

Ontario screenwriter wins U.S. Academy fellowship

BY VICTORIA AHEARN

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Jennifer Archer of Springwater, Ont., is among the winners of the prestigious 2022 Academy Nicholl Fellowships in Screenwriting in Los Angeles

Prestigious 2022 Academy Nicholl Fellowships in Screenwriting in Los Angeles.

A total of four individuals and one writing team beat out thousands of submissions for the honour from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Each individual and writing team will receive \$35,000 and mentorship from an Academy member throughout their fellowship year.

Recipients will be featured at the Academy Nicholl Fellowships in Screenwriting Awards and Live Read on Nov. 9 at the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures, where actors will perform selected scenes from the winning scripts.

Archer (*Awakening the Zodiac*) was chosen for the script "Into the Deep Blue," about a man rebuilding his life after the death of his mom, a DUI, and mandatory grief counselling where he meets his best friend.

Winners are expected to complete feature-length screenplays during their fellowship year. The Academy acquires no rights to the works of the fellows "and does not involve itself commercially in any way with their completed scripts," according to a news release.

A jury of industry professionals, including graduates of the Academy's Diverse Reader Training Workshop, voted on the first and quarterfinal rounds for the fellowships.

Academy members across the spectrum of the motion picture industry voted on the semifinal round, from which 11 individual screenwriters were selected as finalists. Those scripts were then judged by the Academy Nicholl Fellowships Committee, who voted the winners.

Eric Heisserer (Academy writers branch) chairs the committee, which includes members Susan Shopmaker (casting directors branch); John Bailey and Steven Poster (cinematographers branch); James Plannette and Stephen Ujlaki (members-at-large); Jason Michael Berman, Julia Chasman and Peter Samuelson (producers branch); Bobbi Banks (sound branch); and Larry Karaszewski, Adele Lim, Zak Penn, Dan Petrie Jr., Katie Silberman and Dana Stevens (writers branch).

A total of 5,526 scripts from 85 countries were submitted for this year's global competition for the fellowships, which were established in 1985 through the support of Gee Nicholl in memory of her husband Don Nicholl.

Photo: A display case is seen full of Oscar statues February 20, 2004 in Hollywood, California. These are the Oscar statuettes that will be handed out on February 29 at the 76th Academy Awards ceremony and will be on display at the Hollywood & Highland entertainment complex. (Photo by Carlo Allegri/Getty Images)

