



THE
GORDON SINCLAIR
FOUNDATION

Gordon Sinclair Foundation selects PEI journalist as 2009 Fellow

TORONTO (May 17, 2009) – On the 25th anniversary of Gordon Sinclair’s passing in 1984, the Gordon Sinclair Foundation is pleased to announce the selection of Gillian Carr, who is about to graduate from Carleton University’s Bachelor of Journalism program, as the winner of the 2009 Gordon Sinclair Fellowship. One of the legacies of Sinclair’s career is the Foundation that bears his name and which has helped educate a generation of young journalists. [gordonsinclairfoundation.ca]

The Foundation and the annual fellowship that it awards to a promising young journalism school graduate were established in 1984 by friends of the legendary journalist and broadcaster to honour his memory and recognize his contributions to Canadian journalism. Gordon Sinclair was a remarkable journalist, author, radio commentator and television personality who until his death in 1984, was one of Canada’s most enduring celebrities. He earned that celebrity during a career that included periods with the Toronto Star newspaper, CFRB radio and as a panelist on CBC’s long-running Front Page Challenge.



Carr, 22, will use the \$15,000 award to take up an offer to join a Masters program in Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of St. Andrew’s, in Scotland. Carr is graduating from Carleton’s journalism program with a double major in political science, a concentration in international relations and a minor in Spanish. At St. Andrew’s she plans to conduct research into the role of the media in post-conflict reconstruction, particularly in contexts where media and journalists were used as a weapon of war or tool of fear during the conflict. The conflict studies program at St. Andrew’s provides a guided fieldwork experience for students in a post-conflict and development setting. Carr hopes to examine the role of media in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. St Andrews is Scotland’s first university and the third oldest in the English speaking world, founded in 1413.

“Gordon Sinclair was famous for his frank candor and expressing his opinions about controversial subjects,” Carr said. “His legacy lives on in his work and has continued to have timeless relevance, especially with the re-emergence of his famous piece “The Americans” after September 11th and Hurricane Katrina.

“I like to think that he would be very interested today in the role the media can play in rebuilding societies after disasters and conflict.”

Gordon Sinclair informed, agitated and entertained two generations of Canadians and Americans too as reporter and commentator in the newspaper and on radio and TV. He died May 17, 1984 at the age of 84 shortly after collapsing on his way home from his daily radio broadcasts on CFRB radio.

Sinclair Foundation President Don Johnston said: "If Gordon were alive today he would be pleased that so many young Canadians have been able to travel the world and study in some of the countries he covered as a roving correspondent in the 1930s." Johnston, who worked with Sinclair at CFRB NEWS, added that Sinclair was always interested in young people.

The Sinclair Foundation's Executive Director, Allan Thompson, who won the first Fellowship in 1986, said that Fellowship entries came from journalism schools across Canada. Carr is the 22nd person to be named a Gordon Sinclair Fellow since the fellowship was first awarded in 1986. The previous two winners have been graduates of Ryerson University's journalism program.

Over the years, many Sinclair fellows have gone on to make their mark as Canadian journalists, a number of them following in Sinclair's footsteps and reporting from exotic locales. Sinclair fellowship winners have worked for news organizations around the world, including the *Toronto Star*, *Globe and Mail*, *Canadian Press*, *Bloomberg News*, *Reuters News Agency*, *South China Morning Post*, *The Times of London*, *BBC*, *The Independent*, *Forbes magazine*, *the Chicago Tribune* and others.

While Sinclair Fellows are expected to engage in studies that will enrich their capabilities as journalists, whether or not the fellowship year leads to an academic degree or other formal qualification during the fellowship year is a matter of personal choice. But Fellows are expected to use their research to produce a major essay on a topic of current interest in the field of journalism.

The total value of the Gordon Sinclair Fellowship is \$13,000 in Canadian funds, with an additional award of \$2,000 paid upon acceptance by the Foundation of the Gordon Sinclair Memorial Essay at the conclusion of the fellowship year.

For more information about the Gordon Sinclair Foundation visit the website of the foundation at: www.GordonSinclairFoundation.ca

For further information on this year's winner, please contact:

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Past Gordon Sinclair Fellowship winners

2008 – Martha D. Jack is currently completing her coursework for her MA in digital media at London Metropolitan University. The subject of her thesis is the motivation and gratification felt by citizen journalists when they produce their content. In the autumn she will be returning to North America and hopes to find work in online journalism.

