

Jean Little (2016)



Internationally-acclaimed author Jean Little was born in Taiwan to medical missionary parents. Her family returned to Canada when she was seven years of age and she attended elementary and secondary school in Guelph. She holds a degree in English Language and Literature from the University of Toronto where she studied under Northrop Frye.

Jean Little is a national treasure and one of Guelph's most distinguished citizens. Early in her career she taught special needs children, an experience that inspired her first published book, 'Mine for Keeps', and many others thereafter. She is the author of more than fifty books, most of them addressing life challenges encountered by children and adolescents.

The pervading theme of Ms. Little's writing is positive approaches by young people to coping with and rising to challenges, both physical and psychological. Her writing portrays the resilience of children, and critics commented that "she writes to celebrate life and its miracles and to communicate a sense of growth, hope and love".

Ms. Little is the holder of six honorary degrees and a long list of literary honours and awards including the Matt Cohen Award recognizing her lifetime of literary achievement. She is a member of the Order of Canada in recognition of her outstanding contribution to children's literature. As a lecturer Ms. Little has travelled extensively talking to both adults and children about the joys to be found through reading and writing.