



## Elizabeth Crook Wins Lifetime Achievement Award from Texas Institute of Letters

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Author Elizabeth Crook has been named the winner of the Texas Institute of Letters' prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award. This is the highest honor given by the TIL, which was established in 1936 to recognize distinctive literary achievement. The award will be presented to Crook in Brownsville at TIL's annual banquet on April 26, 2025, with a prize of \$7,000.



From TIL president, David Bowles: “Elizabeth Crook is a significant voice in the Texas literary tradition, known for her richly detailed novels that vividly bring the state's past to life. Her work explores the complex histories, landscapes, and characters of Texas, blending meticulous research with compelling storytelling and lyrical power. Through her narratives, Crook captures the spirit of resilience, adventure, and conflict that define our state's heritage, offering readers both a deep sense of place and a nuanced understanding of our diverse cultural roots. Above all, Crook can peer into the human soul with an unclouded eye, perceiving not only the brokenness and confusion we grapple with, but also the hope and love that can make us whole. Crook's unparalleled contributions ensure that Texas letters remain vibrant, bridging the gap as she does between historical record and imaginative storytelling. I'm thrilled that we get to recognize the gift of her necessary work by presenting her with this year's Lifetime Achievement Award.”

Bowles isn't alone in singing her praises. *The Washington Post* states that “Crook is a master at rustling up competing forces to create cinematic calamities,” and the *New York Times* has dubbed her “a treasure of Texas letters whose voice recalls the likes of Charles Portis and Mark Twain.” Her prose has been called “deftly rhythmic, often wry, and impeccably crafted” (*Texas Monthly*), “confident and lyrical” (*Kirkus*), with “words as carefully chosen as pearls on a matched necklace,” (*USA Today*) and holding “the sustained power of a drumbeat” (*Houston Chronicle*). The *Houston Chronicle* declares “just about everything Crook writes [is] drenched in Texas history—not the mythological kind, but a deeply researched dive into largely forgotten details and dark corners.”

In addition to her six critically hailed novels, Elizabeth has written for periodicals such as *Texas Monthly* and the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* and is co-writer, with Stephen Harrigan, of the screenplay for *The Which Way Tree*, currently in development. She has served on the board of the Texas Book Festival and is a member of the Philosophical Society of Texas.

Her book *Monday, Monday* was named a 2014 Best Fiction Book of the Year by *Kirkus Reviews*, while *The Madstone* was named one of *The Washington Post's* 50 notable works of fiction for

2023 and one of *Texas Observer's* 2023 Must-Read Lone Star Books. *The Which Way Tree* was named by The Texas Center for The Book at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission as their 2024 Texas Great Read Adult Selection “to represent the state’s literary landscape” at the National Book Festival. Other distinctions include a *Spur Award* from Western Writers of America, a *Willa Literary Award for Historical Fiction*, and the *Jesse H Jones Award for Fiction* from the Texas Institute of Letters.

When notified about being named the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award, Crook said, “I’m flat-out thrilled to receive this lovely award from an organization as respected as The Texas Institute of Letters. It appears that the decades of research, writing, re-writing, and second guessing—trying my best to land each scene with the perfect sentiment and finish each book with the truest ending—has somehow, gradually, generated what’s called a ‘body of work.’ As with any literary award, and any lifetime achievement award, there are other deserving writers who could have received it. I very much appreciate the honor.”

The [Texas Institute of Letters](#) is a non-profit Honor Society founded in 1936 to celebrate Texas literature and to recognize distinctive literary achievement. The TIL’s elected membership consists of the state’s most respected writers of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, journalism, songwriting, drama, and scholarship. The membership includes winners of the Pulitzer Prizes in drama, fiction, and nonfiction, as well as prizes by PEN, fellowships from the MacArthur Foundation and National Endowment for the Arts, and awards from dozens of other regional and national institutions.

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