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## People & Places: Peggy V. Helmerich Distinguished Author Award

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Posted: Sunday, November 2, 2014 12:00 am



Kristin Bender, Peggy Helmerich and Marcy Robinowitz at Snug Harbor at Southern Hills Country Club at the luncheon to plan for this year's Peggy V. Helmerich Distinguished Author Award that will honor novelist Ann Patchett. MICHAEL WYKE/Tulsa World

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By JAMES D. WATTS JR. World Scene Writer | 0 comments

Novelist Ann Patchett is a fan of happy endings, in fiction as well as in life.

When the other independent bookstores in Nashville, where Patchett makes her home, closed their doors, Patchett opened her own bookstore so that passionate lovers of literature would have a place to discover new books.

Even her own novels tend to resolve in positive or almost positive ways.

As Patchett said in a Tulsa World interview earlier this year, "There are positive stories out there. They do exist. I'm writing from my own experience in a lot of ways, and I have to say that I've known a lot more wonderfully kind people than I have serial killers."

Patchett will be rewarded for her wide ranging work as a novelist, essayist and champion of the printed book, when she is presented with the 2014 Peggy V. Helmerich Distinguished Author Award.

The award — an engraved crystal book and a \$40,000 cash prize — will be presented at a gala dinner on Dec. 5. The evening will feature a special performance by opera star

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Sarah Coburn.

Patchett will also take part in a free public event Dec. 6, in which she will talk about her career, answer questions and sign copies of her books.

Patchett is the 29th recipient of the award, whose previous honorees have included Nobel Prize winners Toni Morrison and Saul Bellow; American literary icons Eudora Welty, John Updike, Norman Mailer and Ray Bradbury; playwright Neil Simon; British novelists John Le Carre, Ian McEwan and Kazuo Ishiguro; and historians William Manchester and David McCullough (the only two-time recipient of the award).

Patchett is the author of best-selling novels "Bel Canto," "State of Wonder" and "The Magician's Assistance," and three volumes of non-fiction, the most recent being "This is the Story of a Happy Marriage."

**Event details:** Gala dinner, 6:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 5, at the Librarium, 1115 S. Denver Ave.

**Attire:** Black tie

**Sponsors:** Tulsa Library Trust and Tulsa City-County Library

**Chairs:** Kristin Bender, Marcy Rabinowitz

**Tickets:** \$175. To order, call 918-549-7366

**For more:** [helmerichaward.org](http://helmerichaward.org)

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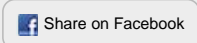
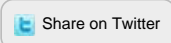
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**AG ruling: Secrecy not allowed**

The Legislature's mandate for public transparency in legislative hearings is not being honored, according to a ruling by the Oklahoma Supreme Court.

The court's ruling in *State v. Oklahoma State Legislature* (2014-10-10) says that the Legislature's attempt to keep its proceedings secret is unconstitutional. The court said that the Legislature's actions violated the Oklahoma Constitution's guarantee of public access to government proceedings.

The court's decision is a landmark ruling that will likely have a significant impact on the way the Legislature conducts its business.

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**More than 250 new laws in effect**

OKTIP: Oklahoma voters have approved more than 250 new laws since the 2010 election, according to the Oklahoma Legislative Services Center.

The laws cover a wide range of issues, including education, health care, and public safety. The center says that the number of laws passed is the highest in the state's history.

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**MICHELLE MURPHY: ACHIEVING MILESTONES**



Michelle Murphy, a Tulsa resident, has achieved a significant milestone in her life. She has been named the recipient of the Peggy V. Helmerich Distinguished Author Award for her book, "Starting Life Anew." The award is presented annually to a local author whose work has made a significant contribution to the community.

Murphy's book tells the story of her life after a tragic event. She has overcome many challenges and has become a role model for many people in the community.

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**Starting life anew**

Church celebrates exonerated woman's 'rebirth' 20 years after crime against son

By ZINA KRANSTETTER ■ WORLD ENTERPRISE EDITOR

A Tulsa woman who was wrongfully convicted of a crime against her son is celebrating a "rebirth" 20 years after her exoneration. The woman, Michelle Murphy, has been named the recipient of the Peggy V. Helmerich Distinguished Author Award for her book, "Starting Life Anew."

Murphy's story is one of resilience and hope. She has overcome many challenges and has become a role model for many people in the community. Her book, "Starting Life Anew," tells the story of her life after a tragic event.

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**OCCJ anti-bias push targets lawmakers**

The Oklahoma Council on Crime and Justice (OCCJ) is pushing for anti-bias legislation to be passed by the Oklahoma Legislature. The council says that the current laws are outdated and do not adequately protect the rights of all Oklahomans.

The council's push is part of a larger effort to reform the criminal justice system in Oklahoma. The council says that the current system is flawed and needs to be reformed to better serve the community.

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Tulsa World, Nov. 11, 2014

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