2007 - Julia Belluz completed an MSc in Social Anthropology from the London School of Economics. During her studies there she became the second winner of the Bernard Levin Award (in honour of an LSE alumnus and former reporter with *The Times*), with her essay *London as a Moveable Feast*. Following her studies at the LSE she worked as an intern with *The Times*. She's now a London-based freelance journalist. Her work has appeared in *The Globe and Mail*.

2006 - Brett Popplewell completed an MA in the History of International Relations at the London School of Economics. During his fellowship year he was a regular contributor to the pages of *The Globe and Mail*, freelancing stories from Bosnia, Ireland and the UK. He is currently a business reporter with the *Toronto Star*.

2005 - Sherri Beattie spent her fellowship year in Grenoble, France, at the Université Stendhal, doing an intensive French language program and living with a French family for the year. She also did the DELP exam, "Diplôme d'études en langue française" while there. She is scheduled to graduate next month from Osgoode Hall Law School with her J.D., juris doctorate.

2004 - Julia C. Williams did a Masters in International Relations at the University of Sussex in the UK and later worked for International Alert, a conflict resolution organization, before joining the Afghanistan Task Force at the Canadian International Development Agency.

2002 -Kate Barrette completed her M.A. in Russian and Eastern European Studies. She joined Radio Prague in October, 2005 and later worked for *the Globe and Mail*. She now lives in New York.

2001 - Irek Kusmierczyk obtained an MSc in European Politics and Policy at the London School of Economics. During that year he worked as an intern with Alan Freeman then-London correspondent for *The Globe and Mail*. Following his year in London he continued his studies at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. He is currently completing his PhD in Political Science at the Vanderbilt University in the U.S.

2001 - Yasmin Solomonescu used the fellowship to complete a Masters degree in English at Cambridge University, in the UK. She continued her studies and later completed a PhD, looking specifically at the links between journalism and 19th century writers.

1999 - Jennifer Ross completed an MA in Political Studies at Queens University in her fellowship year before moving to London for a second masters in International Relations from the London School of Economics. She is currently a project assistant with the United Nations' Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in Santiago, Chile. Prior to taking on her role with the United Nations, Ross was a freelance foreign correspondent whose work appears in BBC radio, CBC radio and TV, NPR's Latino USA, *The Independent*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star*, among others.

1998 - Nathan Vardi spent his fellowship year studying International Affairs at Columbia University in New York City. Though he had planned to return to Canada following his fellowship year, he

wound up staying in New York City where he got a job with *Forbes Magazine*, where he is now an associate editor dealing primarily with investigations.

1997 - Jennifer Fleming used her fellowship to study at the University of Havana in Cuba and now teaches journalism at California State University, Long Beach. Prior to that she contributed to some of Canada's highest rated national news and current affairs programs including *CTV News with Lloyd Robertson*, *Canada AM* and *CTV Newsnet*.

1996 - Anne-Marie Wheeler

1995 - Jennifer Goddu studied women's studies at York University during her fellowship year. She began her journalism career immediately after completing her studies, first as an intern at the *Edmonton Journal* and then as a reporter in Moncton, New Brunswick with *The Times and Transcript*. Following a stint in Toronto with *The Canadian Press*, Goddu moved to Chicago, from where she freelanced regularly for the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Chicago Sun-Times* where she reviewed theatre for a decade. She currently teaches in the writing centre at Queens University of Charlotte, North Carolina but continues to work periodically as a freelancer.

1993 - Alexandra Topolski

1992 - Rian Maelzer is a Malaysian-based business correspondent with *World Business*, a weekly half hour business news feature broadcast on CNBC and PBS.

1991 - Christopher Brown, now a national reporter for the CBC in British Columbia, did a Masters degree in arts and political science at Dalhousie University.

1990 - Shawn Berry was a reporter with the *St. Catharines Standard* and a student of journalism at Western University before winning the fellowship. He used his fellowship year to study sociology at Concordia University. It was during his fellowship year he decided he wanted to teach sociology. He's currently teaching at Dawson College in Montreal.

