

# Winterset awards Maggs' poetry of hockey

By JAMES MCLEOD

SPECIAL TO THE TELEGRAM

It was a sweet moment some 10 years in the making for Randall Maggs, when he won the Winterset award Thursday afternoon for his book "Night Work: The Sawchuk Poems."

Maggs was chosen from 35 authors and three finalists for the \$5,000 prize, which recognizes excellence in Newfoundland and Labrador writing.

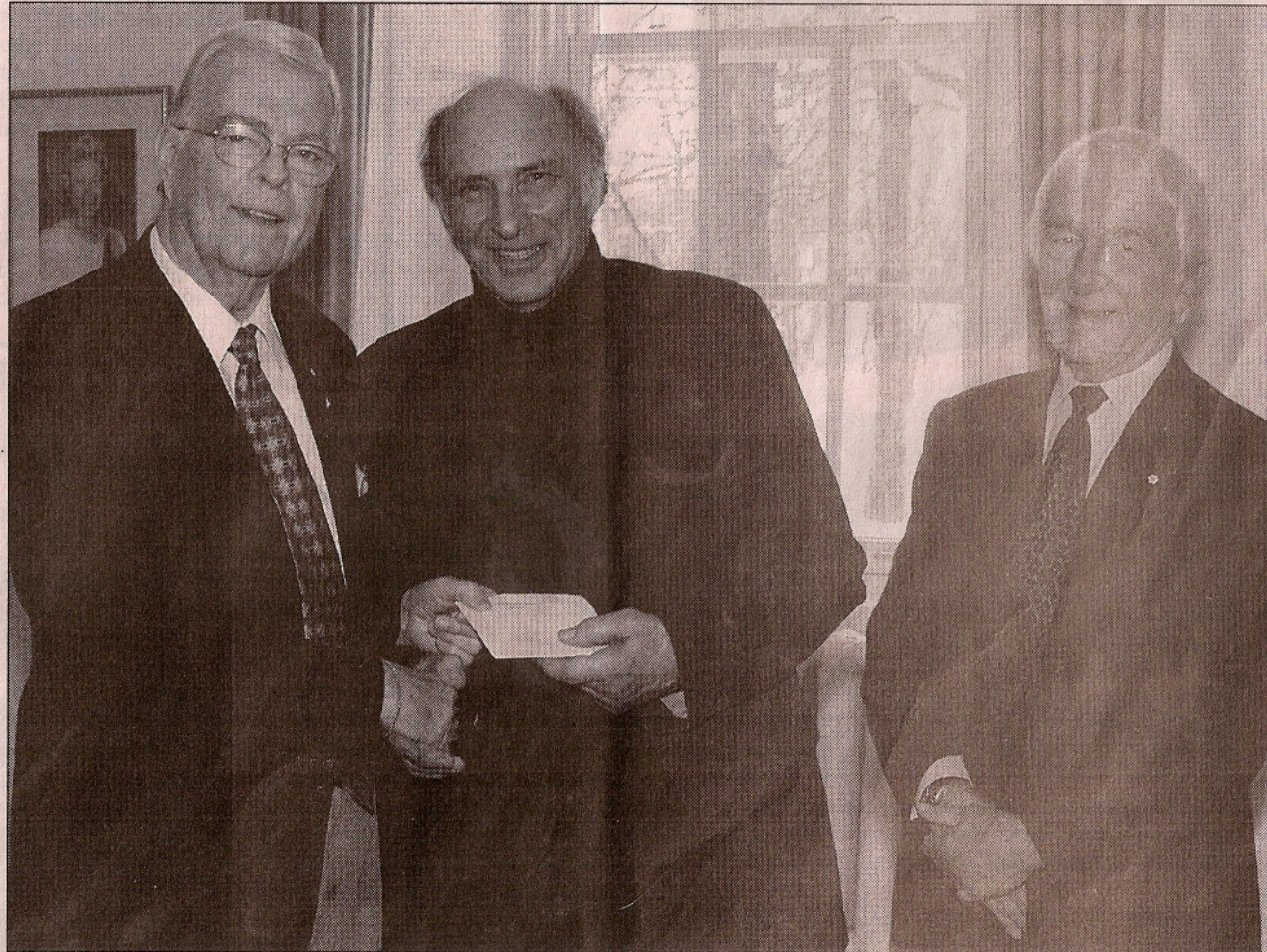
"I was always really skeptical about awards and art, and I still am to a certain extent, but the recognition is nice," said Maggs. "I don't think this is a win-lose situation; three people wrote three wonderful books — if I can include my own in that — and I see those people as colleagues, not competition."

The book is a collection of poetry about Terry Sawchuk, an NHL goalie who played 21 seasons from 1949-1970. It took about a decade to put together, and Maggs said he did about 50-60 interviews in the course of his research.

"That seemed to catch everybody's attention, the fact that you're mixing these two things together," Maggs said. "This is a man with a reputation for being surly and a loner and he's had nothing to say about that, and I'm just trying to give him an opportunity to speak about why he was the way he was."

The Winterset Award was established in 2000 by Richard Gwyn in memory of his late wife, Sandra; the name comes from the house on Winter Avenue where she grew up.

"It's done everything that Sandra would have wanted and everything I had in mind when I set it up," Gwyn said. "It's something useful for a writer, maybe even important for a writer, to have won."



Randall Maggs (centre) is the recipient of the 2008 Winterset Award for his book "Night Work: The Sawchuk Poems." The awards were established by journalist and author Richard Gwyn (right) to recognize excellence in Newfoundland and Labrador writing and to honour the memory of his late wife, Sandra Fraser Gwyn, social historian and author. Maggs received a cheque for \$5,000, presented by Lt.-Gov. John Crosbie (left). — Photo by Gary Hebbard/The Telegram

The other two finalists were Sara Tilley for "Skin Room" and Marie Wadden for "Where the Pavement Ends: Canada's Aboriginal Recovery Movement and the Urgent Need for Reconciliation."

Hosted by honorary patron Lt.-Gov. John Crosbie at Government House, the Winterset Award cuts across all genres, creating a special challenge for jurists.

"It's really impossible to compare them. I'm not sure that we even tried to compare them," Kathleen Winter, last year's winner, said of the three finalists.

Author and radio host Bill Rowe and author Jane Urquhart were also judges.

While acknowledging the quality of the other two finalists, Gwyn said that with the "Sawchuk Poems,"

Maggs accomplished something special.

"Very few activities are less poetic than hockey. I mean, the only thing that's poetic about it is sheer, raw, physical skill, and courage and violence," he said. "To write poetry about hockey, that is a remarkable achievement."

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