

The 2011 Leila St John Award
for distinguished services to children's literature
is presented to

Eileen Nelson

In recognition of her almost 50 years contribution to the world of children's literature in Victoria.

Beginning at South Melbourne Public Libraries, Eileen was firmly ushered into the field of Children's Librarianship, her true destination, and since that day, a warm enthusiasm and respect for children's literature has been part of her life.

The wonderful storytellers of the 1960s in the Toronto Public Libraries inspired her to begin telling stories herself, something she has done ever since. It was here, too, that she was introduced to puppetry.

Eileen is best remembered as Children's Librarian at Clayton and Oakleigh Public Libraries, a position she held for twenty-three years and where she mentored some of the most prominent children's librarians of today. During her time as a Children's Librarian, Eileen helped to introduce puppetry into libraries as a means of communicating with all age groups and with those of diverse ethnic backgrounds, She organised and participated in many seminars on puppetry and storytelling.

In the early 1980s Eileen was part of a team who organised the Southern Children's Literature Co-operative, which later became the first Libraries Youth Support Network.

Eileen also served twenty years as Treasurer of the Children's and Youth Services Section of the Victorian group of the Australian Library and Information Association

Eileen was an active member of the Executive Committee of the Children's Book Council of Australia Victorian Branch, and served as Victorian Judge for the Book of the Year Awards for two years. In a time when there were few such resources available for informed book selection, she contributed to several editions of Books for Children, working on selection criteria and annotations, which sold Australia wide.

Since then her weekly storytelling at the local Catholic Primary School has inspired the instigation of the Eileen Nelson Literacy Award, which goes to a child in Year 3 or 4 who shows marked enthusiasm for reading, writing and books.

The Grade 6 child who nominated, as her *Primary School Highlight Happening*, "Eileen's stories" encapsulates the gratitude and appreciation felt by so many, both adults and children, for the significant contribution Eileen Nelson has made to the world of Children's Literature in Victoria.