

## Biblio File

**Robert Marovich** was nominated for a Grammy Award in the category of “Best Album Notes” for his work on “The Gospel According to Malaco” (Malaco Music Group), a box set that Literary



**Patricia Hruby Powell**

License featured in 2019. Robert writes to say he and his wife plan to attend the Grammy celebration in January in Los Angeles. ... **Patricia Hruby Powell** reviewed *Fountains of Silence* for the Dec. 22 Champaign (Illinois)

News-Gazette. ... **Robert Pruter** on Oct. 19 was keynote presenter at the annual 20th annual Calumet Heritage Conference, sponsored by the Calumet Heritage Partnership. The theme of the conference was Calumet’s musical heritage, and Pruter’s presentation, based on his two books, *Chicago Soul* and *Doowop: the Chicago Scene*, discussed the various African American recording artists in jazz, blues, and soul from the

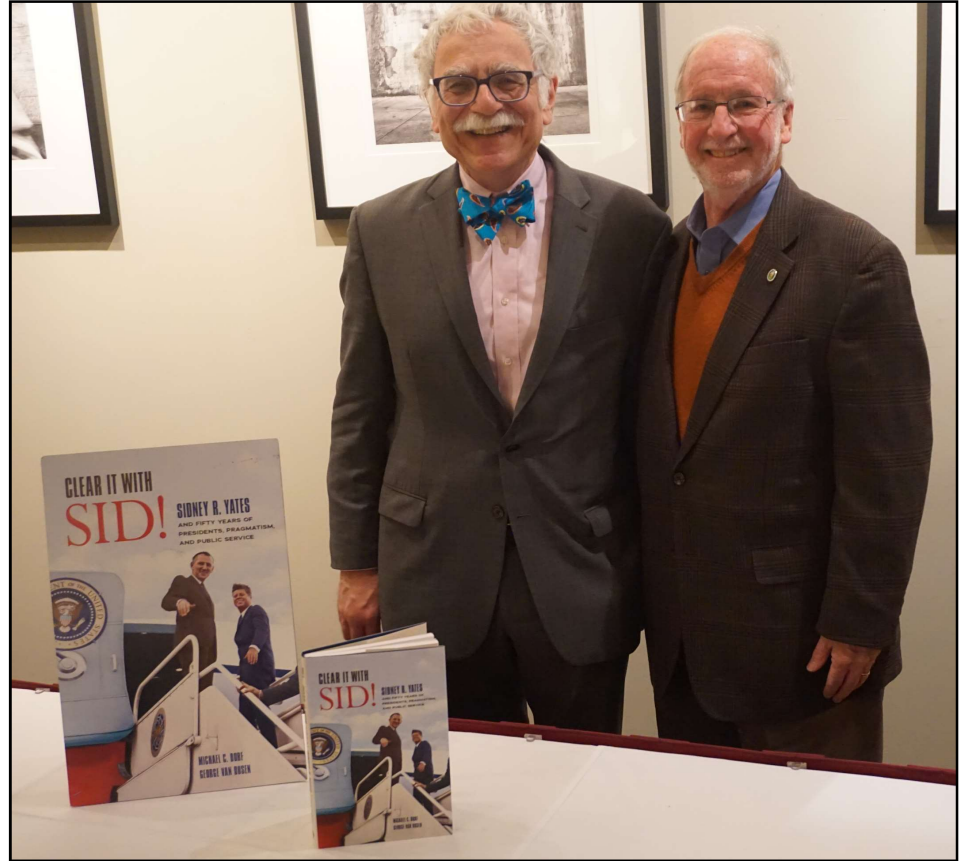


**Darryl Pinckney**

Calumet Region who made an impact on the area during the 1950s and 1960s. ... 2017 Midland Authors award winner **Darryl Pinckney** has a new book out, *Busted in New York and Other Essays*. ... On Dec. 12, The Athletic quoted **Jeannie Morris**. ... **Cynthia Clampitt’s** book, *Pigs, Pork, and Heartland Hogs: From Wild Boar to Baconfest* was named in December to the Choice Reviews Outstanding Academic Titles list for 2019. ... **Milton**

**Nieuwsma’s** book *Surviving Auschwitz: Children of the Shoah* is being reprinted in January in commemoration of the 75th

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**Michael C. Dorf (left) and George Van Dusen** prepare to discuss their book, *Clear It With Sid!* at the Nov. 12 Midland Authors program at the Cliff Dwellers Club in Chicago. (Thomas Frisbie photo)

## Congressional ‘cardinal’ rule is topic of a new biography

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

**T**he late U.S. Rep. Sidney Yates, who was elected to Congress in 1948 and who retired in 1999 with just a two-year break along the way, helped shaped the second half of the last century as one of “the cardinals of Congress ... a small group of people who

controlled billions and billions of dollars of the federal budget,” author **Michael C. Dorf** said Nov. 12 at the Midland Authors program at the Cliff Dwellers Club in Chicago.

