

For Immediate Release:

## **SHELAGH D. GRANT WINS THE 2011 LIONEL GELBER PRIZE FOR HER SEMINAL BOOK ON THE ARCTIC**

March 1, 2011 (Toronto and Washington). Sara Charney, chair of the Lionel Gelber Prize Board and niece of Lionel Gelber, announced today that the winner of the 2011 Lionel Gelber Prize is Shelagh D. Grant for her book *Polar Imperative: A History of Arctic Sovereignty in North America* published by Douglas & McIntyre.

“Shelagh Grant is the first Canadian woman to receive the Lionel Gelber Prize, a fact that would have made my uncle very proud,” Charney notes. “We applaud Ms Grant’s book, it is key to our understanding of the Arctic’s future.”

Jury chair Paul Cadario remarked, “*Polar Imperative*, Shelagh Grant’s riveting history of adventure, sovereignty, and environment around the Arctic Ocean, is a comprehensive account of the interplay of politics, economics, institutions and culture that few ever experienced first-hand. Her well-told chronicle deftly documents the back story on diplomatic and military events well before the 24-hour news cycle. As climate change melts the polar icecap and for the first time makes competition for undersea natural resources possible in a fragile ecosystem, Grant also reshapes our mental model of the world’s important borders and vital global trade routes. Her book is must-read background for what could well become the next ‘great game’.”

Based on 30 years of groundbreaking archival research on Arctic sovereignty and her reputation as a leading historian in the field, Grant’s winning book is a definitive overview of the attempts by many countries to claim sovereign rights over the polar regions of North America. Covering Alaska and Greenland as well as Canada and balancing the implications of major changes in climate, science and technology, and international law against the competing ambitions of those countries seeking sovereign rule of the Arctic, Grant’s use of archival documents to reveal previously unpublished details surrounding Britain’s 1880 transfer of the Arctic islands to Canada, and the identity of those who firmly secured Canadian title to the archipelago in 1925 is of particular importance. By comparing the actions of various governments over two millennia, she concludes that Arctic sovereignty has historically depended less on legal interpretation or military might than on the ice cover that restricted access to adjacent waters, and the speed with which countries have acted to assert sovereign authority.

Shelagh D. Grant is Canada’s leading authority on Arctic history and the first woman and first historian to receive the INAC’s Northern Science Award/Centenary Medal. Her previous books include the award-winning *Arctic Justice: On Trial for Murder, Pond Inlet, 1923; Sovereignty or Security? Government Policy in the Canadian North, 1936 – 1950*; a history of Mittimatalik-Pond Inlet, which was translated into Inuktitut under Grant’s supervision and the copyright donated to the Baffin Island Teacher's Learning Centre for use in their schools and elders' centres; along with numerous articles published in scholarly journals. Her research has involved

extensive travel throughout the circumpolar region: to Siberia, the Svalbard Islands, Greenland, Iceland, and Finland, as well as throughout Canada's eastern and western Arctic. Now retired from regular teaching, she remains an adjunct professor in the Canadian Studies program and a research associate of the Frost Centre at Trent University. A white water canoeist, wilderness camper, both downhill and cross-country skier, mother of three and grandmother of six, she lives in Peterborough, Ontario, with her long time spouse Jon K. Grant.

Ms Grant will accept her award and give a public lecture at the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs on Tuesday, March 29, 2011. Subsequently, she will speak at an event hosted by Lionel Gelber Prize partner *Foreign Policy* magazine, to be held at George Washington University's Elliott School, in Washington, D.C.

The five-person jury – composed of jury chair Paul Cadario, senior manager for Trust Fund Quality Assurance and Compliance at the World Bank; David Frum, a Canadian and American journalist who is active in both the American and Canadian political arenas; Rachel Lomax, who has served as deputy governor, Monetary Stability, at the Bank of England and as vice president and chief of staff to the president of the World Bank; Mark Starowicz, executive director of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's Documentary Programming; and Steven Weber, a specialist in international relations at the University of California at Berkeley and senior policy advisor with the Glover Park Group in Washington, D.C. – chose *Polar Imperative* from a five-book shortlist announced on January 17, 2011. The remaining four finalists are *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle against Poverty in Asia* by Nick Cullather; *Why the West Rules – For Now* by Ian Morris; *Yalta: The Price of Peace* by Serhii Plokhy; and *Arrival City: The Final Migration and Our Next World* by Doug Saunders.

The Lionel Gelber Prize was founded in 1989 by Canadian diplomat Lionel Gelber. A literary award for the world's best non-fiction book in English on foreign affairs that seeks to deepen public debate on significant international issues, The Lionel Gelber Prize is presented annually by The Lionel Gelber Foundation, in partnership with the Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto and *Foreign Policy* magazine. The winning author receives \$15,000.

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