

Our 2007 Lon Tinkle Award winner for distinguished achievement is William D. Wittliff, accomplished publisher, writer, photographer, director, producer and screenwriter. In 1964, shortly after graduating from the University of Texas, Wittliff, with his wife Sally, founded a book publishing company, The Encino Press, which specialized in regional material about Texas and the Southwest, including the Texas Folklore Society publications. If Bill had kept on publishing Texas Folklore Society Publications I would not be here introducing him. When he decided to leave publishing it left Ab Abernethy without a publisher. I decided to step in and thus began my publishing career. The Texas Folklore Society was the hook on which I hung my whole publishing career. So I owe a lot to Bill Wittliff.

Encino won over 100 awards for quality of design and content. The press combined excellence of design and quality of content with the necessity for commercial success. It produced works of history, biography, and belles lettres, which major publishers had passed by.

Bill Wittliff's other acclaimed endeavors include the film adaptations of *The Black Stallion*, *Lonesome Dove*, *Legends of the Fall*, and *The Perfect Storm*, among others. His film *Raggedy Man* was based upon his childhood experiences.

An accomplished photographer and writer, Wittliff's photographs documenting the life of the Mexican vaquero have been exhibited in numerous galleries and institutions throughout this country and in Mexico. His two recent books are, *Vaquero: Genesis of the Texas Cowboy* (2004) and *La Vida Brinca: Tragaluz Photographs* (2006).

At 29, Wittliff was elected to the Texas Institute of Letters, served as president during 1974–78, and sat on the Executive Council until 1990. In 1993, he was elected Fellow of the Institute. He is a member of the Texas Philosophical Society, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, and he served for six years on the Executive Board of Trustees of Robert Redford's Sundance Institute.

In 1985, with the donation of their lifelong collection of original manuscripts and books, Bill and Sally founded the Southwestern Writers Collection at Texas State University.

All of the above was what I was going to say had Bill Wittliff managed to come to accept the Lon Tinkle award. However, it turns out that he was injured while working on his ranch. He said to tell you that he managed the 1<sup>st</sup> 7 bronocs just fine. It was the 8th that got him. More pedestrian, however, he was burning brush and was tugging a rotten tree to the fire when the limb he was using broke and he fell over backwards, injuring his leg, ankle and cracking several ribs. But, he also said to tell you this:

He always felt that writing and making books was a high calling. He was always proud to be part of it and is certainly proud of this Lon Tinkle Award.