Joined by co-author **George Van Dusen** on a panel moderated by former Midland

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with Richard Lindberg

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Robert Loerzel

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anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Originally published as *Kinderlager* in 1998, it was later turned into an Emmy-winning PBS documentary. ... **Michael Raleigh** spoke at Centuries and Sleuths bookstore in Forest Park on Nov. 14, discussing fiction writing in general, mystery writing in particular and the differences between writing a mystery novel and writing a literary novel. He also read from his book in progress, *The Choctaw Woman*. "And I told some of my stories about my adventures on the streets of Chicago," Michael tells Biblio File. ... **Jerry Apps** had two books published in 2019, both by the Wisconsin Historical Society Press: *The Civilian Conservation Corps in Wisconsin* was published last spring and this fall, the WHSP published *The Land Land Still Lives; 50th Anniversary Edition*. Jerry writes to say, "*The Land Still Lives* was my first book, which I wrote in 1969. It has an introduction by Sen. Gaylord Nelson – the father of Earth Day. Now some 45 books later, including two children's books, two young adult books, seven novels (all published by UW Press) and a bunch of nonfiction books, I'm still at it. It's hard to believe I have worked with 23 different publishers from McGraw-Hill to Badger books – large to small. And several mid-size regional publishers – Voyageur Press, Fulcrum Books, University of Wisconsin Press, Wisconsin Historical Society Press and several others I have had four different agents – none at the present time I also have done five-hour-long TV documentaries for public TV. Each show is based on one of my books. Those of us with German backgrounds aren't supposed to brag, but my TV show 'A Farm Winter With Jerry Apps' won a regional Emmy Award." ... The Dec. 7 (Illinois) State Journal-Register and the Dec. 16 Jacksonville Journal Courier quoted **Taylor Pensoneau**. ... Midland Authors President **Dick Simpson** wrote "Four Big Moments in politics coming to Chicago and Illinois in 2020" for the Dec. 30 Chicago Sun-Times. ... **Kelly O'Connor McNeess'** *Undiscovered Country: A Novel*

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Authors President **Thomas Frisbie**, Dorf said Yates was known primarily as an environmentalist who helped save the Indiana Dunes, an ally of Israel, a congressman who rescued America's nuclear submarine program and a champion of the arts and humanities, which came under his purview as chairman of the appropriations committee that "ran the budget for the National Endowment for the Arts and the Institute of Museum and Library Services."

But there was more to him than that, Van Dusen said.

"One of the things we tried to bring out in the book is how Yates worked with Republicans," he said.

Partly that was because after Yates' ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. Senate and subsequently returned to the House, he became a more pragmatic politician, Van Dusen said.

Even though both men had long ties to Yates, they learned much more about him as they worked on the book, Dorf said.

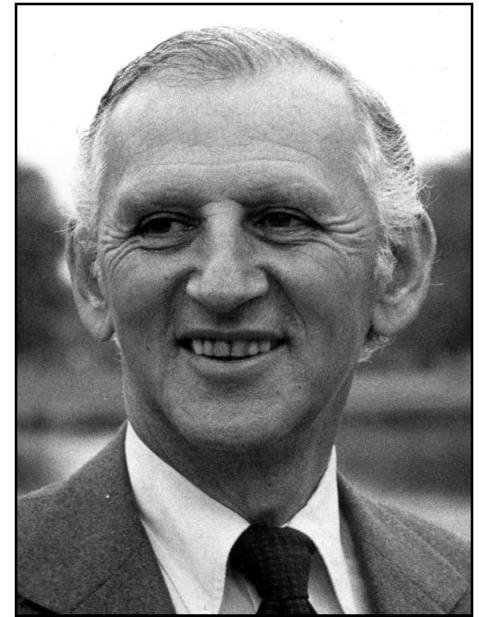
"We knew him as an environmentalist and a champion of the arts who was a person who was respected by just about everybody," Dorf said. "And it really wasn't until we started writing the book that we learned about all of the other issues."

