

# Seven N.S. writers honoured

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Joel Zemel already felt like a winner after being shortlisted for an Atlantic Book Award for his first published book, *Scapegoat: the extraordinary legal proceedings following the 1917 Halifax Explosion*. Winning the Dartmouth Book Award for Non-fiction in Memory of Robbie Robertson was a bonus.

“Most importantly, it is acceptance and validation of the book and a lot of hard work. I put hundreds of hours of work into it,” he said by phone on Thursday, the afternoon following the announcement of the award winners in Charlottetown.

Zemel was one of seven winners from Nova Scotia at this year’s awards. Jill MacLean won the Ann Connor Brimer Award for Children’s Literature for *Nix Minus One*, published by Pajama Press. Ruth Holmes Whitehead won the Atlantic Book Award for Scholarly Writing for *Black Loyalists: Southern Settlers of Nova Scotia’s First Free Black Communities*, published by Nimbus Publishing.

Gerald Hallowell won the Democracy 250 Atlantic Book Award for Historical Writing for *The August Gales: The Tragic Loss of Fishing Schooners in the North Atlantic, 1926 and 1927*, published by Nimbus Publishing. Stephanie Domet won the Jim Connors Dartmouth Book Award (Fiction), for *Fallsy Downsies*, published by Invisible Publishing, and Susan Tooke won the Lillian Shepherd Award for Excellence in Illustration for *Lasso the Wind: Aurelia’s Verses and Other Poems*, written by George Elliott Clarke, and published by Nimbus Publishing.

Charlotte R. Mendel won the Margaret and John Savage First Book Award for *Turn Us Again*, published by Roseway Publishing. Zemel’s book was originally self-published and later picked up by New World Publishing, whom he credits with getting the book into Indigo, Chapters, Amazon, 49th Shelf, and others.

Zemel, 63, who was born in Montreal and grew up in Halifax, was a jazz guitarist and filmmaker before getting into writing.