

Shirlee Smith Matheson's definition of success is being “a story keeper” – writing adult nonfiction biographies as well young adult novels that add to society’s collective knowledge. Shirlee has lived on farms in Manitoba near the Riding Mountains, and in Alberta west of Sylvan Lake; and in urban areas ranging from Lacombe, Alberta; to Vernon and Hudson’s Hope, British Columbia; in Australia; and in Calgary.

Shirlee’s enrollment in writing programs at the Banff Centre afforded her the privilege of meeting, and having as instructors, some of Canada’s top writers: W.O.Mitchell, Alistair MacLeod, Irving Layton, Robert Kroetsch, Richard Lemm, Phyllis Webb and Orm Mitchell. She further attended summer programs at the Iowa School of Writing.

The advice she received from these instructors and mentors has served her well. As of 2014, Shirlee has had 18 books published; further, several titles that went out of print following several reprints are currently being edited, updated and released by new publishers. “It’s great to see these books gain new life,” Shirlee says. “They had become ‘old friends’, not only to me but also to readers who refer to these stories that they had read when they were younger and were now interested in purchasing copies for their children or younger friends. Yes, my writing career has now spanned a couple generations of readers!”

The latest in Shirlee Smith Matheson’s popular Canadian aviation stories, *Amazing Flights and Flyers*, is a fascinating collection of adventures ranging from aerial hijackings to secret Nazi weather stations in Labrador, from the missions of the Civil Air Search and Rescue Association to an incredible aerial rescue expedition in the Antarctic. “Every story is different, every story is astonishing, and every story is completely true!”

Non-Fiction

Lost: True Stories of Canadian Aviation Tragedies, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2005 (currently out of print – new release coming in 2014)

A Royal Balance: The Life and Times of Hal Wyatt, Frontenac House 2013.

Amazing Flights and Flyers, Frontenac House, 2010

Maverick in the Sky: The Aerial Adventures of WW I Flying Ace Freddie McCall, Frontenac House, 2007

Nonfiction titles currently out of print:

Youngblood of the Peace, Lone Pine 1987, reissued Detselig/Tameron Books 1991 (currently out of print)

This Was Our Valley, Detselig/Tameron Books, 1989, reissued 1991, 2003, co-author Earl K. Pollon (currently out of print)

Flying the Frontiers-A Half Million Hours of Aviation Adventure, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1994, 7th printing 1997 (currently out of print)

Flying the Frontiers Vol. II, More Hours of Aviation Adventure, Detselig/Tameron Books, 1996, reissued 1997 (currently out of print)

Flying the Frontiers Vol. III, Aviation Adventures Around the World, Detselig/Tameron Books, 1999 (currently out of print)

A Western Welcome to the World – The History of the Calgary International Airport, Cherbo Publishers, 1997 (currently out of print)

Young Adult

Fastback Beach, Orca Book Publishers, 2003; 7th reprint 2013

Jailbird Kid, Dundurn Group, 2010

Prairie Pictures, McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1989, re-issued 1994; new release forthcoming, Heritage House, 2014

City Pictures, McClelland & Stewart, 1994, B. Wahlstroms Bokforlag, Sweden 1995; new release forthcoming, Heritage House, 2014/15

Flying Ghosts, Stoddart, 1993, re-issued Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2005

The Gamblers Daughter (sequel to *Flying Ghosts*), original printing Beach Holme, 1998; updated printing Dundurn Group, 2009

Keeper of the Mountains, Thistle-down Press, 2000 (*currently out of print*)

Awards

Canadian Children's Book Centre Choice Awards for Teen Novels, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1998, 2000, 2003

Athabasca University Distinguished Alumni Award, 2001-2002

Emerald Award for Environmental Excellence, finalist, 2001,

Northern Lights College, British Columbia: Honorary Associate of Arts degree, 2001

Canadian Award in Aviation, 99s Organization of Women Pilots, 1999

Alberta Culture First Prize for Non-Fiction, 1990

B.C. Book Prize, Roderick Haig-Brown silver award, 1990.

Speaking Topics

“History and Mystery”

“Digging for Gold” – discovering treasures in biographies and memoirs