

For Immediate Release
January 1993

From: Pamela Goodes
Linda Wallace
312-280-5043, 5042
January 22-27
ALA Press Room, Colorado Convention Center
303-446-4226

Patricia C. McKissack and Kathleen Atkins Wilson win ALA's 1993 Coretta Scott King awards

Patricia C. McKissack and Kathleen Atkins Wilson are the 1993 recipients of the Coretta Scott King Awards recognizing outstanding books by African-American authors and illustrators whose works promote an understanding and appreciation of all cultures. The winners were announced on Monday, January 25, at a news conference during the American Library Association (ALA) Midwinter Meeting in Denver.

Presented by the ALA Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) and the Coretta Scott King Task Force, the awards commemorate the life and work of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and honors Mrs. Coretta Scott King for her courage and determination in continuing to work for peace and world brotherhood.

McKissack won the text award for "The Dark-Thirty: Southern Tales of the Supernatural," illustrated by Brian Pinkney, published by Alfred Knopf and edited by Ann Schwartz.

"In a joyous celebration of children's fascination with events unexplained, Patricia McKissack empowers her readers with this satisfying collection that chills the bones and speaks to the heart," said Barbara Jones, chair of the Coretta Scott King Book Selection Committee. "Tightly connected to African-American life and the historic struggle for freedom,

Patricia C. McKissack and Kathleen Atkins Wilson wins 1993 Coretta Scott King Awards -- add one

these tales entertain even as they inspire us to believe in powerful forces ensuring justice in a world often cruel and oppressive. Eerie tales to be told in the dark-thirty -- the half-hour just before nightfall."

McKissack comes from a family of skilled storytellers who taught her to listen and observe and who encouraged her life-long love affair with words.

She received the King Author Award in 1990 for "A Long Hard Journey: The Story of the Pullman Porter," (co-authored with her husband, Frederick) and is the author of "A Million Fish...More or Less!," "Nettie Jo's Friends" and "Mirandy and Brother Wind," a Caldecott Honor Book.

McKissack and her husband are residents of St. Louis, Mo., and have three sons.

Wilson won the King Illustrator Award for her first book, "The Origin of Life on Earth: An African Creation Myth," retold by David A. Anderson/SANKOFA and published by Sight Productions in Mt. Airy, Md.

"From the cradle of civilization comes this historically rich retelling of an age-old Yoruba creation myth," Jones explained. "Kathleen Wilson juxtaposes distinctively styled silhouettes with lavish watercolors, which creatively illuminate each page with thought-provoking images of profound beauty."

Wilson is best known for her distinctively styled "Silhouette Expressions of Portraits in Black" found in galleries and fine art collections nationwide. Born in Ypsilanti, Mich., she now resides in Los Angeles where she divides her time between her husband, two children and her studio from which she publishes and distributes her art.

- over -

Patrick C. McKissack and Kathleen Atkins Wilson win 1993 Coretta Scott King Awards -- add two

The committee named three King Author Award Honor Books: "Mississippi Challenge," by Mildred Pitts Walter and published by Bradbury Press; "Sojourner Truth: Ain't I a Woman?," written by Patricia C. McKissack and Frederick McKissack and published by Scholastic, Inc., and "Somewhere in the Darkness," by Walter Dean Myers and published by Scholastic, Inc.

"Mildred Walter's sharp and unrelenting text in 'Mississippi Challenge' chronicles the history of civil rights movements in Mississippi over a period of 100 years," Jones said. "The blending of personal testimonies and excerpts from speeches and letters all meticulously documented, lets the events speak for themselves with forceful quietness and without sensationalism. This volume fills a void in the yet unfinished story of the African-American struggle for freedom and justice in Mississippi."

Walter grew up in a small town in Louisiana. She has always been involved in the struggle for freedom and justice. In the 1960s she and her husband, Earl Walter, the city chairman of CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) worked to end discrimination and open up employment and housing opportunities in Los Angeles. She now resides in Denver, Colo.

"In a well-documented narrative embellished with selected period photographs, the McKissacks successfully portray events in the life of Sojourner Truth and her unending work in the cause for freedom and civil rights in 'Sojourner Truth: Ain't I a Woman?.'

"The McKissacks quiet prose captures the strength, power, unswerving convictions and persuasive speaking ability of a woman born into slavery, but

spiritually forever free. Readers will respond with a resounding 'yes' to

- over -

Patricia C. McKissack and Kathleen Atkins Wilson win 1993 Coretta Scott King
-- add three

Truth's oft repeated query, 'Ain't I a woman?'"

