

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

Cynthia Rylant and Emily Arnold McCully win 1993 Newbery and Caldecott Medals

Cynthia Rylant and Emily Arnold McCully have won the 1993 John Newbery and Randolph Caldecott Medals, the most prestigious awards in children's literature. Winners of the annual Newbery and Caldecott Medals were announced Monday, January 25, by the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association (ALA) at a news conference held during the ALA's Midwinter Meeting in Denver.

Rylant, author of "Missing May," won the 1993 Newbery Medal for the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children published in 1992. The book is published by Orchard Books and edited by Richard Jackson.

"When May dies, 12-year old Summer, Uncle Ob and Summer's friend, Cletus band together to get her back -- or at least word of her -- and help each other ease the pain," said Sara L. Miller, chair of the Newbery Award Selection Committee. "Set in the mountains of West Virginia, this memorable trio of lovingly-described characters journey from grief to an understanding that love is never truly lost. Eloquent, sharply insightful, leavened by humor, this tale will live long in the heart's and minds of its readers."

- over -

Cynthia Rylant and Emily Arnold McCully win 1993 Newbery and Caldecott Medals
-- add one

Rylant is renowned for her picture book texts that include two Caldecott Honor Books -- "When I Was Young in the Mountains," illustrated by Diane Goode, and "The Relatives Came," illustrated by Stephen Gammell. A third book, "Appalachia: The Voices of Sleeping Birds, illustrated by Barry Moser, won a 1991 Boston-Horn Book Award for nonfiction. She has also written volumes of poetry, short stories and other novels including "A Fine White Dust," a Newbery Honor Book.

She lives with her son in Kent, Ohio.

McCully, illustrator and author of "Mirette on the High Wire," won the 1993 Caldecott Medal for the most distinguished American picture book for children published in 1992. The book was edited by Arthur Levine and published by G.P. Putnam's Sons.

"Emily Arnold McCully's vivid impressionistic watercolors bring 19th century Paris to life with the story of Mirette, a spirited risk-taking little girl," said Jane Botham, chair of the Caldecott Award Selection Committee. "She enables the once-great Bellini to conquer his fear on the high wire when she achieves her own dream.

"McCully's splendid use of light, color, line and movement in these animated and bold illustrations are in perfect balance with the text."

McCully's artwork has been included in the International Biennale at Bratislava, and has won a Christopher Award for her book "Picnic," one of the many picture books that she has both written and illustrated. Her book, "Craving," was nominated for an American Book Award.

The idea for "Mirette on the High Wire" began as a biography of real-life daredevil Blondin. But McCully changed her mind to accommodate the tree-climbing child and risk-taking adult she was and is.

The Newbery Committee named three Honor Books: "The Dark-Thirty," written by Patricia C. McKissack, published by Alfred A. Knopf and edited by

Cynthia Rylant and Emily Arnold McCully win 1993 Newbery and Caldecott Medals
-- add two

Ann Schwartz; "Somewhere in the Darkness," by Walter Dean Myers, published by Scholastic Hardcover and edited by Regina Griffin, and "What Hearts," by Bruce Brooks, A Laura Geringer Book, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.

"Patricia McKissack has offered us a unique series of suspenseful and bone-tingling tales in 'Dark-Thirty' expertly crafted in the oral tradition of African-American folklore," said Miller. "Strong characterizations combine with classic themes and suspenseful plots to make this collection a page-turning delight."

McKissack has written more than 40 books for young readers. Born and raised in a small town outside Nashville, Tenn., McKissack received her bachelor's degree from Tennessee A&I University and her master's degree in early childhood education and literature from Webster University. She currently lives in a renovated old house outside of St. Louis with her husband, Frederick, and their three sons.

"Jimmy Little's life takes an abrupt, dangerous turn the day his stranger-father Crab appears in a dark hallway straight from a prison hospital in 'Somewhere in the Darkness,'" Miller explained. "He'd always wanted a father -- but on the tense, difficult journey the two of them make to Chicago and on to Crab's old haunts in Arkansas, he finds he must make do with self-knowledge and compassion. Direct, driving language, the tension of a chase and riveting characterization makes this one of Walter Dean Myers' most involving and realistic novels to date."

Myers began writing poetry in the fifth grade. He has his first book published when he was 32 and in his 40s, Myers got a degree from Empire State College, some 15 books to his career. Myers lives in Jersey City, N.J., with his wife, youngest son, and where he volunteers as a creative writing teacher at a nearby public school.

Cynthia Rylant and Emily Arnold McCully win 1993 Newbery and Caldecott Medals
-- add three

"Almost too bright, certainly too verbal for his own good, sensitive and deeply conscious, Asa in 'What Hearts' tries to make sense of a quicksand of a world challenged and put down by a controlling stepfather, Miller said. "Only partially sustained by a loving but disturbed mother, he searches for the secret of connection with others. Told in four parts with controlled imagery, insightful illumination of motive and the needs of his characters, Brooks has proven himself once again a master of language."

Brooks began writing fiction at 10-years old; his first story was called "The Two Junior Detectives Catch the Bad Guys Underground." At 11-years old, he started two comic books -- Sonic Man and Jim Jacks and Investigator -- which he published in laborious handdrawn editions up until the age of 12, at which time he read "Great Expectations" and decided to concentrate on practicing for as long as it took to become a novelist.

