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# Harbour shines at Book Awards

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May 25, 2012 1:00 AM

It was a particularly satisfying win for Harbour Publishing at this year's BC Book Awards.

When the envelope was opened May 12 at a gala event in Vancouver, there were three awards for books by the Madeira Park publisher, including a book of poems by Pender Harbour's John Pass.

Pass, who has previously been honoured with a Governor General's Award, took the Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize for his most recent collection of poems, *crawlspace*, and commented that it was gratifying to win an award on home turf, in B.C.

As one of five nominees, Pass was not expecting to win the prize, so had neglected to write an acceptance speech.

"I really wasn't expecting to win," he told Coast Reporter later. "I've been nominated for the BC Book Prize three times now. I feel silly preparing a victory speech and not giving it."

Despite his lack of preparation, when he came to podium he delivered an eloquent address, thanking his publisher and his wife, Theresa Kishkan - who was also a nominee for her book *Mnemonic* - with whom "life is poetry."

Harbour's 2011 best seller, *The Chuck Davis History of Metropolitan Vancouver* by Chuck Davis, won both the Roderick Haig-Brown Regional Book Prize, awarded to the book which most contributes to the enjoyment and understanding of B.C., and the Bill Duthie Booksellers' Choice Award, given to the author and publisher with the best book in terms of public appeal, initiative, design, production and content.

This was a satisfying win not only for Harbour's Howard White, its founder and guiding hand, but for many of the Harbour staff.

White knew the late Chuck Davis. "He gave me my first media interview about Raincoast Chronicles," White said, "back in 1972."

Davis was host of an afternoon CBC show, and although White was nervous, Davis proved a gentle interviewer. Over the years Davis brought out many guide books and regional histories. The Vancouver book was a good seller and this latest history was intended to be the culmination of all of his work.

"He had been working on it for 10 years," White said, "and in some ways he had been working on it all his life."

Davis died in 2010 with his book unfinished. Many writers, editors, photo researchers, history buffs and many of the staff of Harbour Publishing set out to complete it in time for the city's 125th anniversary.

"It's the kind of book that should have taken three years to complete," White commented, "but we did it in seven months."

Winning awards does not always help with book sales, he noted, but it does give the book a lift and makes it stand out from the crowd. They doubted that the big, hard cover book at a price of \$49.95 would sell, but the book reading public supported it.

"It's a great upper," White said. "Everybody felt good about it."

Chuck Davis' widow, Edna Davis, his daughter Stephanie Davis and about a dozen Harbour employees and freelancers who worked on the book came on stage to accept the final prize on Davis' behalf.

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