

New Australian Author Book Release

# THE MAN BEHIND THE PRIZE

A LIFE OF J.F. ARCHIBALD

PAUL J GREGURIC

**The man behind the prize lived a life that was not without tragedy and mystery...**

Every year thousands of Sydneysiders visit the Art Gallery of NSW to view the entrants in the Archibald Prize for Portraiture, which carries the primary aim to foster portraiture, as well as to perpetuate the memory of great Australians.

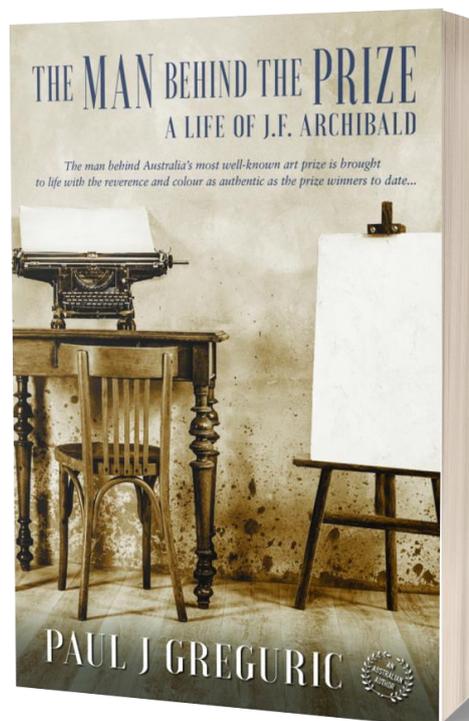
Across Australia, thousands more will see the travelling exhibition of the prize.

Sydney's fountain in Hyde Park is named after him.

He is the founding editor of our nation's most iconic newspapers, The Bulletin. Yet extraordinarily little is known about the man behind the prize, J.F. Archibald.

As editor of the Bulletin newspaper, he nurtured the careers of Australian writers and artists from Mile Franklin and Banjo Paterson to Norman Lindsay and Francis Rodway. In 1900, he commissioned Melbourne portrait artist John Longstaff to paint a portrait of poet Henry Lawson for 50 guineas.

So pleased with this portrait, he left money in his will for an annual portrait prize, which was first awarded in 1921.



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**RRP:** \$22.95  
**Trade Price:** \$11.48  
**ISBN:** 9781922444622  
**Genre:** Australian Biography  
**Format:** Paperback  
**Audience:** General  
**Location:** Waterloo, NSW

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# A Conversation with Paul

## Who inspires you?

*The UK biographer A.N. Wilson.*

## What is your work schedule like when you're writing?

*Three hours per day, seven days a week. It helps to write every day at the same time for the same duration.*

## What does your family think of your writing?

*They are supportive. Two of my brothers are specialists in their fields and check my factual material.*

## What was one of the most surprising things you learned in creating your books?

*The book takes on a life of its own.*

## Include any interesting experiences you might've had during the research for the book, or while writing or publishing the book:

*I had a couple of 'Rosebud' moments. I was shown a photograph of my subjects and read the handwritten note that was with the image. I suddenly realized what made my subject 'tick.' I found handwritten gossipy notes written on some of the archival material.*

## What were your inspirations for *The Man Behind the Prize*?

*I had just had a short story published in a major Australian journal and wanted to write something that was non-fiction. I was walking past the NSW State Library and noted that there was a banner announcing the Archibald Prize Exhibition. I did some library and online research and discovered that there was little available about Archibald's life. I decided to research his life in depth.*

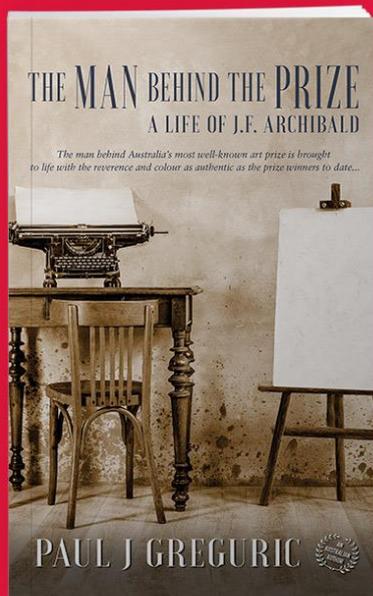
*I noted that the only biography of Archibald had been written in the 1980s and was not readily available. I requested it from the SL archives and flicked through it and looked at the author's sources. I decided to write Archibald's life using all the resources I had available in the Mitchell Library.*

## What research did you do to support the facts within your book?

*Letters, journals, newspaper articles, photographs, notes and jottings by the individuals.*

## As a child, what did you want to do when you grew up?

*To be a teacher, I have future plans to write a book about a teacher.*



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**2022 NOMINATED TITLE  
THE DOUGLAS STEWART  
PRIZE FOR NONFICTION**