He is currently writing a new novel and has recently published three books about animals and natural science -- "On the Wing" (Scribner), "Predator!," and "Nature by Design" (both Farrar, Straus & Giroux). Brooks and his wife, Penelope, and their son, Alexander, live in Silver Spring, Md.

The Caldecott Committee named three Honor Books: "Seven Blind Mice," illustrated and written by Ed Young , published by Philomel Books and edited by Patricia Gauch; "The Stinky Cheese Man & Other Fairly Stupid Tales," illustrated by Lane Smith, written by Jon Scieszka, Regina Hayes, editor and published by Viking, and "Working Cotton," illustrated by Carole Byard, written by Sherley Anne Williams, edited by Diane D'Andrade, Michael Farmer, art director and Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, publisher.

"Ed Young successfully reinterprets the Indian fable of the blind men and the elephant," said Botham about "Seven Blind Mice." "Deceptively simple text integrates concepts of color, numbers and days of the week with visual

irony. Bold color and strong composition is heightened through contrasting

- over -

Cynthia Rylant and Emily Arnold McCully win 1993 Newbery and Caldecott Medals
-- add four

textured paper effects. White type face against glossy background and marbled endpapers add to the excellent design.

Young received the 1990 Caldecott Medal for "Lon Po Po." He was born in Tientsin, China and brought up in Shanghai. Young has been illustrating children's books for more than 20 years and has won many awards. He lives in Hastings-on-Hudson, N.Y.

"Jack has a bean problem in 'The Stinky Cheese Man & Other Fairly Stupid Tales' and the Little Red Hen talks in capital letters in this irreverent retelling of the gingerbread man and other time-honored tales, Botham said. "The avant-garde art ('rendered in oil and vinegar' according to the book note) lampoons 20th century art in the process. Interdependence of words, visual images and the bookmaking design itself extract every possible laugh in this outrageous collaboration."

Smith has illustrated several books including "The True Story of the Three Little Pigs" (Time Warp Trip series), "Halloween ABC," "Glasses," "Who Needs 'Em?," "The Big Pets" and "Flying Jake."

"Carole Byard's dramatic paintings in 'Working Cotton' portray the dignity of diligent work and strong family relationships," Botham explained. "Told through a young child's voice, the story captures a long day in the life of a migrant family. From the first glimpses of streaky dawn to the red twilight, the glowing and powerful portraits and landscapes poignantly complement the poetic text."

Byard received the Coretta Scott King Award for Illustration for "Africa Dream" (1989) and "Cornrows" (1981). Her other work includes "The Black Snowman" (1989), "Grandmama's Joy" (1980) and "I Can Do It by Myself" (1978).

She has been awarded a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, a New

York State Council of the Arts grant and a Ford Motors Travel grant from the Institute of International Education that took her to five countries in

- over -

Cynthia Rylant and Emily Arnold McCully win 1993 Newbery and Caldecott Medals
-- add five

Africa. A graduate of the New York-Phoenix School of Design, Byard lives in New York and is currently a lecturer at the Parsons School of Design.

Newbery and Caldecott medalists and Honor Books were selected by two separate committees, each comprising 15 members.

Newbery Committee members were: Miller, Rye Country Day School, Pleasantville, N.Y.; Joan Atkinson, School of Library and Information Science, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa; Carol J. Fox, Illinois State Library, Rockford; Susan L. Golden, I.M.C., Belk Library, Appalachian State University, Boone, N.C.; Suzanne W. Hawley, Vineyards Elementary School, Naples, Fla.; Chrystal Carr Jeter, youth services coordinator, Anchorage (Alaska) Municipal Libraries; Amy Kellman, The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, Pa.; Susan M. Knorr, Zablocki Library, Milwaukee, Wis.; Virginia W. McKee, Providence (R.I.) Public Library; Linda K. Murphy, Boston (Mass.) Public Library; Judith Rovenger, Westchester Library System, Elmsford, N.Y.; Karen Stanley, Rosenberg Library, Galveston, Texas; Anitra T. Steele, Mid-Continent Public Library, Sugar Creek, Mo.; Vivian M. Sykes, University of Michigan, Graduate Library, Ann Arbor, and Kay Weisman, Willowbrook School, Glencoe, Ill.

Caldecott Committee members were: Botham, Milwaukee, Wis.; Melody Lloyd Allen, Rhode Island Department of State Library Services, Providence; Laurel C. Chase, children's services, Irving (Texas) Public Library; Susan Faust, Katherine Delmark Burke School, San Francisco, Calif.; Carole D. Fiore, State Library of Florida, Tallahassee; Sharon Harvey, Beaufort (S.C.) Elementary Library; Rita Hoffmann, Sulzer Regional Library, Chicago; Jan Irving, State Library of Iowa, Ankeny; April L. Judge, Thousand Oaks (Calif.) Library; Fay

L. Matsunaga, Twombly Primary School, Littleton, Colo.; Helen Mullen, The Free Library of Philadelphia; Sue McCleaf Nespeca, NOLA Regional Library

- over -

Cynthia Rylant and Emily Arnold McCully win 1993 Newbery and Caldecott Medals
-- add six

System, Youngstown, Ohio; Jane Pan, New York Public Library; Rivkah K. Sass, Washington State Library, Olympia, and Sally Anne Thompson, Paradise Valley, Ariz.

Colorful brochures giving a complete list of Newbery and Caldecott award-winning books are available for \$24 for 100 copies from ALA Graphics, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611.

- 30 -