



News Release

Contact: Martin Ackley, Director of Communications, (517) 241-4395

Michigan Notable Books for 2014 **Help Build a Culture of Reading** *20 books celebrating Michigan people, places, and events*

January 3, 2014

LANSING - The Library of Michigan today announced the 2014 Michigan Notable Books – 20 books celebrating Michigan people, places and events.

“Michigan is rich in talented writers, history, and resources,” said State Superintendent Mike Flanagan. “Our Notable Books for 2014 express the wonderful variety of character, tone, and flavors that are purely Michigan.

“This year’s Notable Books appeal to people of all ages and will continue to build a Culture of Reading here in Michigan,” Flanagan said.

The 2014 list includes titles covering topics as diverse as a detailed discussion of Chief Pontiac’s Rebellion; a biography of Mark “The Bird” Fidrych; a children’s graphic novel about Buster Keaton’s summers spent in Muskegon; an anthology of some of the best Michigan poetry; the deadly Great Lakes hurricane of 1913; a collection of articles studying the Great Lakes sturgeon to a book highlighting the joys of baking and eating pies are all topics covered on this year’s varied list.

The Michigan Notable Books program continues to provide the Library of Michigan with an opportunity to promote a culture of reading and especially the value of exploring the great wealth of literary talent found in the Great Lakes State, Flanagan added. The state’s rich history combined with the creative talent of its citizens continues to result in a treasure of printed materials published annually.

“The Michigan Notable Books Program helps to show what is ‘great’ about the Great Lakes State,” said State Librarian Nancy Robertson. “It is amazing to see the quality of books that are written focusing on Michigan year after year,” added Robertson.

“Each year the program helps to tell Michigan’s complete story through the voices of talented historians, creative writers, illustrators, essayists and poets. These creative voices are all around

us in our communities. We just need to take a little time to find them and to recognize their value. Reading is more important than ever. This list helps to steer people to the ‘good stuff’,” said Robertson.

Annually, the Michigan Notable Books Program (MNB) list features 20 books published in the previous calendar year that are about Michigan or the Great Lakes region, or are written by a Michigan author. Selections include nonfiction and fiction books that appeal to a variety of audiences and cover a range of topics and issues close to the hearts of Michigan residents.

Michigan Notable Books is a statewide program that began in 1991 as part of the Michigan Week celebration, geared to pay tribute and draw attention to the many people and places that make life in Michigan unique. In that regard, the MNB program successfully features Michigan books and writers focusing their talents on the creative talents found in the Great Lakes State. Each title on the list provides readers an insight into what it means to make your home in Michigan and continues to showcase some of the greatest stories are located in the Great Lakes region. The Michigan Notable Books Program is “Pure Michigan.”

This year’s Michigan Notable Books Selection Committee consisted of representatives from the Library of Michigan; The Library of Michigan Foundation; the Archives of Michigan; Grand Rapids Public Library; Michigan Center for the Book; Michigan Humanities Council; Schuler Books and Music; *Lansing City Pulse*; Howell Carnegie District Library; Genesee District Library; and the State Historic Preservation Office.

For more information about the MNB program call 517 373-1300, visit www.michigan.gov/notablebooks or email riley1@michigan.gov.

2014 Michigan Notable Books:

Beyond Pontiac’s Shadow: Michilimackinac and the Anglo-Indian War of 1763 by Keith R. Widder (Michigan State University Press)

On June 2, 1763, the Ojibwa captured Michigan’s Fort Michilimackinac from their British allies. Widder examines the circumstances leading up to the attack and the course of events in the aftermath that resulted in the re-garrisoning of the fort and the restoration of the fur trade. At the heart of this discussion is an analysis of French-Canadian and Indian communities at the Straits of Mackinac and throughout the pays d’en haut. An accessible guide to this important period in Michigan, American, and Canadian history, *Beyond Pontiac’s Shadow* sheds invaluable light on a political and cultural crisis.

The Bird: The Life and Legacy of Mark Fidrych by Doug Wilson (Thomas Dunne Books)
The Bird is the first biography of 70s pop icon and Detroit Tigers pitcher, Mark Fidrych. As a rookie he stormed the baseball world by his antics of “talking” to the baseball and along the way became one of the most popular Tigers in history. Fidrych’s larger than life personality and killer slider resulted in his selection as the 1976 All Star game starter and landed him as the first athlete ever to appear on the cover of *Rolling Stone*. Wilson details how an arm injury in 1977 limited his career. Fidrych’s love of the game and pure joy in playing helped to make the summer of 1976 magical in Detroit.

Birth Marks by Jim Daniels (BOA Editions Ltd.)

A poet of the working-class and city streets, Jim Daniels's 14th poetry collection travels from Detroit to Ohio to Pittsburgh, from one post-industrial city to another, across jobs and generations. Daniels focuses on the urban landscape and its effects on its inhabitants as they struggle to establish community on streets hissing with distrust and random violence.

