



**THE WRITERS'
UNION OF CANADA**

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DECISIONS OUT OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

In Toronto this weekend, at their Annual General Meeting, members of The Writers' Union of Canada (TWUC) agreed to study the Union's relationship with the collective licensing agency Access Copyright, with the goal of enhancing creators' control of their own copyright interests. "But let me make it clear," said incoming Chair Greg Hollingshead, "that the Writers' Union and Access Copyright continue to stand together in support of collective licensing, copyright, and the protection of intellectual property."

This was underlined when, at the same meeting, author Heather Robertson was awarded the Union's Graeme Gibson Award, for varied and remarkable contributions to improve the circumstances of writers in Canada. Robertson received the award, previously given only to Graeme Gibson and Pierre Berton, in recognition of her 13-year class action suit against Thomson and Bell Globemedia, as well as her more recently settled suit against Toronto Star Newspapers, Rogers Publishing, and others. Both suits concerned the use of freelancers' work without permission.

In another motion, the Union criticized the Halifax *Chronicle Herald's* recent freelance contract and will call on the newspaper to work towards a more equitable agreement with terms acceptable to all parties involved. The current contract would make it extremely difficult – if not impossible – for writers to sell their work to other publications and has resulted in more than 20 freelance writers, including TWUC member Silver Donald Cameron, refusing to sign.

"These issues are about money, yes," Hollingshead said, "but more importantly, they concern the internationally mandated principle of intellectual property and the damage done to the livelihoods and careers of Canadian writers and to Canadian culture when that principle is ignored or denied."

The Writers' Union of Canada is our country's national organization representing professional authors of books. Founded in 1973, the Union is dedicated to fostering writing in Canada, and promoting the rights, freedoms, and economic well-being of all writers.