

The State Library of Kansas Announces the 2018 Kansas Notable Books

Acting State Librarian Eric Norris announced today the 13th annual selection of Kansas Notable Books. The fifteen books feature quality titles with wide public appeal, either written by a Kansan or about a Kansas-related topic.

“I am proud to present the 2018 Kansas Notable Book list. Choosing only 15 books is no easy task,” said Eric Norris, Acting State Librarian. “The selection committee began with a pool of over 100 submitted titles and worked diligently to identify the year’s best works by authors and illustrators from Kansas, as well as those works that highlight our history and heritage. Kansans are encouraged to visit their local public library and celebrate the artists and the artistry of Kansas.”

Kansas Notable Books is a project of the Kansas Center for the Book, a program of the State Library. The Kansas Center for the Book is a state affiliate of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. Throughout the award year, the State Library promotes and encourages promotion of all the titles on this year's list at literary events, and among librarians and booksellers.

An awards ceremony will be held at the Kansas Book Festival, Saturday, September 8, 2018, 9:30 a.m., at the State Capitol to recognize the talented Notable Book authors. The public is invited.

For more information about Kansas Notable Books, call 785-296-3296, visit kslib.info/notablebooks or email infodesk@ks.gov.

2018 Kansas Notable Books

***Bad Kansas: Stories* by Becky Mandelbaum (Rockport WA), University of Georgia Press**

In this darkly humorous collection, Kansas becomes a state of mind as the characters struggle to define their relationship to home and what it means to stay or leave, to hold on or let go.

***Cricket in the Thicket: Poems about Bugs* by Carol Murray (Overland Park), illustrations by Melissa Sweet (Portland ME). Henry Holt & Co**

Playful poems highlight surprising facts about the world of insects – from familiar ants and exotic dragonflies to cringe-worthy ticks and magnificent fireflies in this picture book for children.

***Dodge City: Wyatt Earp, Bat Masterson, and the Wickedest Town in the American West* by Tom Clavin (Sag Harbor NY), St. Martin's Press**

Cowpokes, desperadoes, and lawmen: it wasn't always easy to tell which was which. This rollicking tale of Dodge City brims with colorful characters. From frontier settlement, to cattle drives, to a railroad town, the history of Dodge City is the story of how the West was won.

***Feet of the Messenger: Poems* by H.C. Palmer (Lenexa), BkMk Press Books**

Between the horrors of the Vietnam War and the pacific silences of the Kansas prairie, these poems honor both the beauty of the English language and the ancient powers of poetry to speak experience without diminishing it.

***Fireflies in the Gathering Dark: Poems* by Maril Crabtree (Mission), Aldrich Press**

These poems traverse landscapes, inner and outer: physical landscapes and metaphysical ones; the landscape of relationships; the landscape of age, from childhood to maturity; and the questing landscape that leads to new understandings.

***Headlights on the Prairie: Essays on Home* by Robert Rebein (Irvington IN), University Press of Kansas**

These essays bring a storyteller's gifts to life's dramas, large and small. Moments of singular grace and grit encapsulate the lives of feedlot cowboys, long-haul truckers, and farm kids dreaming of basketball glory.

***Ike and McCarthy: Dwight Eisenhower's Secret Campaign Against Joseph McCarthy* by David A. Nichols (Winfield), Simon & Schuster**

This fast-paced account reveals President Eisenhower's subtly clever role in the destruction of demagogue Joe McCarthy. Drawn from documents in the Eisenhower Presidential Library, Nichols presents a gripping story of a classic power struggle.

***Kansas Baseball, 1858-1941* by Mark E. Eberle (Hays), University Press of Kansas**

The early history of baseball in Kansas is the story of towns and the ballparks they built. It was a time when baseball was adopted by early settlers, then taken up by soldiers sent west, and finally by teams formed to express the identity of growing and diverse communities.

***Kansas Guidebook 2 for Explorers* by Marci Penner (Inman) and WenDee Rowe (Inman), Kansas Sampler Foundation**

The ultimate guidebook for all things to see and do in Kansas features 4,500 attractions, 843 eateries, and more than 1,600 color photos. Counties are arranged alphabetically within six geographic regions as are the cities within each county. Entries include directions, hours and contact information.

***The Man from the Train: The Solving of a Century-Old Serial Killer Mystery* by Bill James (Lawrence) and Rachel McCarthy James (Lawrence), Scribner**

A baseball statistician and his daughter deliver a provocative story that aims to solve a 100-year-old mass murder case. The two painstakingly scoured thousands of newspapers and records to discover and reveal the identity of one of the deadliest serial killers in America.

***Midnight at the Electric* by Jodi Lynn Anderson (Asheville NC), HarperTeen**

While the stories of three women span multiple generations and thousands of miles, their lives are intertwined. Before leaving Kansas to go to Mars, Adri discovers Catherine's journal of the Dust Bowl and Lenore's letters about World War I. Each story weaves a unifying thread of hope.

***The Shape of Ideas: An Illustrated Exploration of Creativity* by Grant Snider (Derby), Abrams ComicArts**

What do ideas look like? Where do they come from? These one- and two-page comics have been featured in the *New Yorker*, the *New York Times*, and the *Kansas City Star*. They are a colorful look into the creative process.

***Stark Mad Abolitionists: Lawrence, Kansas, and the Battle over Slavery in the Civil War Era* by Robert K. Sutton (Bethesda MD), Skyhorse Publishing**

In 1854, Boston was in an uproar. Businessman Amos Adams Lawrence was inspired to put his efforts and considerable fortune toward keeping slavery out of Kansas. The town that came to bear Lawrence's name became part of a bigger story of people willing to risk their lives and fortunes for freedom.

***That is My Dream!* by Langston Hughes and Daniel Miyares (Lenexa), Schwartz & Wade**

Langston Hughes's inspiring and timeless poem "Dream Variation" comes joyously to life in a gorgeously illustrated picture book. Follow one child on a walk through his small segregated town in the 1950s. Then watch his mind take flight as he images a brighter, more inclusive world.

***To The Stars Through Difficulties* by Romalyn Tilghman (Long Beach CA), She**

Writes Press

Inspired by the women who built fifty-nine Carnegie libraries in Kansas, the No Guilt Quilters overcome numerous obstacles to build the Cultural Center on the Plains- proving that New Hope is more than just the name of a town.

The State Library of Kansas – To learn more, visit kslib.info.