

## LIFESTYLE

# Erin Mills author Eric Walters joins Order of Canada

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Longtime Erin Mills resident and prolific children's author Eric Walters has been named a member of the Order of Canada.

Walters was honoured for his "contributions as an author of literature for children and young adults whose stories help young readers grapple with complex social issues."

Walters joins notables such as former Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney,

Hockey Night in Canada announcer Bob Cole, former NHL player and advocate for sexually abused youths Sheldon Kennedy, and World Anti-Doping Agency president Dick Pound on this year's list.

"I'm honoured and rather humbled to be included in such company," he said. "I'm a proud Canadian. I travel the country talking to young people - over 70,000 each year - helping them understand that they live in



Eric Walters

the greatest country on earth."

Since 1994, Walters has written more than 90 books. Almost two million copies of his books, translated into 14 different languages, are in print. His latest novel, *Walking Home* - a story set in Kenya about a brother and sister's brave journey to find a place to call home - was published in September.

The 57-year-old father of three grown children makes an estimated 500 appearances at schools each year to talk about his work and, hopefully, to encourage kids to read.

A former elementary school teacher, Walters began writing in 1993 when he was teaching at Vista Heights Public School in Streetsville. To spur his students interest in literature, his first novel, *Stand Your Ground*, was set in the school and included features from the community and the names of many of his students.

In 2010 he walked across the Sahara Desert before writing *Just Deserts* and founding Creation of Hope, an organization for the care of orphans in the Mbooni district of Kenya.