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## Real lives

# 40 years of crime pay off for city novelist Alanna

■ **Writer Alanna Knight has received a special presentation from the Scottish Crime Writers' Association in recognition of 40 years as a crime novelist.**

City author Alanna Knight was honoured at the Annual Crime Writers' Lunch, at the Royal Overseas Club, Princes Street, on Friday.

Mrs Knight, who has written 66 books over 40 years, was presented with carved bookends with the names of her first novel, *Legend of the Loch*, and most recent novel, *Murder in Paradise*, which is out in November.

She was also taken along to see a special celebration window display at Waterstone's East End.

Mrs Knight said: "It was a complete surprise. I saw various people and thought, 'I wonder what are they doing here, they're not crime writers?' And people kept delaying me and holding me back from going in for dinner, and when I got in there they had the chairman talking all about it.

"They sent cards and flowers, and I got a lovely present from Ian Rankin, which was a first edition of Robert Louis Stevenson's letters."

On becoming an author Mrs Knight said she had always wanted to write. "I've written

all my life; I started writing when I was about eight years old.

"My father bought me a book about Robin Hood and his Merry Men and I sat in the park and read it all and he said 'You enjoyed that then?' and I said 'Yes, I'm going to write a sequel'."

Born on Tyneside, Mrs Knight moved north in 1951 when she married a Scottish soil chemist, Alistair Knight, who died in January of this year after a two-year battle with Alzheimer's.

The couple moved to Aberdeen, where sons Christopher and Kevin were born. Mrs Knight also now has two granddaughters, Chloe, 14, and Julia, 16.

While researching a book on Robert Louis Stevenson 20 years ago, she fell in love with the city of Edinburgh and decided to make the Capital her home.

The family initially stayed at Dryden Place.

Her first novels were historical works, but when she moved to Edinburgh Mrs Knight was inspired to branch out into crime writing.

She said: "I thought I'd like to write something set in Edinburgh and I've always loved puzzles. I've always loved reading crime and I thought 'I'll have a shot at a crime novel'."

The length of her writing career has presented Mrs



**WRITE STUFF:** Alanna Knight was honoured by fellow authors

Knight with a dilemma shared by many of her crime writing colleagues – how long to continue with the same character – and her first hero, Inspector Faro, is now retired.

Mrs Knight said: "I was having a discussion with Ian Rankin about this because he's axed Rebus, and my other friend, Colin Dexter, has killed

off Morse. I thought, 'I know what I'll do, I'll do a prequel, back 25 years to when he was a young constable on his first case' and that was such fun to write.

"He's young and rather gorgeous, and a bit vulnerable."

Alanna Knight appears at Edinburgh Book Festival on Saturday, August 23 at 6.45pm.