

The HUMANITAS Prize

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31st HUMANITAS Prize™ WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Los Angeles, CA – June 29, 2005. Ten writers took home a share of over \$135,000 in prize money for films and television shows that “entertain, engage and enrich the viewing public.” Over 300 writers, directors, producers and entertainment executives gathered today at the Hilton Universal Hotel to celebrate great writing at the 31st HUMANITAS Prize.

Frank Desiderio, President of the HUMANITAS Prize, started off the luncheon by announcing that the prize money in each of the children’s categories is being increased from \$10,000 to \$25,000. It’s the first time in the organization’s history that the prize money in a category has been increased. Desiderio stated, “We want to send a clear message that writing for children is just as important as writing feature films. We plan to reach out to children’s writers and find out how we can help them connect in meaningful ways with their audiences.”

Motion Picture Academy President, Frank Pierson, received the “Kieser Award” for his vision as a filmmaker, his leadership in the industry and for his willingness to share his knowledge as a teacher. The “Kieser Award” is named after producer and priest Fr. Ellwood “Bud” Kieser, the founder of the HUMANITAS Prize.

The 31st HUMANITAS Prize winners are:

Feature Film Category (\$ 25,000)

HOTEL RWANDA Written by: Keir Pearson & Terry George (United Artists)

The inspiring story of real-life hero, Paul Rusesabagina, a hotel manager in Rwanda who uses his courage and cleverness to shelter over a thousand refugees from death, while the rest of

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the world closes its eyes. Cited for **“its reminder of the importance and duty of universal concern.”**

90 Minute Category (\$ 25,000)

LACKAWANNA BLUES Written by: Ruben Santiago-Hudson (HBO)

Adapted from Ruben Santiago-Hudson’s off Broadway, autobiographical one-man show, “Lackawanna Blues” is a coming-of-age story, that depicts a portrait of a golden age gone by, and illuminates the fruits of love and charity. Cited for **“its reminder that wounds of the past can be healed through love, understanding and compassion.”**

Sundance Feature Film Category (\$10,000)

THE MOTEL Screenplay by: Michael Kang

Thirteen-year-old Ernest Chin lives and works in his family’s hourly-rate motel on the strip of a desolate suburban bi-way. Misunderstood by his mother and without a father to turn to, Ernest befriends Sam Kim, a self-destructive, yet charismatic Korean man who is staying at the motel. Cited for **“it’s candid depiction of how easily a parent’s words can build or break a child’s self-confidence.”**

60 Minute Category (\$15,000)

THE WEST WING: “NSF Thurmont” Written by: John Wells (NBC)

In the wake of a fatal attack on Americans by Palestinian terrorists, President Bartlet disregards congressional and public outcry for military retaliation to pursue a riskier alternative: a peace talk between Israelis and Palestinians at Camp David. Cited for **“it’s reminder that retaliation and retribution aren’t the only solution.”**

Children's Animation Category (\$ 25,000)

JAKERS! THE ADVENTURES OF PIGGLEY WINKS: “Waking Thor” Written by: Kelly Ward and Cliff MacGillivray (PBS)

When Piggley Winks friend’s pet fish dies unexpectedly, he tries to help his friend grieve. Cited for **“it’s sensitive reminder that we can count on others.”**

Children's Live Action Category (\$ 25,000)

SEARCHING FOR DAVID’S HEART Teleplay by: Karen Leigh Hopkins and Alan Marc Levy (ABC Family)

Fifteen-year-old Darcy must cope with the devastating loss of her adored older brother. Cited for **“it’s insightful look at the grief that surrounds the loss of a loved one.”**

There was no award handed out in the “30 Minute Category.” HUMANITAS Trustees did not feel that this year’s submissions reached the standards that HUMANITAS demands. This however is not without precedent. In 1986, no award was given in the animation category and in 1989, no award was given in the TV movie category.

Erika Kennair, a graduate of Loyola Marymount University Graduate Film program, was named the recipient of the “2005 David and Lynn Angell HUMANITAS Comedy Fellowship.” Kennair received a \$10,000 stipend at the luncheon. Her winning comedy spec script was an episode of “Bernie Mac.”

Since its inception in 1974, the HUMANITAS Prize has presented over 230 prizes and dispersed over 2.3 million dollars in prize money to television and motion picture writers, whose work honestly explores the complexities of the human experience and sheds light on the positive values of life. Each year, the HUMANITAS Prize holds Master Writers Workshops presented by today's leading writers. Winners of the HUMANITAS Prize have included: Steven Bochco (*Hill Street Blues*); Alan Alda (*M*A*S*H*); David E. Kelley (*The Practice*); Horton Foote (*William Faulkner's OLD MAN*); Steven Zaillian (*Schindler's List*); Tim Robbins (*Dead Man Walking*); Matt Damon and Ben Affleck (*Good Will Hunting*); Aaron Sorkin (*Sports Night, The West Wing*) and Kenneth Lonergan (*You Can Count On Me*). For more information, please visit the website at www.humanitasprize.org.

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