They also learned that when members of Congress would approach then-House Speaker Tip O'Neill with legislation that might involve the Middle East, O'Neill would say: "You have to clear it with Sid first, and if Sid says it's OK, then come back to me."

That is how the book got its title, *Clear It With Sid!*

One topic the authors couldn't agree on is whether former Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley failed to support Yates in his Senate run against Republican Everett Dirksen.

Dorf thought Daley undermined Yates by encouraging him to campaign downstate in the final days of the campaign. But Van Dusen said the vote totals in the river wards where Daley had control indicated Yates got Daley's full support.



Sidney Yates in the 1980s.

If there is a future joint book project, Van Dusen said, he would be "much more organized."

"I hate writing," he said. "Once I start, I'm fine, but getting myself to sit down [was hard]. But then once the chapter was written, we would exchange chapters and make comments and edits, things like that. ... At the very end, we had a copy editor and it drove me berserk trying to go back and read a lot of the stuff."

One technique Dorf said he and Van Dusen used in their collaboration was to read each other the chapters out loud.

"It was amazing to us when you read the chapter out loud how many times one has repeated a word," he said. "And we were able to get one voice in the book, even though each of us [were in charge of different chapters]."

The authors also made use of university shared-book systems in which it was possible to order almost any book they wanted and to use databases the universities had subscriptions to.

"But the interviews were essential," Dorf said. "We started doing interviews before Mr. Yates died. ... One of the wonderful things about this book is that we could call almost anyone."

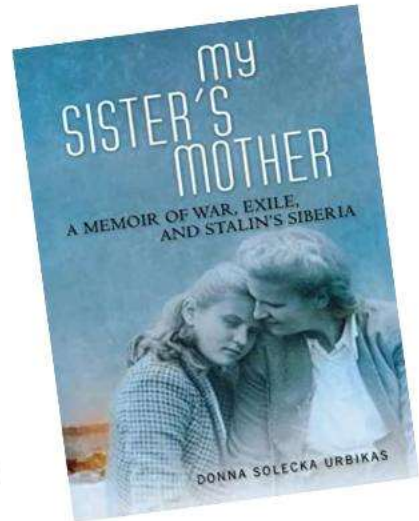
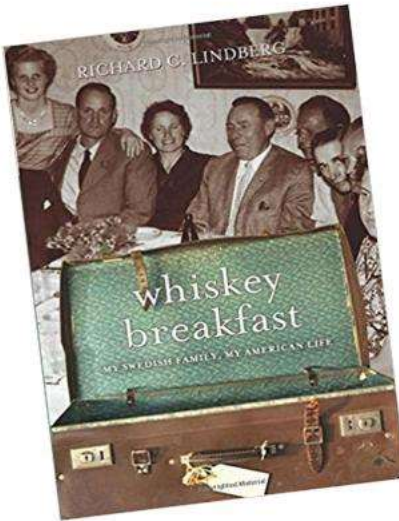
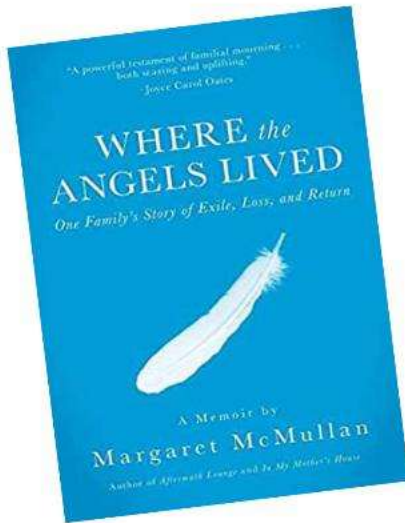
To watch the entire program as recorded by CAN TV go to:  
<https://youtu.be/JCHjB3vJXeI>

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# MIDLAND AUTHORS

presents

**Margaret McMullan ❖ Rich Lindberg ❖ Donna Urbikas**



## How and why to write and publish a memoir

Join us at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2020,  
at the Harold Washington Library (400 S. State St.) for a free presentation by  
three authors discussing their experiences behind these successful memoirs.

