The Twenty-Ninth Annual

Children’s Book Festival

The University of Southern Mississippi
March 6-8, 1996
The University of Southern Mississippi

The awarding of the University of Southern Mississippi Medallion to Patricia MacLachlan is the highlight of the Twenty-Ninth Annual Children's Book Festival, March 6-8, 1996. The medallion is awarded annually for outstanding contributions in the field of children's literature. Silver medallions are cast for the recipient, for the President of the University of Southern Mississippi, and for the de Grummond Children's Literature Research Collection's permanent display. In addition, a number of bronze medallions are cast and are available for purchase during the festival.

Past Recipients of the Medallion

1969 Lois Lenski
1970 Ernest H. Shepard
1971 Roger Duvoisin
1972 Marcia Brown
1973 Lynd Ward
1974 Taro Yashima
1975 Barbara Cooney
1976 Scott O'Dell
1977 Adrienne Adams
1978 Madeleine L'Engle
1979 Leonard Everett Fisher
1980 Ezra Jack Keats
1981 Maurice Sendak
1982 Beverly Cleary
1983 Katherine Paterson
1984 Peter Spier
1985 Arnold Lobel
1986 Jean Craighead George
1987 Paula Fox
1988 Jean Fritz
1989 Lee Bennett Hopkins
1990 Charlotte Zolotow
1991 Richard Peck
1992 James Marshall
1993 Quentin Blake
1994 Ashley Bryan
1995 Tomie de Paola

The University of Southern Mississippi Medallion for distinguished contributions to children's literature is made possible by the generous support of the Ralph and Carol Wicker Foundation.
Patricia MacLachlan

The University of Southern Mississippi is pleased to welcome our 1996 Medalion winner, Patricia MacLachlan, back to campus. At her 1990 Children's Book Festival appearance, MacLachlan held the audience spellbound with her poignant reading from Sarah Plain and Tall. It is because of the exemplary writing ability displayed in Sarah Plain and Tall, a 1986 Newbery winner, that MacLachlan is being honored at this year's Children's Book Festival.

Patricia MacLachlan was born in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Her parents—both teachers—fostered her love of books and reading from a very early age. She fondly remembers visits to the library with her mother and her father acting out the scenes from her favorite books. After spending several years in Minnesota, the family moved to the East.

Although MacLachlan did not write stories as a child, her creativity produced Mary, an imaginary friend who would reside in the MacLachlan home for a number of years. Her professional writing did not begin until many years later, when at the age of 35, MacLachlan felt the need for a change in her life. She was a wife, and the mother of three, working full-time with foster mothers at a family services agency. She considered going back to school or returning to teaching, but she felt very satisfied with a series of journal articles she had written on adoption and foster mothers. Perhaps writing was the change she needed. Although she is better known for novels, MacLachlan began her career writing picture books, the first being The Sick Day, published in 1979, followed by Through Grandpapa's Eyes in 1980. Also in 1980, her first novel, A River for the Very First Time, was published. It was recognized by the American Library Association as a Notable Book for the year, received the Golden Kite Award for Fiction in 1980, and was chosen as a Literary Guild selection.

Critical acclaim began with reviews for Arthur for the Very First Time and has not stopped. In addition to the Newbery Medal in 1986, Sarah Plain and Tall received the 1986 Christopher Award, the 1985 Golden Kite Award for Fiction, the 1986 Jefferson Cup Award, the International Board on Books for Young People Writing Award in 1988, and the 1985 Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction. In addition, the title has been listed on numerous best book lists, including the New York Times Notable Books of the Year, Horn Book Fanfare Honor List, School Library Journal Best Books, and The Christian Science Monitor Best Children's Books.

All of MacLachlan's stories are for children, rather than for young adults, and most center around the complexities of family love and life. According to Ethel H. Heins, MacLachlan's work "shows a fine mastery of the difficult art of writing for preadolescents without flippancy, patronizing, or sentimentality." Heins goes on to say, "MacLachlan views children not in isolation but in their close, though sometimes stormy, relationships with nurturing adults."

In the 1980s, MacLachlan had a very close and productive professional relationship with editor Charlotte Zolotow. A number of her books, Mama One, Mama Two (1982); Tomorrow's Wizard (1982); Cassie Bigner (1982); Seven Kisses in a Row (1983); Unclaimed Treasures (1984); Sarah Plain and Tall (1985); The Facts and Fictions of Minna Pratt (1988); and Three Names (1991) were all issued under the Zolotow imprint.