1989 - Lydia Zajc, did a Masters in political science at McGill University and later worked at *Bloomberg*, *Reuters* and the *South China Morning Post* in Hong Kong. She is now a freelancer.

1988 - Wayne Adam, then of Vandorf - northeast of Richmond Hill - was awarded the Sinclair fellowship to study natural resources in the University of Michigan's two-year master's program.

1987 - Mark Bastien spent his fellowship year studying international relations and the French language at Schiller International University in Paris, France. Upon his return to Canada he worked for *Canadian Press* but sadly, passed away in the early 1990s.

1986 - Allan Thompson was the first Gordon Sinclair Fellow. In his fellowship year he completed an MA in International Relations at the University of Kent at Canterbury before returning to Canada to work as a reporter with the *Toronto Star* for 17 years. He is now an associate professor of journalism at Carleton University, editor of *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide* and director of the Rwanda Initiative project. He is also executive director of the Gordon Sinclair Foundation.

Backgrounder on Gillian Carr

Q. Tell us about yourself.

A. I'm 22 years old, originally from Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. My undergrad degree (which I will receive in June) is a Bachelor of Journalism in Journalism and Political Science, with a concentration in International Relations and a minor in Spanish from Carleton University. My parents are Darke and Marya Carr. My father is an insurance broker and my mother is a physiotherapist, and both live and work in Charlottetown. I am currently back in Charlottetown for the summer. I decided I wanted to do journalism fairly early on as a teenager, although I can see early signs from even before that- during the Christmas holidays I came across one of my diaries from grade 6 and in between all the angst of being a pre-teen, I had written entries about the conflict in Kosovo and about the U.S. and U.K. bombing areas in Iraq! I've always had a burning curiosity to know what is happening outside my own little sphere, to know what's happening in the far off places I read about in the paper or saw on TV. Journalism helped quench (and also feed) that curiosity.

Q. What will you be doing with the Sinclair Fellowship?

A. For next year I will be studying for an M.Litt in Peace and Conflict Studies at the School of International Relations, University of St Andrews. It is a one- year taught masters program with nine months of coursework and then three months to write my dissertation in the summer (12 months in total). One thing that is particularly unique to the St Andrews program is that it offers a guided fieldwork placement in a post-conflict country during the second semester, in order to give its students firsthand experience in observing the difficulties and rewards of post-conflict reconstruction. The Sinclair Fellowship will allow me to visit these countries and talk to the people who lived through conflict and are now rebuilding their lives and society will be very important for my research next year. I'm hoping to study media outlets in post-conflict societies, and look at the impact they have on the peace process. Particularly, I'm hoping to study places where the media was used as a weapon (ie. Rwandan hate radio, nationalist newspapers in the former Yugoslavia) during conflict, and see what kind of transformation is made in the industry post-conflict.

I believe the media is an essential part of a functioning democratic society and after it has been "corrupted", I want to study how societies move on from seeing the media as a weapon to being a necessary instrument that helps to ensure a similar tragedy will never happen again. Some of the questions I'll want to look at: what steps are needed to rebuild trust between the society and the media? What kind of training is necessary for those involved in that country's media? For those international correspondents who might return to a post-conflict area and report on the rebuilding- can they help or hinder the reconstruction process? What is their role as they file their stories?

Q. What does Gordon Sinclair might mean to you? Given your age, you never watched him on TV or saw him in action, so what does he mean for someone of your generation?

Gordon Sinclair died a couple years before I was born so I can't say that he has made as strong an impact on my generation as he did with previous ones. Gordon Sinclair was famous for his frank candor and expressing his opinions about controversial subjects, and his legacy lives on in his work and has continued to have timeless relevance, especially with the re-emergence of his famous piece "The Americans" after September 11th and Hurricane Katrina. In "The Americans", Gordon Sinclair speaks on the role the United States has played in helping rebuild other countries' infrastructure and society, a role that he lauded them for. He talks about what other countries could do to help them in their time of need (when the American Red Cross was broke after a year of domestic disasters) instead criticizing the Americans in their newspapers and broadcasts. I like to think that he would be very interested today in the role the media can play in rebuilding societies after disasters and conflict.