

**Women's Fiction Writers Association
Announces Winners Of the First Annual Star Award
For Published Women's Fiction**

Scott Wilbanks Wins for General and Kelli Estes Wins for Outstanding Debut

Albuquerque, New Mexico – September 23, 2016 – The Women's Fiction Writers Association (WFWA) announced the winners of the Star Award given to authors of published women's fiction. This is the first year Star Awards have been bestowed, and are the start of an annual tradition.

The Star Award General winner is Scott Wilbanks for *The Lemoncholy Life of Annie Aster*. Wilbanks is an American living in Auckland, New Zealand. His book was published in August 2015.

The Star Award Outstanding Debut winner is Kelli Estes for *The Girl Who Wrote in Silk*. Estes lives near Seattle, Washington, and her book was published in July 2015.

"We are proud to announce the winners of the first ever Star Awards for published women's fiction," said Amy Impellizzeri, President of WFWA. "In an industry that often celebrates success with raw data, sales reports and rankings, it is important to take a step back occasionally and celebrate the amazing stories behind that data. Women's fiction, as a genre, celebrates those stories that stay with you long after the last page is read. This year's Star Award winners are no exceptions."

The WFWA Star Award was open to all women's fiction authors. Librarians with a strong interest in women's fiction chose the winners from a group of finalists who were chosen by readers. The contest was limited to the first 50 entries that were received by February 15, 2016.

"This is the first year WFWA, a young organization itself, has given out Star Awards," said Laura Drake, Star Award Contest Chair. "The winning books were chosen as some of the finest in the genre, and the authors are gifted. We expect the Star Award will inspire all writers in this category, and will become an influential indicator of the best in women's fiction."

Wilbank's Star Award General book, *The Lemoncholy Life of Annie Aster*, is a commercial fiction novel with a fantasy premise. It's a story of two pen pals who fight against the clock to solve the mystery behind the hiccup in time connecting their homes before one of them is convicted of a murder that is yet to happen, and yet somehow already did.

“Winning this award is empowering,” said Wilbanks, who has been a WFWA member since it started. “I joined for the community and to improve my craft. To win this award is overwhelming, and I’m proud this great organization has given me and my book this award.”

In Estes’ Star Award Outstanding Debut book, *The Girl Who Wrote in Silk*, the character explores her deceased aunt's island estate and finds an elaborately stitched piece of fabric. As layer upon layer of the secrets it holds is peeled back, her life becomes interwoven with that of a young Chinese girl mysteriously driven from her home a century before. Through stories told in silk, a tragic truth is uncovered that will shake the character’s family to its core — and force her to make an impossible choice.

Women’s fiction is described by WFWA as layered stories where the plot is driven by the main character’s emotional journey. They can range from contemporary to historical, commercial to literary, with romance or without, as long as the plot is driven by the emotional journey.

Winners will receive a Star Award trophy plus a prize package for book promotion and branding services equivalent to \$850.

Further details of the Star Award are at:
http://womensfictionwriters.org/STAR_AWARD

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Women’s Fiction Writers Association began in 2013 to create a support organization for male and female writers focused on the emerging force of women’s fiction. Women’s fiction is defined as stories about a main character's emotional journey. Currently, there are more than 800 members throughout the world, including writers, agents and editors. To learn more about WFWA, visit www.womensfictionwriters.org

Media Contact:

Martha Sessums
VP Communications
martha@sessums.com
650.222.4372