MacLachlan lives in western Massachusetts, where she spends her days "as a wife, reader, teacher, birdwatcher, and cello player on the good days." Recent titles include Baby (1992) and two picture books, All the Places to Love (1994) and What You Know First (1995).
Richard Egielski

Born in New City and educated at the High School of Art and Design, the Pratt Institute, and Parsons School of Design, Richard Egielski has been well prepared for his outstanding career in children's book illustration. In high school he was taught by Irwin Greenberg, mentor of John Steptoe, and while at Parsons, he took a course in children's book illustration from Maurice Sendak, the most important teacher he ever had. It was under the guidance of Sendak that Egielski realized his natural disposition toward picture books. Thesen of a police lieutenant and an executive secretary, Egielski grew up drawing. He has fond memories of spending Saturday mornings in front of the television trying to duplicate the drawings of artist John Graggy.

Egielski's career in children's book illustration began when he encountered author Arthur Yorinks in an elevator at school. Yorinks, it seemed, was looking for an illustrator for his stories. After a mutual decision that their stories and art belonged together, the pair created Sid and Sol, published in 1977. Other collaborations include Louis the Fish, Oh, Brother; If It Happened in Pink, Bravo, Mosquito; and the 1987 Caldecott winner Spray, My Love. His work with Pam Conrad has given us the enduring Tub People family, featured in The Tub People and The Tub Grandfather. A sequel, tentatively entitled The Tub Christmas, is due for future release. Other author collaborations include five books with Miriam Chatkin and a recent book with Bill Martin.

As with many artists who illustrate texts created by others, Egielski now has his own stories that he will illustrate. Buzz, the first book both written and illustrated by Egielski, was recently named to the prestigious list of New York Times Best Illustrated Books 1985. Buzz is a high adventure story featuring a bug, the boy who swallowed the bug, two Keystone cop pills, and a technicolor chase through the human body. Although he always works in watercolor, Egielski varies the paper surface on which he paints to achieve a different feel for each book. He is well known for his innovative use of color, but in books like Sid and Sol, it is the starkness of the black and white drawings that enhances the story.

Future projects include a retelling of The Gingerbread Boy and Three Magic Balls, his second solo effort. Egielski and his wife Denise, also a children's book illustrator, live in New Jersey with their young son, Ian, and their dog, Daisy.

Leonard S. Marcus

Leonard S. Marcus is a historian, author, critic, and lecturer in the field of children's literature. He has been the children's book reviewer of Parenting magazine since the magazine's founding in 1987 and has overall responsibility for Parenting's annual Reading Magic Awards for excellence in children's literature. He also has contributed articles and reviews to the New York Times Book Review, the Washington Post, Parents' Choice, Art in America, The Horn Book, and numerous other publications. He has twice judged the New York Times Best Illustrated Books of the Year prize and is a member of the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation's New Writer Award committee.

His most recent books include 75 Years of Children's Book Posters (Knopf) and, for young adult readers and their families, LifeLines: A Poetry Anthology Patterned on the Stages of Life (Dutton). In addition, Beacon Press recently brought out the paperbound edition of his critically acclaimed biography Margaret Wise Brown: Awakened by the Moon.

Mr. Marcus has curated exhibitions about children's books and their illustration at the New York Public Library, the New School for Social Research, and the Vassar College Library and has served as an advisor to the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Norman Rockwell Museum, and the Touchstone Center for Children.

He was the founding book review editor of The Lion and the Unicorn (Johns Hopkins University Press) and has contributed introductions or essays to among others) The Complete Works of Lewis Carroll (Barnes & Noble), Children's Books and Their Reviewers (Houghton Mifflin), The Art of Eric Carle (Philomel), and Roberto Innocenti: The Spirit of Illustration (San Diego Museum of Art/Art Services International).

His current projects include a collection of the letters of Harper's great editor, Ursula Nordstrom, to her authors (Margaret Wise Brown, E.B. White, Maurice Sendak, and others) and a general history of children's book publishing in the United States, from Colonial times to the present.

He lives with his wife, Amy Schwartz, and their three-and-a-half-year-old son, Jacob, in Brooklyn, New York.

Bruce McMillan

Maine native Bruce McMillan is a self-styled writer and photo-illustrator for children. McMillan was given a camera by his father at age five and even after more than forty years of practice, he still learns something with each shoot. He is perhaps best known for his concept books for young children, among them Here a Chick, There a Chick, Eating Fractions; One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Six, Seven, Eight; Squirt, Squirt, Squirt and Bubba Backwards, Bubba Frontwards. They feature bold, colorful photographs that invite the child to explore size and new territory.

In addition to concept books, McMillan also does outstanding nature photography. His travels have taken him to Antarctica, Iceland, and the Caribbean to capture the natural habitat of sea birds, whales, and to the Antarctic Peninsula to explore the summer ice.

In Grandfather's Trolley (1995), McMillan departs from his usual style. To capture the feel of the early 1900s, the photographs were first shot in black and white, the prints were toned brown, and finally hand tinted with oil paint. To continue the soft feel, he smudged the edges of his clear lens filter with petroleum jelly.