**McMullan: *Where the Angels Lived: One Family's Story of Exile, Loss and Return***

“McMullan has written a beautiful and heartrending account of her pilgrimage to Hungary in the hope of retrieving what she can of the story of a distant relative lost in the Holocaust. Written with her usual vividly realized, emotionally engaging prose, (this book) is a powerful testament of familial mourning as well as a vision of 20th century European history that is searing and uplifting.” — Joyce Carol Oates, *Pursuit: A Novel of Suspense*

**Lindberg: *Whiskey Breakfast: My Swedish Family, My American Life***

“Lindberg does not spare himself or his ancestors in this poignant, powerful memoir of his family’s entry to the United States. He evokes the haunted landscape of poverty and superstition from which his ancestors fled to America...only to suffer different demons in that new land.” — Harry Mark Petrakis, *Collected Stories*

**Urbikas: *My Sister's Mother: A Memoir of War, Exile and Stalin's Siberia***

“This stunning, heartfelt memoir looks unflinchingly at the scars borne by one Polish immigrant family as their daughter tries to become a normal American Girl in Chicago. ... a must-read for World War II history buffs.” — Leonard Kniffel, author of *A Polish Son in the Motherland*

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For more information, contact Greg Borzo: (312) 636-8968; [gborzo@comcast.net](mailto:gborzo@comcast.net)

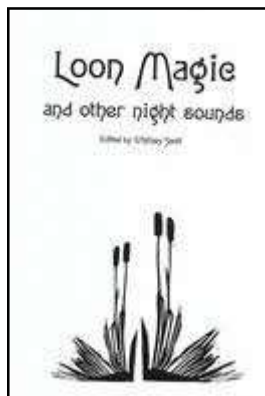


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*Inspired by the Lives of Eleanor Roosevelt and Lorena Hickok* is out in paperback. ... **Susan Orlean's** Midland Authors award-winning book *The Library* was chosen as one of 2019's best books by the Los Angeles Times. ... The Dec. 30 Bloomington (Illinois) Pantagraph quoted **Christopher Z. Mooney**. ... On Dec. 5, Chicago Sun-Times columnist Neil Steinberg said **Dominic Pacyga's** *American Warsaw* "starts debunking untruths about Chicago on page one." ... On Dec. 19, **Joseph G. Peterson** went on **Rick Kogan's** WGN-Chicago radio show to talk about his most recent book, *Ninety-Nine Bottles*. ... In December, **Patrick Reardon** reviewed Lee Bey's *Southern Exposure: The Overlooked Architecture of Chicago's South Side* and Don Hayner's *Binga: The Rise and Fall of Chicago's First Black Banker* for third-coast.com. ... In November, **Walter Podrazik** talked on WGN about the 70th anniversary of the sitcom. ... **Sarah McFarland Taylor** was scheduled to speak Jan. 14 on "Ecopiety: Green media and the dilemma of environmental virtue" at the University of California, Santa Barbara. ... The Dec. 9 Park Rapids Enterprise included **Roderick Townley's** *The Great Good Thing* in its list of books with "powerful stories."

## Literary Latest



### EVOCATIVE THEME

TallGrass Writers Guild announced its latest anthology, *Loon Magic and Other Night Sounds* (October, 2019), published in affiliation with Outrider Press' Black-and-White series of annual anthologies edited by **Whitney Scott**.

Writes the American Library Association's Booklist magazine: "Featuring poetry, fiction and nonfiction, this year's Black-and-White anthology explores the evocative theme of nature's night sounds. A number of works explore the sorrows revealed under the cover of night."

From Tallgrass: "The haunting 'In the Dark' (Grand Prize Winner) follows a mother navigating her grief after the death of her 14-year-old son, and finding unexpected solace in a local astrophysics

class.

"In 'The Screaming Woman,' a young narrator is tormented at night by a mysterious moan emanating throughout her apartment complex, a tale that concludes with a haunting backstory.

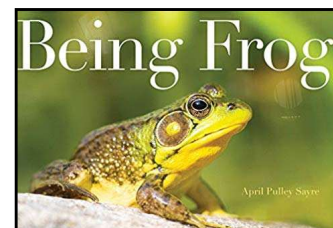
"Night sounds offer unexpected moments of connection and reconciliation in other pieces: packing up a childhood home opens a connection to the past, and a vacation in Maui offers much-needed hope.

"Unwanted aspects of nature's effects, physical and emotional, also have a place as a cabin hideaway is plagued by insects and rodents, and a narrator is increasingly tormented by an unending cacophony.

"Editor Scott has curated another diverse collection, one uniquely tuned to the beauty and fear expressed in the night's symphony between one day and the next."



Whitney Scott



### REVEALING PEEK

**April Pulley Sayre's** latest book is *Being Frog* (Simon & Schuster, Feb. 4, 2020).

From the publisher: "Frogs are amazing creatures, and this book offers young readers an up-close and revealing peek at their everyday lives. Follow them from egg to tadpole to froglet crawling up onto land for the first time. Watch them resting on a favorite log, searching for food, and leaping through the air. And see how frogs are unique, individual beings with rich lives all their own in the wild."



