

Thursday, October 13, 2022 | For Immediate Release

## Esi Edugyan and Wendy Proverbs Win Victoria Book Prizes

VICTORIA, BC — The Victoria Book Prize Society is pleased to announce Esi Edugyan as the winner of the City of Victoria Butler Book Prize for *Out of the Sun: On Race and Storytelling* and Wendy Proverbs as the winner of the City of Victoria Children’s Book Prize for her novel *Aggie & Muddy: The Journey of Two Kaska Dene Children*.

Mayor Lisa Helps and co-sponsor Brian Butler announced the winners at the 20th annual Victoria Book Prize Gala at the Union Club on Wednesday. Both winners received \$5,000 prizes.

“Congratulations to Esi Edugyan and Wendy Proverbs,” said Mayor Lisa Helps. “These two awards honour their exceptional work in addressing important and complex topics in such a thought provoking and creative way. I would like to offer my sincere gratitude for their contributions to Victoria’s literary community.”

Victoria writer Esi Edugyan’s non-fiction book, *Out of the Sun: On Race and Storytelling*, is an insightful exploration and moving meditation on identity, art and belonging from one of the most celebrated writers of the last decade. *Out of the Sun* offers new perspectives to challenge us, examining Black histories in art through the lens of visual art, literature, film and the author’s lived experience. In this groundbreaking, reflective and erudite book, Esi Edugyan illuminates the myriad varieties of Black experience in global culture and history.

A graduate of Johns Hopkins University and the University of Victoria, Esi Edugyan is also the author of *Half-Blood Blues*, *Dreaming of Elsewhere* and *Washington Black*, which won the 2018 Scotiabank Giller Prize and was shortlisted for the Rogers Writers’ Trust and Man Booker Prizes. She has held fellowships in the US, Scotland, Iceland, Germany, Hungary, Finland, Spain and Belgium.

City of Victoria Children’s Book Prize winner Wendy Proverb’s novel, *Aggie and Muddy*, is based on the true story of the author’s biological mother and aunt. This novel for young readers traces the long and frightening journey of two Kaska Dena sisters as they are taken from their home to attend residential school. When Maddy discovers an old photograph of two little girls in her grandmother’s belongings, she wants to know who they are. Nan reluctantly agrees to tell her the story, though she is unsure if Maddy is ready to hear it. The girls in the photo, Aggie and Muddy, were taken from their families at a young age to attend residential school, where they endured years of isolation and abuse.

Wendy Proverbs is an emerging Indigenous author of Kaska Dena descent. She holds a BA and MA in anthropology from the University of Victoria. Like thousands of Indigenous people across Canada, as an infant she was caught in the sweeping scoop of Indigenous children taken from their birth families and was only reunited with biological family members as a young adult. She has acted as a community liaison with Indigenous communities and strives to help younger generations, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, learn more about their past. *Aggie and Muddy* is her debut novel.

"We had a wonderful evening hearing from these talented authors who call Victoria home," said Victoria Book Prize Society President Kim Gough. "My congratulations to our winners and finalists, as well as my sincere gratitude to our sponsors and volunteer board who make this event happen."

Established in 2004, the City of Victoria Butler Book Prize is a partnership between the City of Victoria and Brian Butler of Butler Brothers Supplies. The City of Victoria Children's Book Prize recognizes and celebrates exceptional literature for children and young adults. The prize was established in 2008 by the late Mel Bolen of Bolen Books. Additional sponsors include the Union Club of British Columbia, Friesens Corporation, Munro's Books, Russell Books, Ivy's Bookshop, CBC Radio, Island Blue Print Co., the Greater Victoria Public Library, Chateau Victoria Hotel and Suites, and Magnolia Hotel and Spa. CBC's Kathryn Marlow hosted the event.

The Victoria Book Prize Society establishes the policy and criteria for the prizes, appoints the juries and administers the competitions.

For more information, visit [victoriabookprizes.ca](http://victoriabookprizes.ca).

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