When McMillan is not busy with his camera, he teaches writing, illustrating, and publishing children's books at the University of Southern Maine and the University of New Hampshire. He loves the possibility of finding a new talent and also in passing along the knowledge that would have been so helpful to him in his early days of creating children's books.

Tom Feelings

Tom Feelings was born and raised in the Bedford-Stuyvesant community of Brooklyn, New York. His interest in art began at a very young age, when he would copy cartoon characters and create his own comic strips. All of his earliest work was simply copied from what he saw in books, newspapers, and movies. His mother would fold blank sheets of paper in half and stitch them together on her sewing machine. She would tell him to "draw a hero," a feat which he quickly accomplished in these "mama-made books."

Feelings' early art training came from Mr. Thipadou, a local artist who was teaching at the local school and lived in his neighborhood. Not only did he live, several blocks away, but was a black artist, the first that Feelings had ever met. Thipadou believed in Feelings' abilities and urged him to practice to develop his skills so that he could "finally put down on paper not just what you see, but also what you feel about the subjects you draw and paint."

Feelings majored in art in high school and upon graduation, he received a scholarship to The School of Visual Arts. He attended classes for two years before entering the U.S. Air Force in 1953. His first printed work was a comic strip called "Ftis" for a Japanese Air Force newspaper in the late 1950s. The strip spoke of Feelings' concern that black people were not well represented in books. Feelings worked as a freelance artist, spending many hours drawing the black people of his community. During these years his work was used in The Liberator, Looker's, and Preadventures.

In 1964 Feelings left the United States and lived for several years in Ghana, where he worked for the Ghana Government Publishing House. There he was astonished by the warmth and pride of the black people in Africa—a real black power. The children were happy and secure, feelers that he for so long wanted to see in black children in America. When he returned to the United States in 1966, he sensed many changes. Reaffirming his belief that black children need to see positive images of themselves in their books, Feelings turned his attention to children's book illustration. His first published title was Soll and the Old Lady (Scholastic), published in 1967. After illustrating several other titles written by white authors, feelings provided illustration for Julius Lester's Newbery Honor winner To Be A Slave.

Tom and his wife, Muriel, collaborated on two critically acclaimed works—Moja Means One and Janba Means Hello—designed to teach the Swahili number system and alphabet. Both works were named Caldecott Honor Books. Since that time, he has worked with many distinguished black writers, including Nikki Grimes, Eloise Greenfield, and Maya Angelou.

His most recent work, The Middle Passage, was published by Dial in 1995 and received the 1996 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award. The idea for this work began in the early 1960s when Feelings worked and lived in Ghana. While discussing the implications of the slave trade from Africa with his Ghanian friends, he felt a need to express his feelings about this horrible time in history. It was ten years later, when he had returned to the United States and successfully started a career in children's book illustration, that the method for his storytelling became obvious. Finally, twenty years later, he began researching the project, The Middle Passage is a reality. Of that work Feelings comments: "I have finished this long spiritual and psychological journey... back... to go forward with completion of the last painting of The Middle Passage—a story that has changed me forever. My struggle to tell this African story, to create this artwork as well as live creatively under any conditions and survive, as my ancestors did, embodies my particular heritage in this world. As the blues, jazz, and spirituals teach, one must embrace all of life, both its pain and joy. creatively. Knowing this I see, may be disappointed, but never destroyed."
Barbara Freeman
A practitioner of tandem storytelling, Barbara Freeman is one of the famous Folktellers. Her partner is her cousin Connie Regan-Blake, and together they have performed for appreciative audiences throughout the United States and in 13 foreign countries. Barbara was one of the first storytellers to appear at major American and Canadian folk festivals and is the recipient of the “Most Outstanding Performer” award. Her work has been recognized by Good Morning America, Laugh-Makers Magazine, Saturday Evening Post, and School Library Journal.

The Folktellers have produced a number of excellent storytelling cassettes: Tales to Grow On (1981), White Horses and Whippettwails (1981), Chillers (1983), Homespun Tales (1986), Mountain Sweet Talk (1988), Stories for the Road (1992), Christmas at the Homestead (1992), and Pennies, Pets, and Peanut Butter (1994). Her earlier works have all been recognized by the Parents’ Choice Foundation and the American Library Association for their distinguished content. Pennies, Pets, and Peanut Butter has won the Parents’ Choice Silver Honor Medal, as well as Storytelling World’s Honor Award presented at the 1995 meeting of the International Reading Association.

Iona Opie
Scholar, collector, lecturer, and folklorist are but a few of the words that can be used to describe Iona Opie. Scholars in the field of children’s literature certainlly owe a debt of gratitude to Iona Opie and her late husband Peter. They are the authors of a number of books that set the standard for research and scholarship in the field. Before the publication of their Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes in 1951, children’s literature issues were dismissed as too trivial for serious thought.