April Pulley Sayre

## Literary Largess

Dues cover mailings and other organizational expenses, but the Society always needs additional money for programs

such as the awards at the annual May book awards banquet.

Thanks to **Ann Bausum, Elizabeth Fama** and **Kerry Trask**, who made recent contributions.

## Literary License

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Society of Midland Authors members can now pay their membership dues, buy tickets to the annual dinner and make donations on our website with PayPal (there is a \$1 fee to help cover PayPal's fee). To make a donation, visit our home page at [www.midlandauthors.com](http://www.midlandauthors.com) and click on the "Donate" button in the upper right corner.

# The sober reality of small presses

*This is the fifth part of a series reflecting on writing.*

I worked on blind faith when I signed a contract with a press to do my third book, *Chicago Ragtime: Another Look at Chicago, 1880-1920*, a rich tapestry of social and political history of an age that has always fascinated me – the Gilded Age through the dawn of Prohibition.

At the time I was unhappily employed at the Chicago Irving Park Road Sears Roebuck store, making a scant sum of money with a profit sharing program that had already begun to wilt in the 1970s, but I digress.

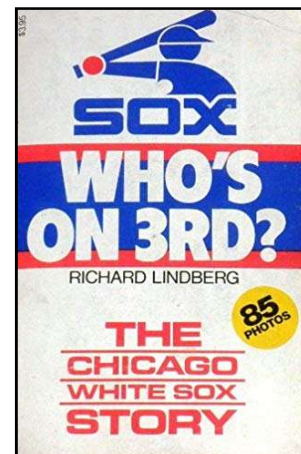
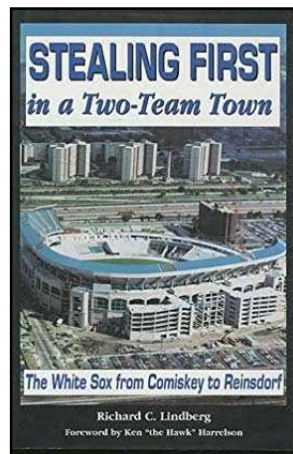
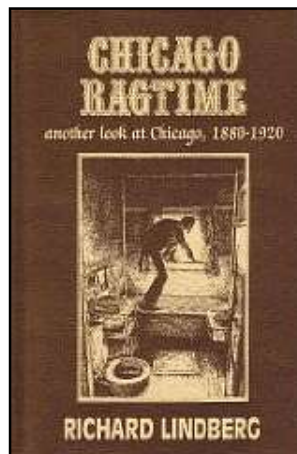
The press published my third book in hardcover. They did a good job managing the artwork and the cover, but then disaster struck. Just about two weeks (or was it three?), after the warehouse received its first shipment from the printer, the press went down for the count.

Wishing to make amends to me, the press delivered nine cases of *Ragtime* and *Who's on Third?* The rest of the inventory I was later told by a third party, were rumored to have been sold at auction and floated south aboard a barge shipping the inventories of other broken companies into some large distribution warehouse.

At the time I did not fully comprehend that the generous gift of free books was the sum total compensation I could expect to receive for both the Sox book and the history volume.

Copies of *Ragtime* managed to make it into some Chicago libraries. Dog-eared copies can still be found in the closed stacks in the Chicago section of the Harold Washington Public Library or in a vendor stall at the annual Lit Fest on Dearborn Street every June, but very few book stores carried it once Icarus went down.

Perhaps the library is where Gary Krist, author of *City of Scoundrels* found it and might have inspired him to write his own book from one of my chapters "A Summer of Lost Innocence: 1919." I



would like to know.

A year passed, then 10. I had nothing to show for either of the two titles, but I still had high hopes. Never lose hope. You have to keep reminding yourself of that in this business.

Hope is what sustains us as writers, always the hope.

I asked the press to grant me the resale rights back to *Chicago Ragtime*. I knew there was no hope of recovering unpaid royalties from them so I didn't bother to ask – all I wanted was the right to republish it with a new publisher. I sent letters to the press, or what was left of it, but my request fell on deaf ears, forcing me

to seek redress in federal court.

It was a costly, unnecessary legal tempest that need not have happened if the original publisher had simply signed over the rights to a book that had no chance of making it into stores or into the hands of reviewers once the company went down.

