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Dayton Literary Peace Prize Foundation Announces Finalists for 2026 Book Awards

Ann Patchett to Receive the Holbrooke Distinguished Achievement Award

Six Finalists Named in Both the Fiction & Nonfiction Categories

Dayton, OH (June 17, 2026)— [The Dayton Literary Peace Prize Foundation](#), the first and only international literary peace prize awarded in the United States, today announced the finalists for the 2026 Dayton Literary Peace Prize, honoring books published in 2025. The Foundation also announced that beloved novelist and essayist **Ann Patchett** will receive the **Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke Distinguished Achievement Award**, bestowed upon a writer whose body of work reflects the Prize’s mission of fostering peace, social justice, and global understanding.

When informed of her award win, **Ann Patchett** said, *“If you wait to find a way to bring peace to the world there’s a good chance that nothing will be accomplished. Instead, I recommend bringing about peace in any small way that is available to you. Live as peacefully and as generously as possible. Invite others to stand with you or, better yet, go and stand with them. The Dayton Literary Peace Prize reminds us of what is possible. I am honored to be a part of this legacy.”*

On the decision to honor Patchett with the Holbrooke Award, **Nicholas A. Raines**, Executive Director of the Dayton Literary Peace Prize Foundation said, *“Ann Patchett has spent her career reminding us that literature is a necessity—it is the very medium through which we understand one another. Her novels return, again and again, to the questions that animate this prize: How do we build community across difference? How do we forgive? How do we repair what has been broken? At a moment when those questions feel more urgent than ever, honoring Ann Patchett with the Holbrooke Award is an act of faith in the power of storytelling to encourage empathy, foster human connection, and lead us toward a more humane world.”*

Ann Patchett is the author of novels, most recently the #1 *New York Times* bestselling *Whistler*, as well as works of nonfiction and children’s books. She has received numerous honors, including the PEN/Faulkner Award, the Women’s Prize for Fiction, and the Book Sense Book of the Year. Her novel *The Dutch House* was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. *Time* magazine named Patchett one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World and President Biden awarded her the National Humanities Medal in recognition of her contributions to American culture. She lives in Nashville, Tennessee, where she is the owner of Parnassus Books.

Patchett’s books have been translated into more than thirty languages and have influenced generations of readers to believe in the transformative power of storytelling and community. Her lifetime of work is as deeply empathetic as it is far-reaching. The Dayton Literary Peace Prize Foundation’s recognition of Patchett’s legacy honors not only her unshakable commitment to the



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written word as a force for connection and understanding, but for her relentless advocacy for independent bookshops and literary culture—especially in schools—has helped shape global conversations.

Inspired by the Dayton Peace Accords that ended the Bosnian War in 1995, the annual Dayton Literary Peace Prize honors writers whose work demonstrates the power of the written word to foster peace. The winners each receive a \$10,000 cash prize, and the first runners-up receive a \$5,000 cash prize.

The finalists for the Dayton Literary Peace Prize for publishing year 2025 are:

Nonfiction finalists:

- [*By the Second Spring: Seven Lives and One Year of the War in Ukraine*](#) by **Danielle Leavitt** (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)
- [*Free: My Search for Meaning*](#) by **Amanda Knox** (Grand Central Publishing)
- [*Mother Emanuel: Two Centuries of Race, Resistance, and Forgiveness in One Charleston Church*](#) by **Kevin Sack** (Crown)
- [*Original Sins: The \(Mis\)education of Black and Native Children and the Construction of American Racism*](#) by **Eve L. Ewing** (One World)
- [*The Jailhouse Lawyer*](#) by **Calvin Duncan and Sophie Cull** (Penguin Press)
- [*The Prosecutor: One Man's Battle to Bring Nazis to Justice*](#) by **Jack Fairweather** (Crown)

Fiction finalists:

- [*Bad Bad Girl*](#) by **Gish Jen** (Knopf)
- [*Outside Women*](#) by **Roohi Choudhry** (University Press of Kentucky)
- [*The Antidote*](#) by **Karen Russell** (Knopf)
- [*The Sunflower Boys*](#) by **Sam Wachman** (Harper Collins)
- [*Too Soon*](#) by **Betty Shamieh** (Avid Reader Press/Simon & Schuster)
- [*Wild Dark Shore*](#) by **Charlotte McConaghy** (Flatiron Books)

Winners of the Dayton Literary Peace Prize will be announced in September 2026. The Dayton Literary Peace Prize Foundation will honor Ann Patchett, the Richard C. Holbrooke Distinguished Achievement Award recipient, and the winners and first runners-up at an awards ceremony in Dayton, Ohio, the weekend of **November 7–8, 2026**.

About the Dayton Literary Peace Prize

The Dayton Literary Peace Prize honors writers whose work uses the power of the written word to foster peace, social justice, and global understanding. Launched in 2006, it is recognized as one of the world's most prestigious literary honors and is the only literary peace prize awarded in the United States. The Dayton Literary Peace Prize annually honors one fiction and one nonfiction author, and one fiction and one nonfiction runner-up, whose work advances peace as a solution to



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conflict and leads readers to a better understanding of other cultures, peoples, religions, and political points of view.

Additionally, the Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke Distinguished Achievement Award is bestowed upon a writer whose body of work reflects the Prize's mission. Previous honorees include Salman Rushdie, Margaret Atwood, Wendell Berry, Sandra Cisneros, Wil Haygood, Louise Erdrich, John Irving, Barbara Kingsolver, Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, Marilynne Robinson, Colm Tóibín, Elie Wiesel, and more.

About the Dayton Literary Peace Prize Foundation

The Foundation offers programming to high schools, colleges and universities, and libraries, including its Student Author Series, Community Conversations with the Ohio Public Library Network, among others. A primarily volunteer organization since its conception, the DLPP Foundation depends on donations from individuals, corporations, universities and local government to sustain its efforts. Learn more about how you can get involved via [the DLPP website](#).

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