

## ON WINNING THE HUGO

As I sat nervously in the audience at Denvention 3 a few years ago, the fourteen-year-old next to me noticed that I'd prepared a dense half-page acceptance speech just in case I actually won the Hugo Award for Best Editor— Short Form. All the speeches so far had been mercifully brief and she hissed that I'd better shorten mine. I whispered that she'd have to put up with these remarks because I couldn't see well enough to edit them in the darkened auditorium. Mortified by the prospect, she replied, "Well, Mom, then I hope you lose!" The problem for my poor daughter, and for the members of a Worldcon audience, is that having worked in this field for close to thirty years, there were countless people to whom I owed my thanks.

Circumstances were a little different at Renovation; this year's Worldcon in Reno, Nevada. My family couldn't be with me because it was move-in day at college, so I sat with fellow Hugo nominees, James Patrick Kelly and Geoffrey A. Landis. Having lost the Hugo for five years in a row, I hadn't brought a written speech. Ten minutes before the pre-Hugo reception, however, I decided I should give some thought to preparing for the unlikely event that I did win the 2011 award. In a slightly better lit auditorium waiting for my category to be called, I jotted down a brief list on the back of my program. Horrified that I hadn't prepared a real speech, Jim Kelly decided to put a curse on me. He said, "When they call your name, you'll forget most of these people, you'll get flustered and say 'thank you,' and it will be all right."

"Forget that," I thought. I knew exactly who I wanted to thank and why. Fortunately, when my name actually was called I found I was intensely focused and had no problem remembering what I

needed to say. Of course, the speech I said on stage could only be a couple of minutes long and necessarily truncated the number of people I really had to thank. Just as I asked the audience to bear with me, I hope you will too while I recreate a slightly expanded version of that speech here:

My thanks go first to the writers who allow us to use their wonderful stories in *Asimov's* and who make working on the magazine so much fun. Second, and no less important, I have to thank you, the readers of *Asimov's*. You may have voted for the Hugo and you support each issue with your charge card or your checkbook. Without you, there wouldn't be much reason to produce this magazine.

For me, this Hugo is as much an award for *Asimov's* as it is for an individual editor. The magazine could not be produced without the work of a group of dedicated people. I'd like to thank my managing editor, Trevor Quachri; my art director, Victoria Green; and our production artist, Cindy Tiberi. Administrative support comes from Mary Grant and Emily Hockaday. In addition to expressing my gratitude to them, I'd like to thank staff members from departments as varied as production, accounting, subsidiary rights, IT, advertising, and circulation. It takes the work of these people and many others to get the magazine out and into your hands.

I'd also like to thank Stanley Schmidt, my colleague down the hall. Stan is the long-time editor of *Analog*. He has always been a friend and a mentor and he's an excellent hiking companion as well. His insights and support cannot be over emphasized.

I have so many friends in this field that it's terrible to single out any of them, but there are two who have gotten

me through two sales of the magazine, helped me adapt to three publishers, taken all my frantic phone calls, and always been there for me. They are Connie Willis and Jim Kelly and I want to thank them as well as all my other incredibly supportive friends.

My patient husband and my mostly understanding children deserve their share of thanks, too. (In a mark of how much she's matured, my older daughter seemed as distressed at not being in the audience for me as I was at not being able to settle her in to her first year at college.) I couldn't edit this magazine if I didn't have all of them in my corner.

I also want to mention two men who are no longer with me, but who are very much responsible for where I am today. One is my good friend, Isaac Asimov. I was deeply influenced by his fiction as a teenager. Later, I was impressed that he had agreed to co-found a magazine that would provide a showcase for the fiction of new writers much as his fiction had found a home in the SF magazines when he was starting out. It's a philosophy that we continue to honor. Isaac was an ally and a protector during the first ten years of my career and I still miss him. The other man is my dad, Alfred Williams, who filled up an impressionable young mind with tales of Dejah Thoris, Tars Tarkus, and Thuvia, Maid of Mars, and created a passion that has guided my life to this day. My father shared all his books with me. We poured over the *Hugo Winners* (edited by Isaac Asimov) together and discovered that there were such astonishing things as SF magazines and conventions. After that, he took me to my earliest conventions and he always encouraged me to follow my dreams.

That's pretty close to what I said, or at least what I remember saying. It is thanks to Isaac and my dad that I have a career that I love. Putting together an enjoyable magazine is truly more than enough reward for me, but the Hugo is a nice sign that you, the readers of *Asimov's*, find this magazine rewarding as well. ○

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