

Distinguished Achievement Citation

Sandra Thompson, M.F.A

Class of 1965

With this presentation of Ohio Wesleyan's Distinguished Achievement Citation, the Ohio Wesleyan University Alumni Association Board of Directors is honored and privileged to recognize Sandra Thompson for her work in fiction, nonfiction, feature reporting, editing, and encouragement of writers.

Sandra graduated from Ohio Wesleyan in 1965 and began her publishing career in New York. In 1978, she earned her MFA in Creative Writing from Brooklyn College, and within just a few years she won the Flannery O'Connor Award for Short Fiction from the University of Georgia Press. Her prize-winning short story collection *Close-Ups* earned praise from the *Washington Book Review* for its "stunning wit and sparkle" and its "tight and resonant" prose. *The Nation* commented on her "deft and vivid account of the stages in a woman's life" and her "O'Connor-like subtlety and eye for the grotesque," while *Publishers Weekly* called the collection "haunting and understated."

Her novel *Wild Bananas*, the story of a failed marriage, garnered kudos from *Library Journal* for its "cool, spare style that creates emotional distance as she defines the characters' social milieu with precision." The *San Francisco Chronicle* called it "an impressive novelistic debut," and *Kirkus Reviews* said the work was "a sad/funny first novel of real pathos and skill."

Her fiction has been published in anthologies such as *The Flannery O'Connor Award, Selected Stories*, and *Vital Lines: Contemporary Fiction About Medicine*.

But fiction was only one of the arrows in Sandra's quiver. While a staff writer at the *St. Petersburg Times*, she wrote stories, profiles, reviews, and essays, and her column, "Observations," was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. As News Features Editor at the same paper, she supervised a staff of 35 assistant editors, writers, and critics, and she directed and edited "A Gift Abandoned," a series of stories that won the Pulitzer Prize for Feature Writing in 1990.

Sandra served as a judge for the Flannery O'Connor competition from 1997 to 2001. She received an Individual Artist Fellowship from the state of Florida and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and has served as a writer-in-residence for the National Writer's Voice Writers Community. Sandra taught fiction workshops at New College in Sarasota; the University of South Florida in Tampa; and the Florida Suncoast Writers' Workshop, also at the University of South Florida. She previously was an instructor at Marymount Manhattan College and Brooklyn College, both in New York City.

Sandra continues as an active freelance writer of reviews, articles, and short stories. For her contributions to the national literary scene, we applaud Sandra Thompson and her notable career through the presentation of this Distinguished Achievement Citation.

15 May 2010

