

Sanderson Earns Top Honors in Short Story Competition

The Texas Institute of Letters has honored Jim Sanderson, professor and chair in Lamar University's Department of English and Modern Languages, with the Kay Cattarulla Award for short-story writing.

The institute – considered the most prestigious literary organization in Texas – presented the award Saturday, April 6, at its annual meeting in San Marcos. The award recognizes the best short story written by a Texan or about Texas.

Sanderson's award-winning story, "Bankers," was published in *descant*, the literary journal of Texas Christian University.



"When I received the award, I was in San Marcos, Texas, where some people said that I got a 'mis-education.' My parents attended – to see if their money for my 'mis-education' was well spent," said Sanderson, who earned bachelor's and master's degrees from Southwest Texas State University (now Texas State).

"I received an award sponsored by Kay Cattarulla, who previously pushed my career forward by getting Larry Hagman to read another story of mine in public. I have known my fellow finalists and participated in Texas literary events with them for more than 30 years. And I had a lot of friends in the crowd who helped me. I had a lot of help, so I wanted to share the honor, but, as a writer, I kept the money."

Lamar University virtually swept the short-story competition, Sanderson said, with writers with Lamar connections honored as finalists for the Cattarulla Award.

One of the finalists is Jerry Craven, for "Brenda Without Skin," which appeared in the *Concho River Review* at Angelo State University. Craven, a 1964 Lamar graduate and resident of Jasper, is editor-in-chief of the Lamar University Press, a literary publisher launched in 2012.

The other finalist is Jan Seale's "Going Forth," which appeared in *Appearances*, the first book published by Lamar University Press. Seale, the current Poet Laureate of Texas, appeared at the 2012 Lamar Literary Festival to promote *Appearances*. A resident of McAllen, Seale formerly taught English and creative writing at the University of Texas-Pan American.

Sanderson's story appeared in Volume 51 of *descant*, which marked the last produced under the direction of longtime editor Dave Kuhne, another featured writer at the 2012 Lamar Literary Festival.

The award honors Kay Cattarulla, who started Arts and Letters Live with the Dallas Museum of Arts. Cattarulla brought a long New York City literary tradition to Texas, showcasing Texas actors reading Texas writers' stories. Cattarulla previously enlisted Hagman, the late actor of *Dallas* fame, to read another story by Sanderson, "Ladies Man."

[Article courtesy the Lamar University website and Larry Acker](#)