Since Peter’s death in 1982, Iona has supervised the publication of The Singing Game (1983), Tall Feathers from Mother Goose (1988), A Dictionary of Superstitions (1989), and in 1990, The Treasures of Childhood: Books, Toys, and Games from the Opie Collection, coauthored with Brian Alderson and her son, Robert Opie. This beautiful work details the contents of the two collections amassed by the Opies since 1945, when they purchased The Cheery Walther (ca. 1820). The book collection grew to 20,000 volumes and the complementary collection of toys and games is outstanding; for its many examples in mint condition. It was these two collections that the Opies had hoped would someday be the basis for a center for the study of childhood. But Peter’s untimely death put an end to such dreams. The book collection was appraised at one million pounds and offered to the Bodleian for half that amount. The Opie Appeal was launched under the patronage of the Prince of Wales, and in 1988, eighteen months later, the goal had been met and the books were transferred to the Bodleian. The toy and game collection is still in the possession of Iona Opie. In 1989 an agreement was made with University Microfilms International (UMI) to microfilm and distribute the Opie Collection. Included are more than 20,000 bound volumes and 1,100 chapbooks, ballad-sheets, comics, magazines, penny dreadfuls, and picture books. The filming began in 1990 and will be published in units, organized by book type.

The Opies and their work have received numerous awards and recognitions. Children’s Games in Street and Playground won the Chicago Folklore Prize and The Singing Game was awarded the 1986 Katherine Briggs Folklore Award, the 1987 Rose Mary Crawford Prize, and the 1988 Children’s Literature Association Award for Excellence in Literary Criticism in the book category. Iona Opie was awarded the first Lifetime Achievement Award of the Children’s Folklore Section of the American Folklore Society in 1991 and in the same year delivered the prestigious Arbutus Honor Lecture at the Library of Congress.

Other Participants
Dr. Pam Barron, Professor, Florida State University
Dr. Maureen White, Associate Professor, University of Houston
Dr. Bonnie Holder, Associate Professor Emerita, The University of Southern Mississippi
Mr. Brian Alderson, Professor Emeritus, distinguished scholar and critic, and most recently the Children’s Book Editor of The Times of London.

Patricia MacLachlan Bibliography


Baby by Patricia MacLachlan; New York: Delacorte, 1993.


Moon, Stars, Frogs, and Friends by Patricia MacLachlan, ill. by Tomie de Paola; New York: Pantheon, 1980.


Seven Kisses in a Row by Patricia MacLachlan, ill. by Maria Pia Marrella; New York: Harper & Row, 1983.


The University of Southern Mississippi
Children's Book Festival

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Special Thanks
The USM Children's Book Festival expresses appreciation to the following for their help in making this 1996 Children's Book Festival an exciting and rewarding event:

Dr. Aubrey K. Lucas, President, The University of Southern Mississippi
Dr. Martin Pope and Dr. Lillian Pope and the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation, New York, NY
Dr. Carrol Wicker and the Ralph and Carrol Wicker Foundation, Hattiesburg, MS
Mrs. Dee Jones, Curator, de Grummond Children's Literature Research Collection
Ms. Sherry Laughlin, Cook Library

Members of the Children's Book Festival Planning Committee

Members of the Medallion Selection Committee

Students from the School of Library and Information Sciences for assisting our guest speakers and for providing refreshments

Members of the Association of USM Office Professionals for assistance with the book sales

Children's Book Review Center

Over 1,000 recently published books for children and young adults are available for examination and review at the University of Southern Mississippi Children's Book Review Center. Students in education and library science classes, faculty members, and participants in the Children's Book Festival are invited to visit the Center, which is sponsored by the School of Library and Information Science. The Review Center is open at selected times during the Children's Book Festival.

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The de Grummond Children's Literature Research Collection

The de Grummond Children's Literature Research Collection is one of North America's leading research centers in the field of children's literature. Although the Collection has many strengths, the main focus is on American and British children's literature, historical as well as contemporary.

The Collection holds original materials and published works in its facility on the fourth floor of the McCain Library and Archives on the Hattiesburg Campus of the University of Southern Mississippi. The Collection is named for Dr. Lena Y. de Grummond, author of several children's books, who founded the Collection in 1966. She assembled materials which were sent by contributors from around the world. Over 1,200 people have generously donated their books and original materials to the Collection. In addition, holdings include 50,000 published books.

A major acquisition is that of the Ezra Jack Keats Collection. The original artwork, typescripts, dummies, and preliminary sketches for 36 books by the Caldecott award-winning author/illustrator complement the archives of his personal and professional papers already housed in the de Grummond Collection.

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