PRESS RELEASE

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Finalists for CODE's 2016 *Burt Award for Caribbean Literature* Announced

Thousands of copies of the winning titles to be distributed to Caribbean youth to promote love of reading

Port of Spain, 11 March 2016 — CODE is proud to announce the finalists for its third annual Burt Award for Caribbean Literature, which recognizes outstanding writing for young adults by Caribbean authors.

Six finalists were selected from among 60 submissions of published books and unpublished manuscripts. The 2016 shortlisted titles are (in alphabetical order):

- The Demise of the Queen's College Adventure Club by Imam Baksh, Guyana (manuscript)
- De First Family by Tamika Gibson, Trinidad & Tobago (manuscript)
- The Truth Is by Lynn Joseph, Trinidad & Tobago (manuscript)
- The Protector's Pledge by Danielle Y.C. McClean, Trinidad & Tobago (self-published)
- Barberry Hill by Carol Mitchell, St. Kitts & Nevis (manuscript)
- Girlcott by Florenz Webbe Maxwell, Bermuda (manuscript)

The finalists were selected by a jury administered by the Bocas Lit Fest and made up of writers and educators with expertise in Caribbean literature.

Up to $22,000 CAD in prize money will be awarded to up to three winners, who will be announced on **April 29th** at an award ceremony during the **2016 NGC Bocas Lit Fest in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.**

As part of its ongoing commitment to promote writing by Caribbean writers for Caribbean readers, CODE will facilitate the publication of unpublished winning manuscripts by Caribbean publishers. CODE will also purchase and distribute up to 6000 copies of the winning titles, which will be donated to schools, libraries and community organizations across the region.

"This is the award's third year in the Caribbean, and it only gets more exciting as time goes on," said CODE Executive Director Scott Walter. "We were thrilled by the number of submissions received this year, many of them unpublished manuscripts by emerging authors, which suggests there is a great deal of untapped writing talent in the Caribbean. In addition to supporting the publication of the winning books, CODE looks forward to introducing these authors and their high quality, culturally relevant stories to eager young readers across the region."

To date, CODE has distributed 15,000 award-winning books to readers in eleven Caribbean countries. It further supports local writing and publishing through workshops for writers and editors and through reading promotion initiatives, such as sponsoring events that connect winning authors directly with young readers.

"Our desire to tell and hear stories is never quenched and it starts with the young. The Burt Award is fuelling a revolution in the literary arts and publishing in our region in the underexploited area of young adult literature, and the Bocas Lit Fest is pleased to be playing its part in this important development," says Marina Salandy-Brown, founder and director of the Bocas Lit Fest.

The Burt Award for Caribbean Literature was established by CODE—a Canadian charitable organization that has been advancing literacy and learning for 55 years—in collaboration with the Literary Prizes Foundation. CODE's Burt Award is a global readership initiative that includes programs in the Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, and Canada.

For further details on the *Burt Award for Caribbean Literature*, please visit:

www.codecan.org/burt-award-caribbean

or contact:

info@bocaslitfest.com/*Telephone: (868) 222 7099* www.bocaslitfest.com

About CODE

With 55 years of evolving success, CODE is Canada's leading international development agency uniquely focused on advancing literacy and education in some of the world's regions in greatest need. By acting to establish and ignite engaging learning environments through the development and publishing of locally authored and designed children books, training teachers and teacher-librarians, resourcing libraries as well as distributing significant numbers of high quality reading materials, CODE focuses on inspiring young minds to improve their literacy and comprehension with the hope that they become critical thinkers and life-long learners, all in working towards nurturing a literate civil society. **www.codecan.org.**