

Dayton Daily News

Dayton Awards 2007 Peace Prize

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DAYTON — The global spotlight for peace focused Sunday on Dayton for the 2007 Dayton Literary Peace Prizes in fiction and nonfiction. Established in 2006, and the only literary peace prize awarded in the United States, the Dayton Literary Peace Prize continues the legacy of the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords that brokered peace for the Balkans. It honors writers whose works center on the broad theme of peace and whose writing and subject matter provide enduring literary value. The 2007 award recipients are: Nonfiction: Mark Kurlansky for his book "Nonviolence: Twenty-Five Lessons from the History of a Dangerous Idea." Nonfiction runner-up: Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin for their book, "Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace ... One School at a Time." Fiction: Brad Kessler for his book "Birds in Fall." Fiction runner-up: Lisa Fugard for her book "Skinner's Drift." Lifetime Achievement Award: Elie Wiesel, a 1986 Nobel Peace Prize winner, for his book "Night."

Born in Sighet, Transylvania, Wiesel is a survivor of the Nazi death camps at Auschwitz and Buchenwald.

In 2006, he was awarded an honorary Knighthood of the British Empire and has numerous medals, including the United States Congressional Gold Medal and Presidential Medal of Freedom, for his work in freedom and peace movements.

"It's very simple," Wiesel said of what he wants readers to take away from his writings. "I give information. I want it to become knowledge. Knowledge to become sensitivity. Sensitivity to become commitment."

Wiesel also is founder of The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity.

Master of Ceremonies Nick Clooney commended Dayton for continuing efforts of nonviolent resolutions throughout the world.

"This was always the city of ingenuity and invention, and more recently, obviously, the center for peace," he said, referring to the 1995 peace accords. "And I think you all seem to be wearing it well, and I salute you,"