2023 Eleanor Taylor Bland Award Winners Announced

June 20, 2023 — Sisters in Crime (SinC), an inclusive international community for all who write and love crime fiction, has announced the winner of the annual Eleanor Taylor Bland Award.

The winner of the 2023 Award is Nicole Prewitt of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Her winning submission, “Harts Divided”, follows Neema Hart, a black, bisexual thief-turned-P.I., who owns a detective agency and therapy office with her estranged wife, Genie Hart. When what should be a bread-and-butter infidelity case results in unsuspecting women getting burned, in more ways than one. The Harts are pushed to prove their commitment to their clients, their community, and each other.

“I’m honestly so excited that opportunities like this exist and feel incredibly honored to have received the 2023 Eleanor Taylor Bland Award,” says Prewitt. “Writing a novel can be such a long process, and this has provided me with encouragement to see it through to the end.”

Established in 2014, The Eleanor Taylor Bland Award is strongly aligned with SinC’s mission to promote the ongoing advancement, recognition and professional development of current and prospective members and intends to support a recipient at the beginning of their crime writing career. The grantee may choose to apply the grant toward workshops, seminars, conferences, retreats, online courses, and research activities to assist in completion of their work. Prewitt’s story was selected from over 60 submissions by 2023 judges Shizuka Otake — winner of the award in 2022 — plus novelists R. Franklin James and Andrea J. Johnson.

“We couldn’t have asked for a more talented group of participants,” says Johnson. “It was an absolute pleasure to experience the captivating ways these writers have chosen to broaden and reinvent the crime genre.

Judge Shizuka Otake agrees. “Reading the entries reminded me that there are so many different voices and stories. And they can all be compelling.”

In addition to Prewitt’s 2023 achievement, SinC has also awarded five runners-up a year-long membership to the organization. Recipients were Josette Covington (Wilmington, Delaware), Ann Harris (Atlanta, Georgia), Kathryn Harrison (Bingham Farms, Michigan), Karabi Mitra (Toronto, Ontario), and Deena Short (Stonecrest, Georgia).
About Eleanor Taylor Bland:
Eleanor Taylor Bland (1944-2010) paved the way for fresh voices in crime fiction by showcasing complex characters that had previously been peripheral to or simply missing from the genre. *Dead Time* (1992), the first in her series of novels, introduced African-American police detective Marti MacAlister, an enduring and beloved heroine who overturned stereotypes that had been perpetuated in much of American popular culture. Bland also published more than 50 works of short crime fiction and edited the 2004 collection, *Shades of Black: Crime and Mystery Stories by African-American Authors*.

About Sisters in Crime:
Sisters in Crime (SinC) was founded in 1986 to promote the ongoing advancement, recognition and professional development of women crime writers. Today, the organization boasts 4,000 members and 59 chapters worldwide and its initiatives also include other scholarships, grants for academic research into the roles of women and underserved voices in crime fiction; cash awards to libraries and bookstores; and surveys and monitoring projects which determine visibility and representation of women and diverse voices in the genre and across the marketplace.

About the Judges:

**Rae James (R. Franklin James)** has published seven mysteries, winning a best fiction award from Northern California Publishers and Authors. Her six-book Hollis Morgan Mysteries was sold to A&E/Lifetime for a TV movie series released last year. *The Inheritance*, a Publishers Weekly acclaimed novel, is the first book in her new Johanna Hudson Mystery series, followed by *Look Twice* (2022). James currently serves as Chair on the Bouchercon National Board, a world-wide mystery convention. She is a member of Sisters in Crime, Crime Writers of Color, Mystery Writers of America and Northern California Publishers and Authors. James lives in Northern California.

**Andrea J. Johnson** is the author of the Victoria Justice Mysteries about a trial stenographer turned amateur sleuth (think *Murder, She Wrote* meets *The Pelican Brief*). She holds an M.F.A. in Writing Popular Fiction from Seton Hill University and a copyediting certification from UC San Diego. She currently teaches creative writing and African American literature at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, and her craft essays have appeared on several websites such as CrimeReads and LitReactor. Andrea has also contributed to the women’s lifestyle websites Popsugar and The List Daily. In addition, she has written a series of nonfiction books that include *How to Craft a Killer Cozy Mystery*, *Mastering the Art of Suspense*, and *How to Craft Killer Dialogue*.

**Shizuka Otake** is a writer born in New York City. In her 20s, she lived in Tokyo for four years, and now wishes she had a magic door so she could commute between the two cities. She loves mystery novels, Japanese TV, and traveling – a.k.a. prowling bookstores and eating. Shizuka writes about identity, the lies we tell for love, and the need to find home. In 2022, she won Sisters in Crime’s Eleanor Taylor Bland Crime Fiction Writers of Color Award. Her unpublished novel *Murder in Tokyo* features Ayu Amita, a Japanese American teen hunting down a classmate’s killer in Tokyo.