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Julieann wins Ireland's premier literary prize

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Derry Journal reporter Julieann Campbell was last night awarded one of Ireland's top literary prizes.

The Derry author's critically-acclaimed 'Setting the Truth Free: The Inside Story of the Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign', was named joint-winner of the Christopher Ewart-Biggs Memorial Prize.

Julieann shares the prestigious award with Douglas Murray whose book, "Bloody Sunday: truth, lies and the Saville Inquiry", focuses on the proceedings of the long-running Saville Inquiry.

"Setting The Truth Free" - described as an intelligent and emotive inside account of the Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign - records the personal stories of the campaigners, the relatives and the wounded themselves right up to the publication of the Saville Tribunal's report in June 2010.

The biennial prize was instituted in memory of Christopher Ewart-Biggs, the British Ambassador to Ireland who was killed by the IRA in 1976. Previous winners include playwright Brian Friel, historians FSL Lyons and Robert Kee and former Beirut hostage Brian Keenan.

A delighted Julieann, speaking from the awards ceremony in Dublin last night, said: "I can't

believe it. I am over the moon that it impressed the judges so much - it means such a lot."

Julieann believes the accolade gives recognition to the family-led Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign which, she says, "snowballed to become one of the most successful human rights movements in history."

She added: "When I took on this project and started gathering the experiences of the families and wounded, it was with the aim of getting their message beyond Derry. With this prize, I finally feel as though we have achieved that."

"I had no idea of the lengths people - my own family included - went to in demanding the truth. They never gave up."

"I hope that, with this prize and this book, we've taken the human story behind Bloody Sunday even further. It's an achievement not just for me but for all those who contributed."

John Kelly, whose brother Michael was among those murdered on Bloody Sunday, said he was delighted for Julieann.

"This is an incredible achievement and one that is fully merited because Julieann did a first class job in relating the story of the families' long struggle for justice," he said.

"We are immensely proud of Julieann and are deeply appreciative of all the work she has done in telling our story to the world."



Derry Journal reporter Julieann Campbell was last night awarded the Christopher Ewart-Biggs Memorial Prize for her critically-acclaimed book, "Setting the Truth Free: The Inside Story of the Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign". Photo: Stephen Latimer