

**Media Contact:**

Patrick Kowalczyk, [patrick@pkpr.com](mailto:patrick@pkpr.com)

Jenny Chang, [jenny@pkpr.com](mailto:jenny@pkpr.com)

PKPR, 212.627.8098

**JUST MERCY BY BRYAN STEVENSON AND THE GREAT GLASS SEA BY JOSH WEIL**

**NAMED WINNERS OF 2015 DAYTON LITERARY PEACE PRIZE**

**The Short And Tragic Life Of Robert Peace by Jeff Hobbs and  
All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr named runners-up**

**Dayton, OH (September 30, 2015)** – *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson and *The Short And Tragic Life of Robert Peace* by Jeff Hobbs, two books exposing how race, income inequality, and the criminal justice system impact the lives of Americans, today were named the nonfiction winner and nonfiction runner-up, respectively, for the 2015 Dayton Literary Peace Prize.

*The Great Glass Sea*, novelist Josh Weil's modern fable of Russian twins divided by ideology, was named the fiction winner, while *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr was named the fiction runner-up.

Inspired by the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords that ended the war in Bosnia, The Dayton Literary Peace Prize is the only international literary peace prize awarded in the United States. This year's honorees will be honored on November 1<sup>st</sup> at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Dayton Literary Peace Prize Gala, one of a series of major events commemorating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the historic peace agreement. Winners receive a \$10,000 honorarium while runners-up receive \$1,000.

A stunning probe into the broken U.S. criminal justice system, *Just Mercy* (Penguin Random House) is a personal narrative by Stevenson, one of the country's leading legal thinkers and social justice advocates. While recounting one of his first cases out of law school – the battle to free a black Alabama man sentenced to die for a murder he insisted he didn't commit – Stevenson also tells the stories of men, women, and children, innocent and guilty, who found themselves at the mercy of an often merciless system. The book traces the education of a young lawyer fighting on the front lines of a country in thrall to extreme punishments and careless justice.

*The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace* by Hobbs (Scribner) is the brilliant, deeply-researched account of the life of Hobbs' college roommate Robert DeShaun Peace, a talented young African-American man who grew up in the inner city of Newark, New Jersey with a father in jail and a mother earning \$15,000 a year. Peace left Newark on a full scholarship to Yale University, but tragically succumbed to the dangers of the streets and his own nature when he returned home after graduation.

In *The Great Glass Sea* (Grove Atlantic), Weil sets his epic tragedy of brotherly love against the dystopian backdrop of an alternative present-day Russia. Swathed in all the magic of Russian folklore, the story centers on inseparable twin brothers who work in the largest greenhouse in the world. A chance encounter with their billionaire employer turns them into pawns for opposing ideologies, threatening to break their bond.

In *All the Light We Cannot See* (Simon and Schuster) Doerr creates a stunningly ambitious and beautiful novel about a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France as they both try to survive the devastation of World War II.

"This year's winners tell the often tragic stories of lives shaped by outside forces – systemic injustice, political corruption, racism, war – that are beyond any one person's control," said Sharon Rab, founder and co-chair of the Dayton Literary Peace Prize Foundation. "While no one can

singlehandedly topple those forces, these books remind us that we can and must work together to diminish them."

Organizers previously announced that author and activist Gloria Steinem (*My Life on the Road, Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions, Revolution from Within*) will be the recipient of the 2015 Richard C. Holbrooke Distinguished Achievement Award, named in honor of the celebrated U.S. diplomat who helped negotiate the Dayton Peace Accords. Legendary television personality Phil Donahue, who launched his television talk show in Dayton in 1969, will present the award to Steinem.

To be eligible for the 2015 awards, English-language books must have been published or translated into English in 2014 and address the theme of peace on a variety of levels, such as between individuals, among families and communities, or among nations, religions, or ethnic groups.

A panel of prominent writers, including Ron Carlson, Christine Schutt, Faith Adiele, and Evelyn McDonnell, reviewed the 2015 finalists and selected this year's winners and runners-up. A full list of the 2015 finalists can be found at: <http://www.daytonliterarypeaceprize.org/2015-finalists.htm>.

### ***About the Dayton Literary Peace Prize***

The Dayton Literary Peace Prize honors writers whose work uses the power of literature to foster peace, social justice, and global understanding. Launched in 2006, it has already established itself as one of the world's most prestigious literary honors, and is the only literary peace prize awarded in the United States. As an offshoot of the Dayton Peace Prize, the Dayton Literary Peace Prize awards a \$10,000 cash prize each year to one fiction and one nonfiction author whose work advances peace as a solution to conflict, and leads readers to a better understanding of other cultures, peoples, religions, and political points of view. Additionally, the Richard C. Holbrooke Distinguished Achievement Award is bestowed upon a writer whose body of work reflects the Prize's mission; previous honorees include Wendell Berry, Taylor Branch, Geraldine Brooks, Louise Erdrich, Barbara Kingsolver, Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, Tim O'Brien, Studs Terkel, and Elie Wiesel. For more information visit the Dayton Literary Peace Prize media center at <http://daytonliterarypeaceprize.org/press.htm>.

###