

Theatre personality Mary Vingoe wins \$18,000 Portia White award

Natasha MacLellan gets protégé honours

By **ANDREA NEMETZ**
Entertainment Reporter

Dartmouth's Mary Vingoe won the 2009 Portia White Prize at the fourth Creative Nova Scotia Awards Gala held Saturday evening at the Ecole Secondaire de Parsen-Bas in Tusket, Yarmouth County.

Ms. Vingoe, an actor, director, playwright and founder of Eastern Front and Ship's Company theatres in Dartmouth and Parrsboro, received \$18,000.

She named emerging playwright Natasha MacLellan of Margaree as the recipient of the \$7,000 Protégé Prize. Ms. MacLellan honed her skills at the Playwrights Atlantic Resource Centre.

"Mary has not only practised theatre arts, she has been passionately committed to helping others practice their craft as well," Percy Paris, tourism, culture and heritage minister, said in a news release.

"She has given a voice and a stage to hundreds of Nova Scotian writers, actors, musicians, set designers, sound technicians, stage managers and other theatre artists."

The prize is named for the late Portia White who overcame adversity to become a world famous classical singer.

The other nominees were Gaelic singer Mary Jane Lamond of Glencoe and sculptor and blacksmith John Little of East Dover.

Ms. Vingoe won the Mayor's Award for Achievement in Theatre at the Merritt Awards in Dartmouth in 2007. She was also director of the Magnetic North Theatre Festival and worked at Theatre Passe Muraille in Montreal in her earlier years.

This summer, Ms. Vingoe, who has focused on directing in recent years, returned to acting for the first time since 1990 to be part of Ship's Company Theatre's 25th anniversary season, starring as the ship in *Ferry Tales* and as Minnie in Ivor Johnson's *Neighbours*.

The evening's other major award, the \$25,000 Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia Masterworks Award went to John Macnab, a Halifax sculptor.

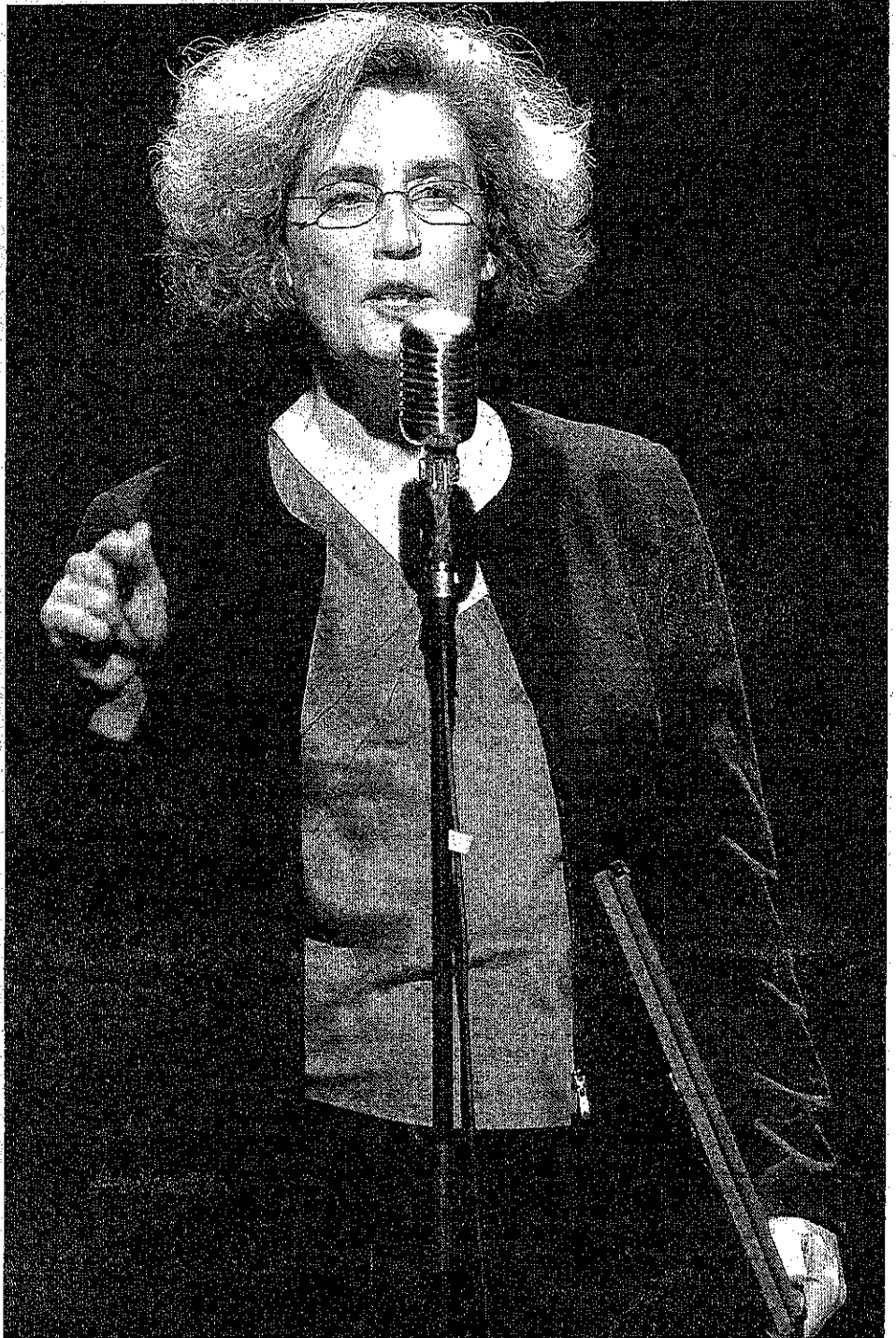
Macnab won for CSDC 3-8 (Compound Spiral Double Cone No. 3, 8 sided), a 7.6-metre-long, double-spiral sculpture turned from red spruce. It was first exhibited in SOFA (Sculptural Objects and Functional Art), Chicago in 2008, and in the Port Loggia Gallery, NSCAD University, in 2009.