Bluffton: My Summers with Buster by Matt Phelan (Candlewick Press)

Muskegon, Michigan, 1908, a visiting troupe of vaudeville performers is about the most exciting thing since baseball. They're summering in nearby Bluffton, so Henry has a few months to ogle the elephant and the zebra, the tightrope walkers and a slapstick actor his own age named Buster Keaton. The show folk say Buster is indestructible; his father throws him around as part of the act and the audience roars, while Buster never cracks a smile. Henry longs to learn to take a fall like Buster, "the human mop," but Buster just wants to play ball with Henry and his friends. With signature nostalgia, Matt Phelan visualizes a bygone era with lustrous color, dynamic lines, and flawless dramatic pacing.

Bootstrapper: From Broke to Badass on a Northern Farm by Mardi Jo Link, (Alfred A. Knopf)

Link's memoir about survival and self-discovery documents the summer of 2005 when debt, self-doubt and a recent divorce forced her to refocus on what truly is important in life. *Bootstrapper* tells the story of her struggles to raise three sons as a single mother and the fight to hang on to her century-old farmhouse in northern Michigan. Her humorous accounts tackle the subjects of butchering a pig, grocery shopping on a budget, Zen divorce, raising chickens, and bargain cooking all in an effort to keep her farm out of foreclosure. Her difficult year is highlighted with the use of humor and optimistic storytelling and demonstrates how her struggles helped to strengthen her family bonds and led to findings necessary in order to save the farm she loved.

The Colored Car by Jean Alicia Elster (Wayne State University Press)

An engaging narrative illustrates the personal impact of segregation and discrimination and reveals powerful glimpses of everyday life in 1930s Detroit. After boarding the first-class train car at Michigan Central Station in Detroit and riding comfortably to Cincinnati, Patsy is shocked when her family is led from their seats to change cars. In the dirty, cramped "colored car," Patsy finds that the life she has known in Detroit is very different from life down south. Patsy must find a way to understand her experience in the colored car and also deal with the more subtle injustices that her family faces in Detroit.

Detroit: Race Riots, Racial Conflicts and Efforts to Bridge the Racial Divide by Joe T. Darden and Richard W. Thomas (Michigan State University Press)

Unique among books on the subject, *Detroit* pays special attention to post-1967 social and political developments in the city, and expands upon the much-explored black/white dynamic to address the influx of more recent populations to Detroit: Middle Eastern Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans. Crucially, the book explores the role of place of residence, spatial mobility, and spatial inequality as key factors in determining access to opportunities such as housing, education, employment, and other amenities, both in the suburbs and in the city.

Detroit: An American Autopsy by Charlie LeDuff (The Penguin Press)

Veteran writer LeDuff set out to uncover what led his city into decline. He embedded with a local fire brigade, investigated politicians of all stripes, and interviewed: union bosses, homeless squatters, powerful businessmen, struggling homeowners, and ordinary people holding the city together. LeDuff shares an unbelievable story of a hard town in a rough time filled with some of the strangest and strongest people our country has to offer.

The Great Lake Sturgeon Edited by Nancy Auer and Dave Dempsey (Michigan State University Press)

This collected volume captures many aspects of the remarkable Great Lakes sturgeon, from the mythical to the critically real. Lake sturgeon is sacred to some, impressive to many and endangered in the Great Lakes. A fish whose ancestry reaches back millions of years and that can live over a century and grow to six feet or more, the Great Lakes lake sturgeon was once considered useless, and then overfished nearly to extinction. Blending history, biology, folklore, environmental science, and policy, this accessible book seeks to reach a broad audience and tell the story of the Great Lakes lake sturgeon in a manner as diverse as its subject.

I Invented the Modern Age: The Rise of Henry Ford by Richard Snow (Scribner)

Henry Ford was born the same year as the battle of Gettysburg, died two years after the atomic bombs fell, and his life personified the tremendous technological changes achieved in that span. Growing up as a Michigan farm boy, Ford saw the advantages of internal combustion. He built his first gasoline engine out of scavenged industrial scraps. It was the size of a sewing machine. From there, scene by scene, Richard Snow vividly shows Ford using his innate mechanical abilities, hard work, and radical imagination as he transformed American industry.

In the House Upon the Dirt Between the Lake and the Woods by Matt Bell (Soho Press)

In this debut novel, a newly-wed couple escapes the busy confusion of their homeland for a distant and almost-uninhabited lakeshore. They plan to live there simply, to fish the lake, to trap the nearby woods, and build a house upon the dirt between where they can raise a family. But as their every pregnancy fails, the child-obsessed husband begins to rage at this new world. This novel is a powerful exploration of the limits of parenthood and marriage—and of what happens when a marriage's success is measured solely by the children it produces, or else the sorrow that marks their absence.

