



News Release

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

Library of Michigan's 2012 Michigan Notable Books Reflect Our State's Legacy and Perseverance

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LANSING - The Library of Michigan today announced the list of the 2012 Michigan Notable Books – 20 books highlighting Michigan people, places, and events.

“This year’s selections prove that persevering through economic and personal hardship is nothing new for Michiganders, and that this enduring and independent spirit has a long, rich history in the Great Lakes State,” said state Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan.

A collection of Michigan ghost stories; a biography of one of the most recognized women in the Republican Party; a history of the role Jacobson’s department stores played in Michigan communities; fiction by nationally-recognized authors; and three children’s books that range from topics covering race relations, “what is art?” and teachers from Mars are among this year’s most notable Michigan books.

“This year’s Michigan Notable Books bring to life the Michigan experience through vivid storytelling that creates portraits of the people and places that make Michigan great,” said State Librarian Nancy Robertson. “Addressing Michigan’s natural beauty, its innovative leaders or the faith of its people, these books celebrate Michigan as a place and a people that even in the most trying of times find transformation. The Library of Michigan is delighted to honor these 20 books as the 2012 Michigan Notable Books.”

Each year the Michigan Notable Books (MNB) list features 20 books published in the previous calendar year that are about, or set in, 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 as part of the 1991 Michigan Week celebration, geared to pay tribute and draw attention to the many people, places and things that make Michigan life unique. In that regard, MNB successfully highlights Michigan books and writers focusing on the Great Lakes State. Each title on the 2012 list gives readers insight into what it means to make your home in Michigan and proves some of the greatest stories are indeed found in the Great Lakes region.

This year's Michigan Notable Books selection committee includes representatives from the Library of Michigan; The Archives of Michigan; Cooley Law School; Grand Rapids Public Library; *Lansing City Pulse*; Michigan Center for the Book; Michigan Humanities Council; Schuler Books & Music; and the Traverse City National Writers Series.

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

2012 MNB Books:

Elly Peterson: “Mother” of the Moderates by Sara Fitzgerald (University of Michigan Press)

Michigan native Sara Fitzgerald writes about a different era of the Republican Party in Michigan. Elly Peterson's story is a missing chapter in the political history of Michigan, as well as the United States. This new biography gives full credit to one of the first female political leaders in this country. A biography of a woman who helped throw open the doors to broader participation and power for women in the Republican Party and American politics.

Everyday Klansfolk: White Protestant Life and the KKK in 1920s Michigan by Craig Fox (Michigan State University Press)

Shedding light on this unsettling chapter in Michigan's history, Fox explores the origins of the organization's strong influence and popularity throughout the state during the 1920s, and demonstrates that their membership was bolstered by ordinary citizens. This important book is based largely on Newaygo County Klan records housed at the Clarke Historical Library at Central Michigan University.

Fever: Little Willie John, A Fast Life, Mysterious Death and the Birth of Soul by Susan Whitall (Titan Books)

Detroit's Little Willie John lived for a fleeting 30 years, but his dynamic and daring sound left an indelible mark on the history of music. His deep blues, rollicking rock 'n' roll and swinging ballads inspired a generation of musicians, forming the basis for what we now know as soul music.

Ghost Writers: Us Haunting Them, Contemporary Michigan Literature edited by Keith Taylor and Laura Kasischke (Wayne State University Press)

This anthology is a collection of stories from renowned Michigan authors collected and edited by Taylor and Kasischke. The tales range from true stories written by non-believers to purely fictional stories that provoke the imagination. The collection is set in a wide range of Michigan locations that bring a sense of history and place to the tales.

Hank Greenberg: The Hero Who Didn't Want to Be One by Mark Kurlansky (Yale University Press)

No baseball player has ever had a swing quite like the Detroit Tigers' Hank Greenberg. His unique athletic ability made hitting a baseball look smooth and effortless. Though Hank

Greenberg was one of the first players to challenge Babe Ruth's single-season home run record, he may be more remembered for a game he did not play. In 1934 in a game with the New York Yankees Greenberg chose not to play because the game fell on Yom Kippur. Almost instantly he became a hero to Jews throughout America. Kurlansky's concise book describes Greenberg as the quintessential secular Jew, and argues to celebrate him for his loyalty to religious observance is to ignore the true man.

Here Comes Trouble: Stories from My Life by Michael Moore (Grand Central Publishing)
Oscar-winning filmmaker, bestselling author, and vocal critic of the right, Michael Moore, tells his story of growing up outside of Flint, Michigan. In a series of far ranging vignettes Moore highlights stories from his early life that helped to shape one of today's most controversial public figures. This deeply personal and honest account introduces readers to the Michael Moore they have never known.

In Stitches: A Memoir by Anthony Youn, M.D. (Gallery Books)

Dr. Youn's memoir describes his transformation from a geeky outcast in Greenville, Michigan to celebrated plastic surgery expert on popular talk shows like "Good Morning America," "The Rachael Ray Show" and MSNBC. With humor and heartfelt honesty Dr. Youn describes how his own surgery to correct a protruding jaw led him to his calling and the realization of how changing your appearance can so profoundly change your life.

Jacobson's, I Miss It So: The Story Of A Michigan Fashion Institute by Bruce Allen Kopytek (History Press)

This is the story of Michigan's Macy's, the once center of upscale clothing and lunch for ladies. Author Bruce Kopytek has found stories that date from the beginnings in Reed City, Michigan in 1869 until the sad bankruptcy and closing. Retail enthusiasts, history buffs and fashion devotees will enjoy the history and the memories.

