A Lifetime of Honors for Eudora Welty: A Checklist of Awards by Elaine Saino

(This article originally appeared in our Winter 1997 issue. Addenda have been added for newly uncovered honors.)

To honor someone is to hold that person in esteem, to show respect, and to mark the person with distinction. The privilege and burden of such an appropriate pause of recognition rested with Eudora Welty on May 24, 1962, when she presented William Faulkner with the Gold Medal for Fiction given by the National Institute of Arts and Letters. She said, "Mr. Faulkner, I think this medal, being pure of its kind, the real gold, would go to you of its own accord, and know its owner regardless of whether we were all here to see or not. Safe as a puppy it would climb into your pocket . . ." (Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the National Institute of Arts and Letters. Second Series. Number 13. New York: 1963: 226). Welty is fond of telling the story that the medal was indeed already in Faulkner's pocket as she spoke. She had passed it to him during dinner and presented an empty box.

Before Welty received her own Gold Medal for Fiction in 1972, she had many other moments of appreciation. In looking at the following checklist of Eudora Welty's lifetime awards, one can see that over many years, Welty has been honored by national governments, colleges and universities, magazines, and local institutions. It is obvious that her appeal is universal as her admirers have no limiting common denominator except a love of her work.

This list includes local, regional, national, and international honors for individual stories and novels as well as for lifetime achievement. The list is culled from Noel Polk's *Eudora Welty: A Bibliography of Her Work* (Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1994), where the day and month are often given, and from past *Eudora Welty Newsletters*, where fuller reports of awards, including descriptions and names of other recipients, may be found. Please notify the *Eudora Welty Review* of any corrections or additional awards that merit inclusion in future updates.

EUDORA WELTY: AWARDS AND HONORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Award/Recognition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>$25 prize in &quot;Jackie Mackie Jingles Contest.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Gold Badge, <em>St. Nicholas Magazine</em>, for a poem &quot;In the Twilight.&quot;</td>
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<td>1938</td>
<td>&quot;Lily Daw and the Three Ladies&quot; in <em>The Best American Short Stories of 1938</em>.</td>
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<td>1939</td>
<td>&quot;Petrified Man&quot; in <em>Prize Stories 1939: The O. Henry Awards</em>.</td>
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<td>1940</td>
<td>&quot;Livvie Is Back&quot; in <em>Best American Short Stories 1940</em>.</td>
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<td>1940</td>
<td>Bread Loaf Fellowship for the upcoming summer.</td>
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<td>1941</td>
<td>Yaddo Writers' Conference, Saratoga Springs, New York.</td>
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<td>1941</td>
<td>&quot;A Worn Path&quot; in <em>Prize Stories 1941: The O. Henry Awards</em>.</td>
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<td>1942</td>
<td>Guggenheim Fellowship.</td>
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<td>1943</td>
<td>&quot;Asphodel&quot; in <em>The Best American Short Stories of 1943</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>&quot;Livvie Is Back&quot; in <em>Prize Stories 1943: The O. Henry Award</em>, first place.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>American Academy of Arts and Letters, $1000 prize.</td>
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1949 Guggenheim fellowship renewal.
1952 Election to the National Institute of Arts and Letters.
1954 Honorary LL.D. from the University of Wisconsin.
1955 Howells Medal for Fiction from the American Academy of Arts and Letters for The Ponder Heart.
1955 Honorary LL.D. from Western College for Women
1956 Honorary LL.D. from Smith College.
1957 "A Flock of Guinea Hens Seen from a Car" in Best Poems of 1957.
1958 Honorary Consultant to Library of Congress.
1958 Lucy Donnelley Fellowship Award from Bryn Mawr College.
1960 Ford Foundation grant for two seasons of observation and study at New York's Phoenix Theatre.
1962 Henry Bellamann Memorial Foundation for contribuiton to American Letters. The award of $1,000 was presented at Mississippi College, Clinton.
1966 Creative Arts Medal for Fiction from Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts.
1970 Edward MacDowell Medal.
1971 Doctor of Letters degree from the University of the South.
1972 Election to the American Academy of Arts and Letters.
1972 Gold Medal for Fiction of the National Institute of Arts and Letters.
1973 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for The Optimist's Daughter.
1975 Honorary Degree from Newcomb College, New Orleans, Louisiana.
1975 Honorary Degree from Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Massachusetts.
1979 Honorary Doctor of Letters degree from the University of Illinois-Urbana.
1979 National Medal for Literature for 1979 from the American Book Award.
1981 Honorary Degree from William Carey College, Hattiesburg, Mississippi.
1981 Medal of Excellence from Mississippi University for Women (formerly Mississippi State College for Women).
1982 Eudora Welty Chair of Southern Studies established at Millsaps College.
1982 Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from Columbia University.
1983 St. Louis Literary Award from Associates of St. Louis Libraries.
1984 Eudora Welty New Playwrights Series established at the New Stage Theatre of Jackson.
1984 Common Wealth Award from the Modern Language Association.
1984 Elmer Holmes Bobst Award for Fiction for lifetime achievement in arts and letters.
1984 The Lillian Smith Special Lifetime Achievement Award from the Southern Regional Council of Atlanta.
1986 Grand Master Award from the Birmingham-Southern Writer's Conference.
1986 National Medal of Arts for contributions to the nation's culture from the National Endowment for the Arts.
1986 The Eudora Welty Library, a branch of the Jackson Metropolitan Library,
1987 French Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres medal.
1987 Authors Award from the Mississippi Library Association.
1987 Sesquicentennial Medal from Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Mass.
1987 Appalachian Gold Medallion from the University of Charleston, Charleston, West Virginia.
1988 Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters Lifetime Achievement Award.
1988 Honorary doctorate from Princeton University.
1989 Phi Beta Kappa Associates Award.
1989 Selected to have portrait hung in the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution by the National Portrait Gallery Commission.
1991 The Corrington Award from the Department of English at Centenary College in Shreveport, Louisiana.
1991 Peggy V. Helmerich Distinguished Author Award from the Tulsa Library Trust.
1991 Cleanth Brooks Medal for Distinguished Achievement in Southern Letters from the Fellowship of Southern Writers.
1991 PEN-Malamud Award for Excellence in The Short Story.
1992 Frankel Humanities Prize from the National Endowment for the Humanities.
1992 Distinguished Alumni Award from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.
1993 Honorary Degree from the University of Burgundy, France.
1994 Richard Wright Literary Prize from Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Wesson, Mississippi.
1996 French Légion d'Honneur.
1998 Doctor of Humane Letters degree from the Mississippi University for Women (formerly Mississippi State College for Women) in Columbus.
1998 The Mayor's Arts Achievement Honors from the Arts Alliance of Jackson and Hinds County in Jackson, Mississippi.
1999 Distinguished Achievement Award from the Southern Book Critics Circle.