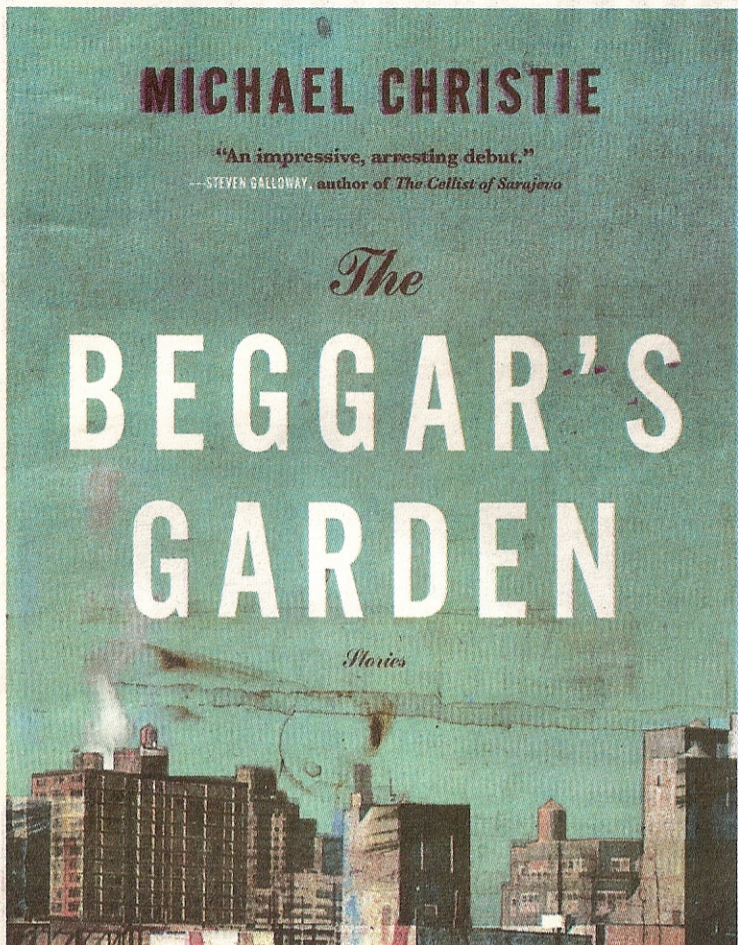


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SFU alumni shortlisted
for B.C. Book Prizes

Left: The cover of Michael Christie's collection of short stories.
Right: Allen Garr, who was involved in the last stages of Chuck Davis' work.

HarperCollins
Vancouverconvention (Flickr)

Several alumni were nominated, including journalist Allen Garr, who made heavy contributions to Chuck Davis' final work

Monica Miller
SFU Student

Vancouver journalist and broadcaster Chuck Davis' work has made two shortlists in the B.C. Book Prizes this year. *The Chuck Davis History of Metropolitan Vancouver* is a 600-page tome with 125 years of people and their stories, illustrated by archival photographs.

'Mr. Vancouver', as he was affectionately known, was a journalist and broadcaster with a deep passion for local history. Unfortunately, Davis did not live to see his magnum opus completed. Diagnosed with an inoperable cancer, Davis passed away in November 2010 at the age of 75.

SFU alumnus and *Vancouver Courier* journalist Allen Garr, who is listed as a contributor, was part of a collective brought together by publisher Howard White after Davis passed away.

Garr coordinated the collection of material and wrote four of the chapters. "Chuck had worked on this book for almost a decade before he passed away, and we were called in to help finish it."

Of the two prizes that Davis' volume has been shortlisted for, the Roderick Haig-Brown Regional Prize is awarded to publications that contribute to the understanding and enjoyment of B.C., while the Bill Duthie Bookseller's Choice Award recipient is chosen based on public appeal, initiative, design, and content.

Several other B.C. Book Prizes nominees are also SFU alumni, including English graduate Garry Thomas Morse, whose poetry collection *Discovery Passages* is shortlisted for the Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize. Growing up in Vancouver with both Kwakwaka'wakw and Cockney Jew heritage, Morse uses poetry to reconnect with the nwaluk of First Nations, or a spiritual intuition of sorts. Because the oral and vocal tradition of the First Nations, as well as their ancient ritual and historic world, are often complicated by modern stereotypes and turned into plot devices,

Discovery Passages posits itself as a link between the world and the Kwakwaka'wakw people.

"I didn't want to write a finger-wagging poverty book that insults you with all the details."

Michael Christie, author of
The Beggar's Garden

Michael Christie is another emerging author who is gaining buzz in the Canadian literature community. *The Beggar's Garden*, a collection of short stories revolving around the Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, made the shortlist. His first novel, *The Beggar's Garden* has received glowing praise, award nominations, and also won the Vancouver Book Award in 2011.

Christie's nine stories are fictional, but very much grounded in reality. They find the humour, honesty, and sorrow in life as a resident of the DTES. Christie creates sympathy for his characters without passing judgment on their

situations, whether they were responsible for it or they fell victim to circumstances beyond their control.

"I knew that I didn't want to write a finger-wagging poverty book that insults you with all the details," said Christie. After completing his bachelors in psychology at SFU, he worked in a homeless shelter in the DTES and provided outreach to the severely mentally ill. "That changed my perspective on how human beings work," he said.

All nominees will be celebrated at the B.C. Book Prize Soirée, held in Vancouver this year. The recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's Award for Literary Excellence will also be announced at this event, which recognizes an individual's lifelong contribution to the literary development to the province. Nominees will then go onto tour the province with B.C. Book Prizes On Tour, providing free readings and presentations at schools, bookstores, and public libraries. Winners will be announced at the gala. **P**

The B.C. Book Prizes Gala will be held on May 12 at SFU Gold-Centre for the Arts.

SHORTLISTED SFU ALUMNI

Michael Christie
The Beggar's Garden
Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize

Allen Garr (contributor)
The Chuck Davis History of Metropolitan Vancouver
Roderick Haig-Brown Regional Prize and the Bill Duthie Booksellers' Choice Award

Susan McCaslin
Demeter Goes Skydiving
Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize

Garry Thomas Morse
Discovery Passages
Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize

Sheryl Salloum
The Life and Art of Mildred Valley Thornton
Roderick Haig-Brown Regional Prize

Caitlyn Vernon
Nowhere Else on Earth: Standing Tall for the Great Bear Rainforest
Sheila A. Egoff Children's Literature Prize