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WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University Press is pleased to announce that *Just a Larger Family: Letters of Marie Williamson from the Canadian Home Front, 1940–1944* is the winner of the Heritage Toronto Award of Excellence in the book category. The book is edited by Mary F. Williamson, Marie’s daughter, and Tom Sharp, the younger of two English boys who lived with the Williamson family in Toronto during the Second World War. Historian Jack Granatstein called it “an extraordinary slice of wartime Canadian life.... Marie Williamson and her family created a record of genuine historical importance.”

Tom Sharp was on hand to accept the award and called it a tremendous honour, adding “The credit is due entirely to Marie Williamson, who wrote the letters. There were many Canadians who made similar home front sacrifices who also deserve recognition. I hope they will feel this book’s award, in a sense, gives it to them. I was very young during my years in Toronto, and editing Marie’s letters helped me return some of that time to my memory. It is overwhelming to me as an English person with a love of Canada that I am myself now part of the heritage of Toronto, one of the greatest of world cities.”

**About the book:** The Second World War had been under way for a year when Marie and John Williamson welcomed two English brothers to join them and their two children in their small house in north Toronto for the duration of the conflict. Marie wrote over 150 letters to the boys’ mother, Margaret Sharp, imagining that she could make Margaret feel she was still with her children. She shepherded the boys through education decisions and illnesses, eased them into a strange new life, and rejoiced when they embraced unfamiliar winter sports. The letters in *Just a Larger Family* brim with detail about family holidays, the financial implications of an extended family, their involvement in their church, and the games and activities that kept them occupied. Marie’s letters reflect the lives and concerns of a particular family in Toronto, but they also reveal a portrait of what was then Canada’s second-largest city during wartime.

**About the editors:** **Mary F. Williamson** is a retired fine-arts bibliographer and adjunct faculty in graduate art history at York University. She co-authored *Art and Architecture in Canada* (1991), and her recent writings on nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century cookery have appeared in *Covering Niagara: Studies in Local Popular Culture* (WLU Press, 2010) and *The Edible City* (2009).

**Tom Sharp** is the younger of the two boys who came to live with the Williamsons in Canada. He had a civil service career in trade policy and was awarded the Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in 1987. He was an elected local councillor in Guildford, Surrey, a governor of two local schools, and a citizens’ advice bureau member.

For more information about Heritage Toronto and the award see [www.heritagetoronto.org](http://www.heritagetoronto.org)

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