridge Troll Murders* was

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chosen for the Librarian-Nominated Longlist for the Dublin Literary Award. His psychological suspense novel, *A Particular Madness*, has been nominated for the 2023 award. Two new novels, *Justice Rode the Train* and *Listen* are scheduled for release in 2023.

Russell is a graduate of Northwestern Oklahoma State University and Oklahoma State University. He taught graduate school at the University of Louisville and the University of Central Oklahoma, where he retired as Professor Emeritus in 2000. He and his wife, Nancy, currently live on the family ranch in the beautiful Gloss Mountains of northwestern Oklahoma.

The Oklahoma Book Award ceremony will be April 22, 2022, at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Oklahoma City. Winners in the five book categories will be announced at the ceremony. For more information on the book awards, including submitting entries, visit the website at oklahoma.gov/libraries/book-awards or contact Connie Armstrong, Executive Director, Oklahoma Center for the Book, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, 200 NE 18th Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73105, or call 405/522-3383, or email connie.armstrong@libraries.ok.gov.