"Suspended horizontally, it presents a floating form of lyrical grace and simplicity that belies the complexity of its production and its remarkable cross-disciplinary origins," a news release said. "Macnab combined his wood-turning background and engineering skills to invent a 20-foot vertical lathe capable of turning large-scale sculptures to complicated formulae."

"With this unique tool, Macnab has been able to re-think the craft tradition and, drawing on his fascination with mathematics, science and the spiral growth of natural forms (from seashells to galaxies), to produce a powerful and elegant work that bridges the gap between industrial precision and creative expression."

Macnab has lived and worked in Nova Scotia since 1970. A graduate of the Nova Scotia College of Geographic Sciences, he is largely self-taught as a wood-turner and machinist.

The Masterworks Award, created in 2005, recognizes works of art with a strong connection to Nova Scotia, in the context of national and international accomplish-



Mary Vingoe of Dartmouth is this year's recipient of the coveted Portia White award.

(INGRID BULMER / Staff)



Natasha MacLellan won the \$7,000 Protégé Prize

and Bruce MacLennan.

Mandible, a large-scale, suspended, ceramic sculpture, was made by NSCAD University ceramics head Neil Forrest.

See Below, an immersive experience of the ocean floor, re-enacted through a group of huge black and white painted canvases, based on sonar side-scan imagery, is by Nova Scotia artist Susan Feindel.

The Colours of Citizen Arar is a wall painting by former Nova Scotia College of Art and Design president and artist Garry Neill Kennedy.

The finalists' works can be viewed at www.nsmasterworks.ca.

ment.

The other four finalists each received \$2,000.

God's Middle Name, a play exploring a mother's multiple challenges of living with an autistic child and her intense emotional journey from denial to acceptance, was created by Halifax theatre artists Jennifer Overton, Scott Burke, Rejean Cournoyer, Denyse Karn, Michael Doherty

Saturday's gala, hosted by the Nova Scotia Arts and Culture Partnership Council spotlighted the achievements of established and up-and-coming artists.

Marie Stella Bourgeois of Cheticamp received the \$2,000 Prix Grand-Pré which recognizes an artist who reflects Acadian culture and originality through their work. Ms. Bourgeois is a founder of the Cheticamp Co-operative Artisanale and well known as a rug-hooking artist.

A number of other accomplished artists were presented \$5,000 Established Artist Recognition Awards: including writer Douglas Arthur Brown of Ross Ferry; ceramic artist Joan Bruneau of Lunenburg; actor Mary-Colin Chisholm of Halifax; dancer-choreographer Veronique MacKenzie of Halifax and visual artist Onni Nordman of South Bar, Cape Breton Regional Municipality.

The role of communities in supporting arts and culture was highlighted with the Community Arts and Culture Recognition Award.

This year's recipient was the Municipality of Shelburne which received \$10,000 for fostering diverse programming in arts and cultural development.

(anemetz@herald.ca)