

## Carla Perry

Will Receive the **Soapstone Bread and Roses Award**  
International Women's Day, March 8, 2022



**The Soapstone Bread and Roses Award** honors a woman whose work has sustained the writing community. Carla Perry is being recognized for her work as founder of the Nye Beach Writers' Series and Writers On The Edge, and the literary journals *Wild Dog* and *Talus & Scree*. Our award is added to others: the Oregon Literary Arts 2002 Stewart Holbrook Literary Legacy Award for her outstanding contributions to Oregon's literary community, and the Oregon Governor's Art Award for the longevity and quality of Writers on The Edge. The award includes \$1000 and a bouquet of roses that will be sent on March 8 to coincide with International Women's Day. Traditionally, the award is presented at a Soapstone Board luncheon, but due to COVID that will be postponed.

Carla was born and raised in Manhattan. She is a graduate of the University of Iowa Writers Workshop, earning a BA in Creative Writing with minors in Mandarin Chinese and printmaking. After college, she spent twenty years in Portland working as a typesetter, owner of an herb store in Lake Oswego, as the technical publications production manager for Intel, and then as a freelance technical writer and photographer.

In 1990, she spent a year circumnavigating the country in a camper van and started the magazine, *Wild Dog*, during her travels. She solicited submissions and had it printed wherever she happened to stop. She stayed on the move for the next few years.

In 1997, she moved to Yachats, on the Oregon Coast, where she began publishing the literary journal, *Talus and Scree*. She joined the board of Friends of the Yachats Commons and at her first meeting was asked what kind of new programming she would like to see in their town. She answered: Something literary, and was given the go-ahead. She soon lined up three Oregon authors for the initial Yachats Writers' Series. During that year and a half, fifty-one authors read their work to room-capacity audiences. Authors received a small stipend and overnight accommodations in Carla's home.

In 1999, the Oregon Coast Council for the Arts invited her to relocate the program to Newport, a city 30 miles north, and use the Performing Arts Center as its venue. The program was renamed the Nye Beach Writers' Series. Carla said her goal was to "present the best writers, no matter what format... people who have something to talk about and the language skills to permeate and caress our hardened skulls. I approach literary readings as live entertainment. After all, we're competing with television, jammies, and comfortable couches."

The Nye Beach Writers' Series hosted readings monthly, year-round. Two featured authors read for 30 minutes each, followed by a Q&A. After intermission, an open mic was held where up to ten audience members could read or perform their original work. Admission costs were kept low to cultivate attendance. Students and teachers in area high schools received free admission. Hundreds-of open mic readers were high school students.

The popularity of the series continued to grow. In 2002, Carla created the nonprofit, Writers on the Edge, which became the umbrella over the Nye Beach Writers' Series and allowed her to apply for grants and expand programming to include in-school and after-school youth workshops, adult workshops, and special events.

Carla explained the choice of the name: "Writers on the Edge implies desperate writers about to dive off cliffs... It implies writers on the edge of a major breakthrough... It reflects our Pacific Northwest Coast geography with its ragged coastline and ferocious weather."

During her fourteen years as volunteer Executive Director, the series hosted more than 350 featured authors of journalism, science fiction, literary nonfiction, Oregon history, poetry, nature writing, memoir, songwriting, and playwriting. She made a point of inviting beginning writers who showed promise to read with famous ones who would draw an audience. In 2011, she turned over administration of Writers on the Edge and the Nye Beach Writers Series to others so she could concentrate on Dancing Moon Press, a full-service book production company she had started in 1996. She retired from book publishing in 2018, but the press continues under new ownership.

**Carla Perry** is herself a writer. Her first book of poems and illustrations, *No Questions Asked, No Answers Given*, was published in 1971. *Laughing Like Dogs*, a book of poetry, photos and line drawings, was published in 1996, and *Wanderlust*, a book of poems and photos, was published in 2014. Her poetry, essays, interviews, and short stories have been published widely. Her photographs, mostly of writers,

have won awards and have appeared in numerous publications. She is the author of the novel, *Riva Beside Me: New York City 1963 to 1966*, which was adapted into a full stage play, debuting in 2017 at the Newport Performing Arts Center. Her current projects include a new poetry collection, a young adult magical realism novel, and the latest installment of *The Cape of Kindness Adventure Series* for her grandchildren.