November's Fury: The Deadly Great Lakes Hurricane of 1913 by Michael Schumacher (University of Minnesota Press)

Set in the infancy of weather forecasting, *November's Fury* recounts the dramatic events that unfolded over those four days in 1913, as captains eager—or at times forced—to finish the season tried to outrun the massive storm that sank, stranded, or demolished dozens of boats and claimed the lives of more than 250 sailors. This is an account of incredible seamanship under impossible conditions, of inexplicable blunders, heroic rescue efforts, and the sad aftermath of recovering bodies washed ashore and paying tribute to those lost at sea.

Poetry in... Michigan... in Poetry – Edited by William Olsen and Jack Ridl (New Issues Poetry & Prose)

Poems from Michigan's most recognized poets are gathered in this beautiful single volume. The anthology gathers an intriguing range of poets and artists, their visions and voices, exploring the variances in Michigan landscape; shoreline; lives lived in the city, town, and countryside; our uncommon diversity of cultures, points of view, concerns, celebrations, losses, and histories.

The River Swimmer by Jim Harrison (Grove Press)

As one of America's most recognized and critically acclaimed authors, Harrison's new collection of novellas make Michigan's natural environment central to each tale. "The Land of Unlikeness" portrays a failed artist's return to Michigan to visit his ailing mother and the resulting rebirth in his love of painting. "The River Swimmer" ventures into the magical as a northern Michigan farm boy is drawn to swimming as an escape and his encounters with mythical "water babies" in the lakes and streams surrounding his northern Michigan home. The stories demonstrate how two men, young and old, actively confront inconvenient love and the encroachment of suburbia on Michigan's lavish natural environment.

Something That Feels Like Truth by Donald Lystra (Northern Illinois University Press)

In 16 compelling stories, award-winning author Donald Lystra takes us on a page-turning journey through the cities and countryside of the Great Lakes heartland to as far away as Paris. In fierce but tender prose, Lystra writes about ordinary people navigating life's difficult boundaries---of age and love and family---and sometimes finding redemption in the face of searing regret. Although spanning half a century, these are timely stories that speak about the limits we place on ourselves, both from fear and for the sake of those we love, and of our willingness to confront change.

Sweetie-licious Pies: Eat Pie, Love Life by Linda Hundt, Photography by Clarissa Westmeyer (Guilford)

In this cookbook, the author has built upon her nostalgia-based bakery business to offer her recipes to a wider audience. A 16-time national pie-baking champion, Linda Hundt truly believes in the ability of pies to spread good will, one delicious bite at a time. In this sweet cookbook, she shares the heartwarming stories behind 52 of her signature pies. Illustrated, like her bakeries, in retro themed pink and red, the cookbook will be enjoyed by both lovers of pie and family to whom she has dedicated many a recipe.

Taken Alive: The Sight's Rock and Roll Tour Diary by Eddie Baranek, Edited and Forward by Brian Smith (Hiros Rise Music)

In 2012, the Detroit area band "The Sights" criss-crossed America and Europe in support of Hollywood star Jack Black's band Tenacious D. Baranek covers the highs and lows of the life on the road touring with a rock n' roll band. Baranek's diary shares stories that uniquely illustrate the power music has in our culture and inspires readers to support Michigan's local music scenes.

Tear –Down: Memoir of a Vanishing City by Gordon Young (University of California Press)

Skillfully blending personal memoir, historical inquiry, and interviews with Flint residents, Young constructs a vibrant tale of a once-thriving city still fighting—despite overwhelming odds—to rise from the ashes. He befriends a rag-tag collection of urban homesteaders and die-

hard locals who refuse to give up as they try to transform Flint into a smaller, greener town that offers lessons for cities all over the world.

Tuesdays With Todd and Brad Reed: A Michigan Tribute by Brad Reed and Todd Reed
(Todd & Brad Reed Photography)

Beginning on January 3, 2012, photographers Todd and Brad Reed traveled throughout Michigan every Tuesday from sunrise to sunset capturing the beauty that Michigan has to offer. During the 52 weeks, the Reeds successfully captured and highlight stunning images depicting both the rural and urban landscape of the Great Lakes State. This book captures a year's worth of their images in one gorgeous volume highlighting Michigan's most beautiful place.

The Way North: Collected Upper Peninsula Works Edited by Ron Riecki (Wayne State University Press)

In 49 poems and 20 stories – diverse in form, length, and content-readers are introduced to the unmistakable terrain and characters of the U.P. The book not only showcases the snow, small towns, and idiosyncratic characters that readers might expect but also introduces unexpected regions and voices. From the powerful powwow in Baraga of April Lindala's "For the Healing of All Women" to the sex-charged basement in Stambaugh of Chad Faries's "Hotel Stambaugh: Michigan, 1977" to the splendor found between Newberry and Paradise in Joseph D. Haske's "Tahquamenon," readers will delight in discovering the work of both new and established authors.

###

The Library of Michigan – Michigan's official state library agency for more than 175 years – is part of the Michigan Department of Education. To learn more, visit www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan