

STUDIUM AUTHOR'S BOOK SELECTED AS BEST FIRST NOVEL
Perfume River Nights Wins Next Generation Indie Book Award

Perfume River Nights, a novel about the Vietnam War, was selected by Next Generation Indie Book Awards as 2016 Best First Novel. Next Generation Indie Book Awards is an international competition for English language books by independent publishers, indie authors, and university presses. This year's awards will be presented at a May 31st ceremony at the Harvard Club of New York City.

Studium, the scholar's program at Saint Benedict's Monastery for writers and artist, hosted author Michael P. Maurer while he was working on the final edit of *Perfume River Nights*. Sister Ann Marie, the director of Studium, was one of the reader's of Maurer's manuscript and an early supporter. "I am not surprised by the award. *Perfume River Nights* is a powerful and moving story."

Perfume River Nights was published by North Star Press of St. Cloud in May 2016. A number of Studium and monastery residents helped celebrate the event at a book release party held at Saint Benedict's Gorecki Center where Maurer gave a touching account of his writing of the story.

Maurer is a decorated combat veteran who served in the Vietnam War in 1968-1969 as a paratrooper and infantryman with the 82nd Airborne Division. In 2003, Maurer moved back to Vietnam and lived in Asia for nine years while writing *Perfume River Nights* which he sees as repayment of a debt to those who died beside him.

Perfume River Nights, as described by Maurer, is about the heartbreak of war, the lure of vengeance and the self-destructiveness of violence. It tells the story of a teenage boy, who when he sets out to prove his bravery, becomes trapped in an ordeal of survival and ignites a struggle with darkness from which he might never escape. "It's more than a war story," Maurer said. "It is a tale of tragic events and the quest to find ourselves and know our way."

In a tribute to those who served in Vietnam Maurer is donating all the royalties from *Perfume River Nights* to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. VVMF built and maintains the memorial in Washington D.C. that holds the names of the nearly 60,000 who died in Vietnam.

Maurer said the Best First Novel Award is especially meaningful because it will bring a larger readership to *Perfume River Nights* and thus expand the remembrance of the Vietnam War and those who died. "My intention was to try to "save the guys" by writing a memorable story about Vietnam that would set the characters in readers' minds and hearts. The award suggests the story accomplishes this."

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Photos at www.michaelpmaurer.com