Magic Trash: A Story of Tyree Guyton and His Art by J.H. Shapiro and illustrated by Vanessa Brantley-Newton (Charlesbridge)

Dedicated to the children of Detroit, J.H. Shapiro tells the story of the Heidelberg Project and Tyree Guyton. Tyree Guyton loved his childhood home where his grandpa Sam taught him to "paint the world." Guyton wanted to wake people up through his art and make them see Detroit's crumbling communities in a new light. This is the true story of an artist and his art and how it saved his community. Tyree Guyton was recognized with a Michigan Notable book award in 2008 for *Connecting the Dots: Tyree Guyton's Heidelberg Project*.

Michigan and the Civil War: A Great and Bloody Sacrifice by Jack Dempsey (The History Press)

Offering a fresh and readable glimpse into Michigan's role in the preservation of the Union, Dempsey leads us through the leading characters, battles, and events during the Civil War, including Governor Austin Blair, the Battle of Gettysburg, and the 102nd U.S. Colored Troops.

Misery Bay by Steve Hamilton (Minotaur Books)

In this 8th novel featuring Alex McKnight, Hamilton, the 2006 Michigan Author Award winner, leads us on a suspenseful adventure in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. McKnight teams up with

former adversary Chief Roy Maven in investigating a string of mysterious suicides in a remote stretch of the Upper Peninsula known as Misery Bay.

Miss Martin Is a Martian by Colleen Murray Fisher and illustrated by Jared Chapman (Mackinac Island Press)

Second grader Melvin Eugene Baxter knows his new teacher is from Mars. Armed with an apropos hockey stick, head protected by a pot he is determined not to let Miss Martin the Martian take over the planet or make his head explode with too much information. Armed with a full litany of seemingly extraterrestrial powers, Miss Martin the school teacher, reveals her true mission.

Motor City Shakedown by D. E. Johnson (Minotaur Books)

Johnson's follow-up to *The Detroit Electric Scheme* is a thrilling ride set in 1911 Detroit. Will Anderson looks to find justice for the death of his best friend, while battling the Detroit criminal underworld, a corrupt police department, and his own personal demons. This is Johnson's second time on the Michigan Notable Books list (*The Detroit Electric Scheme*).

A Nation's Hope: The Story of Boxing Legend Joe Louis by Matt De La Pena and illustrated by Kadir Nelson (Dial Books for Young Readers)

On the eve of World War II, boxer Joe Louis fought German Max Schmeling in a historic bout that was much more significant than determining who would be the next heavyweight champion of the world. Most Americans viewed the fight as a symbol of the nation's battle against Hitler's Germany and his "master race". This beautifully illustrated and powerful picture book focuses on the life of Detroit's Joe Louis and his role in helping White and African American communities set aside prejudice and come together to celebrate our nation's ideals.

Once Upon a Car: The Fall and Resurrection of America's Big Three Automakers-GM, Ford, and Chrysler by Bill Vlasic (William Morrow)

Once Upon a Car is a fascinating story of the "Big Three's" fight for survival in Detroit. In a tale that reads like a corporate thriller, Vlasic, takes readers into the executive offices, assembly plants, and union halls to introduce a cast of memorable characters including the executives who struggled to save their companies but in the end had to seek a controversial, last-gasp rescue from the U.S. government. Vlasic has covered the auto industry for the *New York Times* and *Detroit News* for over fifteen years.

Once Upon a River by Bonnie Jo Campbell (Norton)

National Book Award finalist and past Michigan Notable Book award author for *American Salvage* (2010), Bonnie Jo Campbell, creates an unforgettable heroine to rival Huck Finn in sixteen-year-old Margo Crane. After the violent death of her father Margo takes to the Stark River in her boat, with only a few supplies and a biography of Annie Oakley, in search of her vanished mother. Her river odyssey through rural Michigan becomes a defining journey, one that leads her beyond self-preservation and to the decision of what price she is willing to pay for her choices.

Songs of Unreason by Jim Harrison (Copper Canyon Press)

Songs of Unreason, Harrison's latest collection of poetry, proclaims his reverence for rivers, trees, dogs, and women. Each poem comes to life on the page with the richness and clarity of Harrison's voice. Michigan people and places play a central role in many of the poems included. Harrison is a past recipient of a Michigan Notable Book award for *Off to the Side* (2003), *True North* (2005), *The Summer He Didn't Die* (2006), *Returning to Earth* (2008), and *The English Major* (2009).

South of Superior by Ellen Airgood (Riverhead Books)

Ellen Airgood's first novel celebrates taking joy in the little things in life. Chicago transplant, Madeline Stone, moves to the fictional town of Mac Allaster, Michigan on the southern shore of Lake Superior in hopes of finding an escape from her old life. Events and new friends quickly pull her into the world of this beautiful, gritty, and magic town. Airgood runs a diner in the similar town Grand Marais, Michigan.

Vintage Views Along the West Michigan Pike: From Sand Trails to US-31 by M. Christine Byron and Thomas R. Wilson (Arbutus Press)

Utilizing hundreds of historic postcards and photographs, Byron and Wilson detail the history of the road that has become US-31, and the Lake Michigan communities it connects from Michigan City, Indiana to Mackinaw City, Michigan. This is Byron and Wilson's third time on the Michigan Notable Books list (*Vintage Views of Leelanau County*; *Vintage Views of the Charlevoix-Petoskey Region*).

Wire to Wire by Scott Sparling (Tin House Books)

Sparling's debut is a crime novel with a full cast of colorful characters including the brain damaged, freight car hopping lead character. Between Arizona and Michigan, Sparling nails the sense of place in his writing while taking his reader on an uncommon journey. Lovers of both trains and Michigan will enjoy this book.

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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.