



# Geisel

## AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECHES

### Geisel Medal Acceptance Remarks

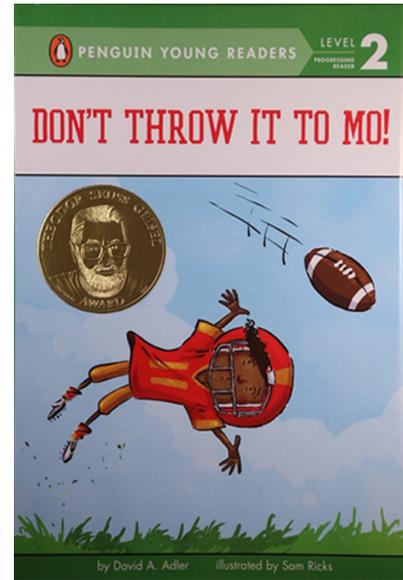
by David A. Adler

**T**hank you to the ALA and especially the Geisel committee and its chairwoman Amanda Foulk.

My response to your Sunday night call about *Mo* and the Geisel medal may have seemed odd to you. Perhaps you called from a cell phone. You may have even had it on speaker. I often have trouble hearing cell phone calls. Be assured, I am very excited with this honor for *Don't Throw It to Mo!* The day after your call a journalist who often writes about books for young readers asked me, "How did you feel when you heard your book had won the medal?" I answered, "It was as if I had won the lottery and wasn't aware I had bought a ticket."

It's a real thrill for me that the medal is named for Theodor Geisel. I read and loved his books even before *The Cat in the Hat*. My favorites of his early works were *The Five Hundred Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins* and *The King's Stilts*.

I wrote the *Mo* story for Jacob and Yoni, my eldest grandsons. Their love of sports was well established before they learned to read. Shouldn't there be beginning readers for them, I asked. Thankfully, Kendra Levin, my



editor at Viking Penguin, agreed that there should. Thank you, Kendra. Thank you, Jodi Reamer, my agent who believed and continues to believe in my Mo Jackson books. *Don't Throw It to Mo* is the first in the series.

Of course, children's reading abilities outpace any publishing schedule. So now the Mo Jackson books are a bit young for Jacob and Yoni, but soon they'll be just right for their brothers Andrew and Aaron.

Who is the Mo Jackson in *Don't Throw It to Mo*?

He's the youngest on his football



David A. Adler (left) and Sam Ricks (right) are the winners of the 2016 (Theodor Seuss) Geisel Award for *Don't Throw It to Mo!* (Penguin Young Readers). Their acceptance remarks were delivered at the ALSC Book and Media Awards Program on Monday, June 27, 2016, during the American Library Association Annual Conference.

For more information about the Geisel Award, visit <http://bit.ly/geisel-award>.

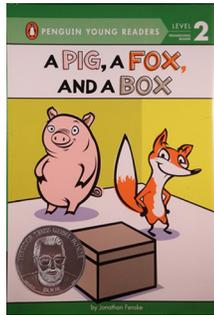


David A. Adler received a BA in economics and education from Queens College in 1968. He taught math for nine years. While teaching, he attended New York University and received an MBA in marketing. While pursuing a PhD, he wrote his first book, *A Little at a Time*, and his focus changed from marketing to writing. Adler has written more than 175 children's books, including the *Cam Jansen Mysteries* series. He lives in Woodmere, New York.

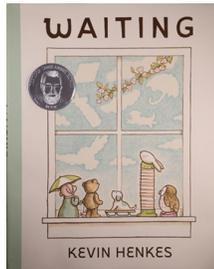
**FUN FACT:** When David was young, he made up stories to entertain his younger siblings. His sister's favorite story was about a girl who planted flowers in her shoes.



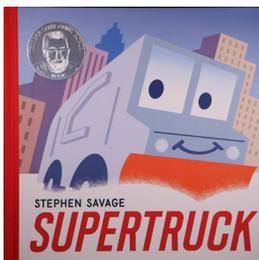
## 2016 GEISEL HONOR BOOKS



*A Pig, a Fox, and a Box*  
Fenske, Jonathan  
Illus. by the author  
Penguin Young Readers



*Waiting*  
Henkes, Kevin  
Illus. by the author  
Greenwillow



*Supertruck*  
Savage, Stephen  
Illus. by the author  
A Neal Porter Book/  
Roaring Brook/Holtzbrinck

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team and the smallest. He sits on the bench for most of the game. But his coach has a clever plan for Mo that he saves for the last play. It succeeds.

Mo tells his coach, “Your plan won the game.”

“No, it didn’t,” his coach tells Mo. “You won the game. You are the one who caught the ball.”

Even the smallest, the youngest player on a team can bring it victory. Of

course, for that to happen, he or she must be in the game.

The story is somewhat autobiographical. I was pushed ahead in school so I was often the youngest on the team. I was often the smallest. Unfortunately, I never caught the winning pass. But I did dream of catching it. And that’s the wonder of literature. Dreams can come true with books and with reading. This medal proves that dreams can come true even with writing.

### Geisel Medal Acceptance Remarks

by Sam Ricks

**T**hanks, first off, to my wonderful wife, Janae. She made the trip out here nine months pregnant, despite my protests. Janae insisted on coming, stating that this was the “Oscars” of children’s books. “The Geisel is the biggest award you’re ever going to get,” she said, “so, you’d better let me come!” I’m glad she’s here, and I love her for it, but I still worry that she’ll go into labor in the middle of my speech.

Congratulations to David Adler, Jonathan Fenske, Kevin Henkes, and Stephen Savage. Your talents inspire me. I’m still uncertain whether I’ve done anything that warrants Dr. Seuss’

likeness on the cover. All the same, it’s a joy to be here.

I’ve always loved film, illustration, and writing. In second grade, I wanted to be Arnold Lobel. In fourth, I wrote a letter to Chris Van Allsburg telling him how much I idolized him. In middle school, I geeked out on C.S. Lewis and Tolkien. In high school, I wanted to be like Peter Weir and Steven Spielberg. Later, I discovered Mary Blair and Lane Smith, William Steig and Quentin Blake—artists I’d neglected as a child. I realize now that what I wanted all along was to tell a story—to share the power of make believe with other people. So, maybe

Sam Ricks is the illustrator of several books for young readers, including Simon and Schuster’s *DATA Set* series, Scholastic’s *Eerie Elementary* series, and the recently released picture book, *The Saddest Toilet in the World*. Sam earned his BA from Brigham Young University and his MA from the University of Baltimore. He is a founding member of Cotopaxi, an outdoor gear and apparel company. A native Arizonan, he and his family now live in Salt Lake City, Utah.

**FUN FACT:** Sam’s interests include Japanese interior design, running, and devouring Reese’s Pieces.



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I just wanted to be a combination of LeVar Burton and Mr. Rogers.

I'm not *there* yet as an artist, though if my wife's prophecies hold true, I may have already peaked. This might be my Orson Welles/*Citizen Kane* moment. Still, I relish the idea of creating books that evoke wonder, that speak to kids where they are, and that say something meaningful (though not necessarily *seriousful*). I hope the

future will let me make things that stand the test of time, even if I never get another gold sticker.

Thank you to the Geisel committee, to Denise Cronin and Kate Renner at Viking, and to my agent, Minju Chang. And here's to all the kids out there like Mo Jackson, who have huge dreams and are just waiting for their big break. Keep moving forward, and magical things will happen.



For more information about the Geisel Award, visit <http://bit.ly/geisel-award>.

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