The McKissacks have written more than 20 books for children. Both are graduates of Tennessee State University. They have been married for 27 years.

"In a realistic portrayal of urban black culture, Myers' in 'Somewhere in the Darkness,' crafts a poignant story. His father in prison, his mother dead, Jimmy is drifting through tenth grade in New York City under his 'Mamma Jean's' care. Abruptly, Crab, his father, appears and demands that Jimmy accompany him on a journey to prove his innocence.

"With terse dialogue and characterization, the reader experiences a heartbreaking journey that propels both Jimmy and Crab to discover that it takes honesty, effort and love to truly become father and son."

Myers, the award-winning author of more than 30 books for young adult readers, began writing poetry in the fifth grade and has been writing ever since. His books include "Scorpions," a Newbery Honor Book "The Young Landlords" and "Motown and Didi" -- both recipients of the King Author Award. Myers' "Fallen Angels," another King Award-winning book, also was named one of Booklist magazine's Best Books of the 80s.

He lives with his wife and the youngest of three children in Jersey City, N.J.

The three King Illustrator Honor Books are: "Little Eight John," illustrated by Wil Clay, written by Jan Wahl and published by Lodestar Books; "Sukey and the Mermaids," illustrated by Brian Pinkney, written by Robert D. San Souci and published by Four Winds Press, and "Working Cotton,"

Patricia C. McKissack and Kathleen Atkins Wilson win 1993 Coretta Scott King Awards -- add four

illustrated by Carole Byard, written by Sherley Anne Williams and published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

"Clay's 'brimming with life' acrylic paintings capture the vibrant energy of the ever-naughty Little Eight John. In this North Carolina folktale, action-packed pictures expanded by the subtle use of color and swiftly moving circular lines reflect Eight John's pranks. Cleverly placed insets give added visibility to the primary elements of the story, leading viewers to a not-too-scary conclusion."

Clay, a resident of Perrysburg, Ohio, has worked for 25 years as a graphics designer. The father of six children, Clay says he is familiar with the "wily ways of little boys."

"Brian Pinkney's masterful and finely detailed scratchboard technique captures the mood of the hauntingly beautiful West African tale of Sukey and the Mermaid. Bold, double-page spreads heighten this drama through subtle changes of facial expression and an afrocentric depiction of the black-eyed mermaid, Mama-Jo. From surprise to curiosity and concern to wickedness, Pinkney's swirling lines create both movement and emotion."

Pinkney, a graduate of the Philadelphia College of Art and the School of Visual Arts in New York, crafted this scratchboard technique after using watercolor and pencil as a medium for many years.

"Acrylic double-page spreads with mottled hues set the mood in this powerful visual rendition of a day in the life of a black migrant family,

"Working Cotton." Through the eyes of young Shelan, Byard depicts the

- over -

Patricia C. McKissack and Kathleen Atkins Wilson wins 1993 Coretta Scott King Awards -- add five

strength of this family with a combination of large close-up images and lush colors.

"From the early morning bus ride, cotton blossoms in full bloom, Daddy's swift rhythmic picking, beads of perspiration and the red glow of the setting sun, viewers see and sense the dignity of this family's labor and fatigue."

Byard is an artist and illustrator whose books for children have twice won the King Award. She has received a grant from the New York State Council of the Arts, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship and a Ford Motors Travel grant from the Institute of International Education that took her to five countries in Africa.

She attended classes at Fleischer Art Memorial in Philadelphia and graduated from the New York-Phoenix School of Design. Byard lives in New York and is currently a lecturer at the Parsons School of Design.

Winners of the 1992 Coretta Scott King Awards receive a framed citation, an honorarium of \$250 and a set of Encyclopedia Britannica or World Book Encyclopedias. Certificates are given to authors and illustrators named for Honor Books. The official award presentation will take place at the ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans in June.

Members of the 1992 Coretta Scott King Awards Jury were: Jones, Birmingham (Ala.) Public Schools; Denyvetta Davis, Ralph Ellison Library, Oklahoma City, Okla.; Carol Edwards, Fairbault, Minn.; Carolyn Garnes, East

Point, Ga.; Ann Miller, Lauderhill, Fla.; Brenda Johnson, Temple Hills, Md.,
and Henrietta Smith, Delray Beach, Fla.

- over -

Patricia C. McKissack and Kathleen Atkins Wilson win 1993 Coretta Scott King Awards -- add six

A four-color brochure giving a complete listing of Coretta Scott King Award and Honor Books is available from ALA Graphics, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 6061. The brochure is \$24 for 100 copies.

- 30 -