

## 50-state Women Honorees for November 2012

(Read About These Talented Women!)

[www.americanwomenwritersnationalmuseum.org](http://www.americanwomenwritersnationalmuseum.org)

(\* Each month, AWWNM's 50-state Project features premier American women writers from four states)



### SOUTH CAROLINA

"*The Secret Life of Bees*" a 2002 novel by **Sue Monk Kidd** (1948- ) about a 14-year old girl and a black housekeeper who take refuge in 1964 South Carolina with beekeeping sisters, sold six million copies, was made into an Emmy-award winning movie and a New York stage play. It was the first novel for the former nurse who was born and reared in Georgia, but writes South Carolina locales with Christian-oriented themes.

**Nikky Finney** was born in 1957 in Conway, South Carolina. She is an award winning poet and English Professor. Her first poetry collection, *On Wings Made of Gauze*, was published in 1985 and would be followed by five more collections. Since 1994, Finney has received nine literary awards and honors including the National Book Award for Poetry for her 2011 collection *Head Off & Split*.

Born in Laurens County, **Julia Peterkin** (1880-1961) was a popular fiction writer. In 1929 her novel *Scarlet Sister Mystery* received the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction though it was not without controversy. Set in the Gullah culture of South Carolina, the story centers around a woman named Mary who is torn between the Church and the pursuit of worldly desires. The novel was labeled "obscene" and was subsequently banned in Gaffney, South Carolina despite its national accolades. Some of Peterkin's other works include *Green Thursday* (1924), *Black April* (1927), and *Roll, Jordan, Roll* (1933).



### SOUTH DAKOTA

A member of the Brule Lakota, **Mary Brave Bird** was born in 1953 on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota. She is a writer and activist. In 1990, she published her memoir *Lakota Woman* which depicted her activism and work with the American Indian Movement. The memoir received the American Book Award in 1991, and was made into a movie in 1994. Brave Bird followed it with another memoir, *Ohitika Woman* which was published in 1993.



Playwright **Hallie Flanagan** (1890-1969), born in Redfield, South Dakota, is best known for her work with the Works Progress Administration in which she directed the Federal Theatre Project. However, it was her play *Can You Hear Their Voices?* that established her as a skilled playwright. Flanagan later became head of the theatre department at Smith College.

Another native of the Rosebud Indian Reservation, **Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve** (1933- ) is a writer of children's literature. Many of her books are historically based and educate children on the culture and history of the various American Indian Tribes. She has received several awards including the Native American Prose Award (1992), the Author-Illustrator Human and Civil Rights Award (1996), and even the National Humanities Medal (2000).

### TENNESSEE



**Josephine Catron Carson** (1946-2011) was born in Johnson City, Tennessee, and was a playwright, poet, and fiction writer. For decades she would travel from city to city and help people put on plays about stories/events happening in their own communities. For this, she was considered one of the most commissioned playwrights in the country. In 1989 she won the Kesselring Prize for her play *Daytrips*. Some of her other works include the play *Preacher with a Horse to Ride*, the poetry collection *Stories I Ain't Told Nobody Yet*, and the children's book *Pulling My Leg*.

An author and illustrator of children's and young adult fiction books, **Louise Fitzhugh** (1928-1974) was born in Memphis, Tennessee. Though she was the illustrator for several previous books, Fitzhugh rose to prominence as an author in 1964 with her first book *Harriet the Spy*, the story of a precocious young girl who aspires to become a spy. The book's popularity transcended generations as it was later adapted into a movie in 1996. She followed her first novel with its sequels *The Long Secret* and *Nobody's Family is Going to Change*.



A world renowned poet, activist, and educator, **Nikki Giovanni** was born in 1943 in Knoxville, Tennessee and is a proud native of the south. Much of her early work was inspired by the Civil Rights and Black Power movements and is evident in her poetry collections *Black Feeling*, *Black Talk* (1967) and *Re: Creation* (1970). Giovanni dabbles in children's literature and has written several books in the genre including *The Sun Is So Quiet* (1996) and *Hip Hop Speaks to Children: A Celebration of Poetry with a Beat* (2008). In 2004 she was nominated for a Grammy for her spoken word album. She currently teaches English at Virginia Tech.

### TEXAS



**Katherine Anne Porter** (1890-1980) was born in Indian Creek, Texas and was a journalist, novelist, and short story writer. Throughout her lifetime, Porter wrote dozens of pieces many with the common themes of betrayal and human evil. Her 1962 novel *Ship of Fools* was the best-selling novel in America that year, and her short stories simply titled *The Collected Stories* received the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1966. In 1990, the state of Texas placed a Historic Landmark in Brown County to honor her life and career.

Poet **Catherine Bowman**, born in El Paso, is published in *The New Yorker*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The Paris Review*, and literary journals. Her first collection, *1-800-HOT-RIBS*, was published in 1993 followed by three more series. In 1994, she received the Kate Tufts Discovery Award, and later received the Peregrine Smith Poetry Prize, and the New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship in Poetry.

A prolific author and poet, **Allison Hedge Coke** was born in Texas in 1958. She has written over a dozen poetry collections, and has received more than three dozen awards including the American Book Award, and the Writer of the Year in Poetry Award from the Wordcraft Circle of Native Writers and Story Tellers. Some of her works include: *Blood Run, Sing: Poetry of the Indigenous Americas*, and *Effigies II: An Anthology of New Indigenous Writing* (her most recent collection).