

W.O. Mitchell

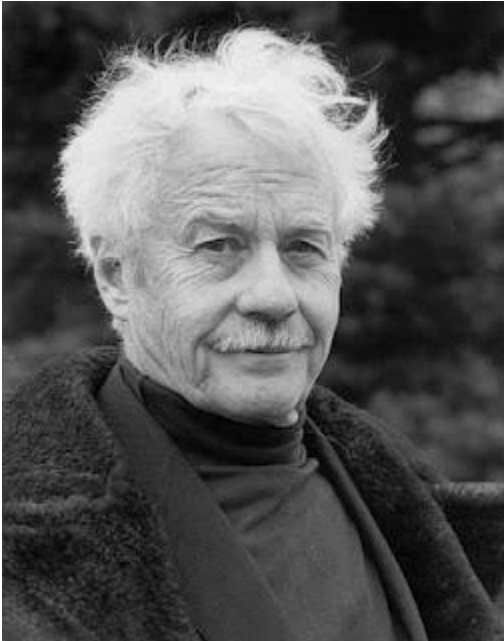


Photo courtesy of WOMitchell.ca

Writers can be admired or they can be respected, and most are happy with either of these reactions. But some writers are loved. Like Roch Carrier, W.O. or Bill Mitchell was one of this special category. A member of the first CanLit wave, he was born in 1914 in Weyburn, Sask. and died in Calgary in 1998.

His setting was the Canadian prairies in the era when he grew up there, and he painted and populated this setting with artistry, accuracy and humanity.

Among his best-known novels are *Who has Seen the Wind* and *The Kite. The Vanishing Point* (1973), according to the [Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan](#), was published after Mitchell got to know a native chief of a reserve near his summer cottage at White Bear Lake. The novel expressed his concern for the Stoney people of the Alberta foothills.

[*Jake and the Kid*](#), a weekly radio show that ran from 1950-1956, was also very popular, and was later adapted for [television](#). Mitchell was also involved in theatre, and spent three years as a fiction editor for [Maclean's](#). He was Writer-in-Residence at the [Banff Centre](#), the University of Calgary, the University of Alberta and [Massey College](#), and taught creative writing classes at Fort Qu'Appelle.

Though Mitchell does not have a library named after him, an elementary school in Ottawa bears his name. He was a Member of the Order of Canada and a recipient of the Stephen Leacock Award and received an honorary degree from the University of Saskatchewan. He was also named an honorary member of the Privy Council.

After his death, the [W.O. Mitchell Literary Prize](#) was founded. In addition to having a substantial body of work, the recipient must serve as a mentor for other writers.