

## PROGRAM RELEASE

COVETED INTERNATIONAL AWARD  
WON BY CBC RADIO PROGRAM

RADIO 47  
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The CBC has won its first George Foster Peabody Award, described as "the Pulitzer Prize of the Fifth Estate", for an hour-length CBC Radio program, *The Longest Journey*, tracing the first and longest journey a human being ever makes, from conception to birth, when so much of his future life is determined. The program was written by Dr. Elizabeth Grove-White of Toronto, and was produced by Eithne Black as the opening program (Oct. 7, 1979) in the CBC Radio series, *Open Circuit*, for which the executive producer is Doug MacDonald, Toronto. *Open Circuit* is a project of the CBC's Features and Humanities Department, headed by Robert Patchell.

The George Foster Peabody Awards, introduced in 1940, are designed to recognize the most distinguished and meritorious public service by radio and television each year, and to perpetuate the memory of G. F. Peabody (1852-1938), a native of Columbus, Georgia, who was of English ancestry. He became a highly successful New York banker, devoted much of his fortune to education and social enterprise, and was particularly interested in the University of Georgia, of which he was a life trustee by special legislative act. The Henry W. Grady School of Journalism and Mass Communications at the university, and a national advisory board, administer the Peabody Awards.

The citation for CBC Radio's Peabody Award reads: "The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation is recognized by the Peabody Committee for *The Longest Journey*, an episode of *Open Circuit*. This is an exciting and informative documentary on the longest journey of our lives, the nine months prior to birth. Every angle is explored with sensitivity and keen understanding, making for a memorable production."

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Previous recipients of this prestigious honor have included the BBC for coverage of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, and An Age of Kings, a series of Shakespeare plays; NBC for Profile of Courage, and a special on The Louvre; and CBS for a production of Arthur Miller's play, Death of a Salesman.

This year the CBC is one of only 24 Peabody Award-winners (and the sole Canadian) selected from 850 entries. The Award, consisting of a bronze medallion and a certificate, will be accepted by Eithne Black on behalf of the CBC, at a luncheon at New York's Hotel Pierre on Wednesday, April 30.

The Longest Journey will be rebroadcast July 20 on CBC Radio when Open Circuit returns after a 15-week hiatus, with a repeat of an 11-part sub-series, Our Future Selves. It offers realistic looks at important options open to children and their parents, from conception to birth, and through adolescence, and relates the options to the practical realities of contemporary life. The programs will be heard Sundays at 9:05 p.m. (in the Maritimes on Saturdays at 10:05 p.m. adt, 10:35 ndt).

When Elizabeth Grove-White began preparing material for The Longest Journey, she was pregnant with her son, Aidan. Producer Eithne Black and her tape-recorder accompanied the mother-to-be to pre-natal classes, and on visits to the doctor. The women explored the pros and cons of every birth process and option available in Canada today. They talked to nurses, doctors, and international experts in every field related to the well-being of the child, as well as to parents, grandmothers, unwed mothers and single fathers. And Eithne Black recorded activity in the delivery room and Dr. Grove-White's comments right through labor to the moment of birth and beyond, for the award-winning broadcast, and for its sequel on the special joys and frustrations of the infant years. Eithne Black says: "The Longest Journey was more than a program. For both Elizabeth and me it was a celebration of life."

Baby Aidan Grove-White's birth on April 10, 1979, was not the end of his perilous journey. A month later he developed a serious breathing difficulty (a rare phenomenon called APNEA), which meant that his breathing had to be monitored constantly. While his mother was at the CBC studios preparing the tapes of his journey for broadcast, he was strapped to her in a tummy bunting. There were frightening interruptions to the tape-editing when he was rushed to hospital for emergency treatment. But his journey had a happy ending. By his first birthday he had recovered sufficiently for the electronic equipment monitoring his breathing at night to be returned to the hospital, and the story of his journey won the Peabody Award.

Eithne Black was born in Belfast. She is a graduate of Methodist College, Belfast, and of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and Trinity College of Music, both in London, England. She taught speech and drama in Northern Ireland and was an actress and writer for the BBC before coming to Canada in 1958. She freelanced for the CBC as a roving reporter, and was a CBC-TV script assistant, and in 1960 was appointed a radio producer. Most of her productions have been school broadcasts covering a wide range of topics, but she has also produced every other kind of program, and has a special interest in documentaries.

Dr. Elizabeth Grove-White was born in Dublin, Eire. After receiving her doctorate in English literature from Trinity College, Dublin, she taught for several years at the University of Toronto, before giving up full-time work to have a family. In Eire she spent much time and energy in working for civil rights and women's liberation, and continued this interest in Toronto with the Elizabeth Fry Society. Her first book, Virginia Woolf: To the Lighthouse, about the English novelist and essayist (1882-1941), was published in England last fall, and she is preparing another book on Woolf criticism for publication soon.

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