

THE 2014 WINNER OF THE 2014 GRAY CAMPBELL DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

LITTLE SISTER'S BOOK AND ART EMPORIUM JIM DEVA (co-owner) and JANINE FULLER (manager)

Little Sister's Book and Art Emporium is an institution synonymous with the grit and courage it took to first open a bookstore in the mid-eighties that catered to the LGBT community – before it had been so named; then to endure various homophobic persecutions including fire bombings, threats of violence and insults; and, most famously, to stand up against the censorship of books and magazines destined for the store by the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, who for over 15 years systematically confiscated, destroyed or held up books that were being shipped to other book and news outlets in Canada without penalty.



Jim Deva, co-owner with Bruce Smythe, of Little Sister's, opened the store with remaining co-founder Barb Thomas on Thurlow Street in Vancouver's West End in 1983. For many years the store's sales were just about \$100 a day but along with Janine Fuller, store manager, they gradually built a community presence and, with the long, drawn out battle with Canada Customs that went all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada, they became the face of gay and lesbian activism in the City. In addition to their personal determination, what characterizes their activism is its relationship to a whole community.

At this time when Russian gay and lesbian parents cannot guarantee that their children will grow up with them and where existing anti-gay legislation is being enforced or has recently been passed in the African countries of Uganda, Cameroon and Nigeria, it is a timely to consider how far we have come in our own country and the contribution that Little Sister's continues to make in the fight. As their website notes: "The struggle continues... in solidarity with good people all over the world who are simply expressing who they are and loving those they choose to love."

Nowadays, the books that were banned when Little Sister's opened are available in bookstores across the country and the magazines in newsstands and on the Internet. Little Sister's bought, disseminated and promoted local LGBT authors and hand sold titles from Canadian publishers – this is no small thing, and it is a rare and important service, in fact it changed Canadian society. This is why the Association of Book Publishers of BC is honoured to recognize the work of Jim Deva and Janine Fuller in awarding Little Sister's Book and Art Emporium the Gray Campbell Distinguished Service Award on April 24th, 2014.