Kim Stafford (1949 -)

Kim Stafford is a prolific writer, a public intellectual, and an influential teacher who is widely recognized for his contributions to Oregon literature. He grew up in a word-friendly home, the second of four children of poet and teacher William Stafford and teacher Dorothy Stafford. In his early years, following his father's career, Stafford's family moved often, but by 1957 they had settled in Lake Oswego.

After high school, Stafford headed to Eugene, where he earned bachelor's and master's degrees in English and a doctorate in Middle English literature from University of Oregon. (Recently, he was named a Distinguished Duck Alumni.) A conscientious objector, he subsequently worked as oral historian, editor, printer, photographer, and itinerant scholar. In 1978, he began teaching at Lewis & Clark College in Portland.

The author of more than a dozen books, Stafford writes in multiple genres. His poems, collected in many volumes, have been published in national magazines as well as etched into local public art projects. One of his essay collections, *Having Everything Right* (1996), won a Western States Book Award citation. Among his wide-ranging works, he also penned a memoir of his father, *Early Morning* (2003); a children's book, *We Got Here Together* (1994); a collection of short fictions inspired by Oregon coast photos, *Wind on the Waves* (1992); and a handbook about writing, *The Muses among Us* (2003). He has created a CD of his original songs, *Wheel Made of Wind* (1997, with Jan DeWeese), and a radio series for National Public Radio. Stafford's range as a writer is exemplified by the half-dozen Oregon Book Award nominations he has garnered—-in more categories than any other writer.

Stafford is also a popular public speaker and storyteller, traveling the country to perform for audiences ranging from the Oregon State Legislature to the national Cowboy Poetry Festival to the U.S. Forest Service.

Through his work as a teacher, Stafford has made significant contributions to Oregon literature. In 1986, he founded the Northwest Writing Institute to offer courses "in writing and cultural inquiry" for people from all walks of life, and he inspired and provoked Oregon teachers through the Oregon Writing Project. Stafford co-founded Fishtrap (a nonprofit that promotes writing about the West), and Oregon Folk Arts. Thousands of children have worked with Stafford through his programs for student writers and his participation in artists-in-the-schools projects and writing festivals. He received a Governor's Arts Award in 1998 and the Stewart H. Holbrook Literacy Legacy Award from Literary Arts in 2007.

An enthusiastic off-road thinker and peace activist, Stafford's recent projects include serving as writer-in-residence at Pacific Northwest College of Art and executing the literary estate of his father. He is currently working on a series of essays about Portland, where he lives with his wife and children.

Written by Tim Gillespie

Further Reading:

"seeking affinity in story, essay, poem & song through writing, teaching, and the life of witness" [Kim Stafford's web site]. http://www.kim-stafford.com/.

Stafford, Kim, Debra Frasier, illus. *We Got Here Together*. *Harcourt*, 1994.

Stafford, Kim, Ray Atkeson, Rick Schafer. *Wind on the Waves.* Portland: Graphic Arts Center Publishing

Company, 1992.

Stafford, Kim. *Early Morning: Remembering My Father, William Stafford*. St. Paul: Graywolf Press, 2003.

Stafford, Kim. *Having Everything Right: Essays of Place. Seattle: Sasquatch Books*, 1996.

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