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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Headline: Local Author, Aged 90, Launches Fiction Career with Two Books**

Summary: Retired university professor R. J. Reilly released a short story collection called *The Prevalence of Love: Glimpses of the Human Condition* in spring 2015 and followed up this summer with *Over There*, a novel about a young GI in Europe in the waning days of World War Two.

(July 27, 2015) DETROIT – Detroit’s fame as an incubator for the creative mind ranges from automotive pioneers to neighborhood revitalizers to mural artists and jazz musicians. With the arrival on the scene of R. J. Reilly, a nonagenarian who has published two works of fiction this year and has another four ready for release, the city can add to its claim as a literary incubator.

*The Prevalence of Love: Glimpses of the Human Condition* includes 12 short stories about people coping with loving and aging. Memory plays an important role in most of the stories, as some characters reflect on their military service or romances during World War Two. Other stories give people a chance at new or renewed love. Some deal with death, loss, and change, as in “Seasons,” which sensitively describes the aging process of a man mourning his late wife. “Arlington” describes one old soldier’s struggle to make sense of his country’s promise in 1776 as compared to its reality today. “I have issues,” he tells his wife of 30 years, and she understands.

*Over There* tells the story of young Jimmy Adair, a 19-year old draftee who reaches Europe just as World War Two is winding down. He’s assigned as the driver for a Monuments man and his colleague, a French art expert. Jimmy’s journey takes him through France and Austria on the trail of stolen loot stashed by the Nazi in castles, salt mines, and even on display in their own homes. He arrives in Germany in time to witness the liberation of the Dachau concentration camp and makes the climb to Berchtesgaden, Hitler’s retreat in the Alps. Through it all, Jimmy is listening to the conversations of his elders about love, art, humanity, evil, and redemption.

R. J. Reilly’s deftly written stories prove both moving and inspiring, his characters memorable as they strive to respond to life on their own terms as they continue to learn and grow.

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R. J. Reilly Press Release – Page 2 Contact Information: Mary Reilly McCall

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Author R. J. Reilly was born in Detroit, attended De La Salle Collegiate when it was located by City Airport and, as a new high school graduate, was assigned to a U.S. Army combat engineering battalion that served in France and Germany in World War Two. Reilly attended college on the GI Bill after his discharge in 1946, earning the Ph.B. (bachelor’s) and master’s degrees from the University of Detroit (now the University of Detroit Mercy) and a Ph.D. in English and American literature from Michigan State University. His dissertation, *Romantic Religion: A Study of Owen Barfield, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams and J.R.R. Tolkien,* was published in 1971 by the University of Georgia Press and is considered a milestone in its treatment of Owen Barfield. The book was re-issued in 2006 and is available as an e-book.

Reilly taught at the University of Detroit until his early retirement in 1987, when he was honored with the *Professor Emeritus* title for his contributions to the field. During his long academic career, Reilly continued to publish texts, book reviews, and scholarly articles, one of which, “Henry James and the Morality of Fiction,” won the Norman Foerster Award for the best scholarly essay in the journal *American Literature* in 1967. In addition to Henry James, a major focus of his academic career has been a study of the development of the American character.

While he wrote some fiction during his teaching career, including publishing an early short story, “Ars Gratia Artis” in *Southern Humanities Review* in 1983, the bulk of his novels and short stories were written in his retirement. In crafting them, he has drawn on his own experiences as a soldier in World War Two, as well as his long and happy marriage to the late Lena Reilly, his roles as father and head of the family, his teaching career, his love of the Detroit Tigers, and his strong attachment to the Detroit River and Lake St. Clair. In addition to *The Prevalence of Love* and *Over There*, his novels and volumes of short stories include the soon-to-be-published *Weekend in the Country*, *The Pelican Affair*, *The Bronte House*, and *On the Trail of Truth: Stories of Americans in an Age of Uncertainty*. He is currently working on a third volume of short stories.

Reilly’s books are being published by Dog Ear Publishing, LLC, and are available through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Ingram, and other book sellers.

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Highlighted excerpt from release: “With the arrival on the scene of R. J. Reilly, a nonagenarian who has published two works of fiction this year and has another four ready for release, Detroit can add to its claim as a literary incubator.”