

News Release: American Library Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The most important and prestigious awards for children's literature published in the U.S. during 1975 were announced today (January 22) by the Children's Services Division of the American Library Association (ALA).

Susan Cooper, author of The Grey King, published by Atheneum Publishers (a Margaret K. McElderry Book) won the Newbery Award for the most distinguished contribution to literature for children.

Leo and Diane Dillon, illustrators of Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears: A West African Tale, retold by Verna Aardema and published by The Dial Press, won the Caldecott Medal for the most distinguished picture book for children.

Zena Sutherland, chairperson of the 1975 Newbery-Caldecott Awards Committee and lecturer in the Graduate Library School, University of Chicago, made the announcement during the ALA's midwinter meeting at the Palmer House in Chicago.

The presentation of the medals will take place at the Newbery-Caldecott Awards dinner during the ALA's Centennial Conference in July 1976.

Susan Cooper, an Englishwoman who has resided in the United States

for the past 12 years, has written adult books as well as children's realistic fiction and fantasy.

The Grey King, the fourth in a planned series of five books, continues the theme of the struggle between the forces of darkness and light in the world. The hero is a young boy who finds he shares the supernatural powers of "The Old Ones," those who use their powers to save the goodness of light. Ms. Cooper, a former staffer for the Sunday Times of London, lives near Boston with her husband, an American scientist.

The Caldecott winners, Leo and Diane Dillon, have been collaborating on illustrations for the last 19 years. In Why Mosquitoes Buzz . . ., their bold, stylized illustrations in soft, strong tones, capture both the dignity of the African culture and the humor of the animal folktale.

Their previous illustrations include Behind the Back of the Mountain: Black Folktales from Southern Africa, a 1973 ALA Notable Book, and Songs and Stories from Uganda, a 1974 ALA Notable Book.

Teachers at the School of Visual Arts, the Dillons live in Brooklyn with their 10-year-old son.

Newbery Honor Books are The Hundred Penny Box and Dragonwings. Written by Sharon Bell Mathis, The Hundred Penny Box, is the story of the love between a small boy and his great-great aunt. It was illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon, the Caldecott winners, and published by The Viking Press, Inc. Dragonwings, by Laurence Yep, is a novel about Chinese immigrants, set in the United States during the 19th century.

It was published by Harper & Row Publishers, Inc.

Caldecott Honor Books are Strega Nona a humorous Italian folktale, retold and illustrated by Tomie de Paola and published by Prentice-Hall, Inc. The Desert is Theirs, about the love of the Papago Indians for their desert home, was illustrated by Peter Parnall, written by Byrd Baylor, and published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

The John Newbery Medal has been awarded annually since 1922 to the author of the most distinguished contribution to literature for children published in the United States during the previous year.

The Randolph J. Caldecott Medal has been awarded annually since 1938 to the illustrator of the most distinguished picture book for children published in the United States during the previous year.

The medals, originally donated by Frederic G. Melcher, continue to be provided by his son, Daniel Melcher.

Selection of the medal winners and the honor books is made by a committee of 23 members of the Children's Services Division of the ALA from nominations submitted by children's and school librarians who are members of the Children's Services Division of ALA.