I had in my mind the image of crates of my book that I was especially proud of, floating down that river in a barge bound for some large distribution warehouse in Georgia.

Maybe there wasn't a river or even a barge, but the apocryphal tale was related to me by another unhappy author.

I won my case. The rights to republish reverted back to my control and with renewed hope and vigor I looked forward

“Over the next decade, I would receive an infrequent royalty check, but they were never more than \$30 or \$40. This is the sobering reality of publishing with small presses.”

to a better outcome with the new publisher. The new publisher accepted the manuscript. I was granted an audience with them just that once. They did not seem interested in communicating with me after the book was out and so I stopped calling. There was no advance money, of course, and I was never given the opportunity to approve the final copyedits made to the volume before it went to the printer in 1996 with a new title, *Chicago by Gaslight*.

Over the next decade, I would receive an infrequent royalty check, but they were never more than \$30 or \$40. This is the sobering reality of publishing with small presses.

*Richard Lindberg's forthcoming books are a village history of suburban Addison, Illinois, and Tales of Forgotten Chicago, which relates stories roughly from the time of the Civil War to the 1960s and is due out with Southern Illinois University Press this year.*

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*Literary  
Life* by  
**Richard  
Lindberg**

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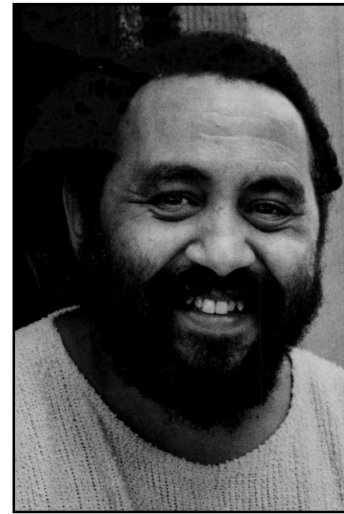




Jacquelyn Mitchard



Paul Simon



David Hernandez

# Memorable Midland Authors moments

*This is Part 36 of the history of the Society.*

*Here are some of the memorable moments from Midland Authors programs over the years.*

Two best-selling authors – **Jacquelyn Mitchard** and **Scott Turow** – shared the podium in a Midland Authors program in April 1999 at the Cliff Dwellers. Turow described the “loneliness of being locked in a room with a pencil.” Mitchard recalled that when the Oprah Winfrey Show phoned to arrange for her novel *The Deep End of the Ocean* to be the first book featured by Oprah's TV book club, she thought it was a gag. They had to call three times before she would talk to them.

“Every life is interesting if you leave enough out,” **Jon Anderson** remarked at a Midland Authors meeting on March 12, 2002.

He said he admired the example of Marcel Proust, who used to say that every news story in the daily newspaper was the beginning of a novel.

“As writers, we can change history,” former U.S. Senator **Paul Simon**, an Illinois Democrat and Midland Authors member, said at the awards dinner on

May 14, 2002, at the Cliff Dwellers. “We must pay more attention to the rest of the world.”

“You could write any way you wanted,” **David Hernandez** (1946-2013) said at a Midland Authors meeting at the Chicago Athletic Association on March 9, 2004, remembering how he'd begun writing poetry at the age of 11 when a teacher explained the idea of poetic license to him. Hernandez, who'd come to Chicago from Puerto Rico with his family when he was nine, was hailed as an unofficial poet laureate for his adopted city.

“There's always been an extremely vital poetry scene in Chicago,” Hernandez, who was a Midland Authors member, said in a 2009 interview with *Literary License*. “This city is a neon lady that nurtures quiet or introspective, loud and brassy poets.”

He died in 2013 and was inducted into the Chicago Literary Hall of

Fame in 2014.

“People like to lie.” That was **Richard F. Bales'** explanation of the discrepancies among the various stories about how the Great Chicago Fire started, which he turned up during the research for his book, *The Great Chicago Fire and the Myth of Mrs. O'Leary's Cow*. He spoke about the book during a Midland Authors

“Every life is interesting if you leave enough out.”

meeting at the Chicago Athletic Association on Jan. 11, 2005.

“You can't find fame and fortune here but you can find work,” said **Richard Christiansen**, retired theater critic for the Chicago Tribune, repeating a popular remark about Chicago in theatrical circles. He spoke about his book *A Theater of Our Own: A History of 1,001 Nights in Chicago* in an SMA meeting in the Chicago Athletic Association on April 12, 2005.

“Don't think. ... Jump off a cliff and build wings on the way down.” That was some advice about writing from Ray Bradbury, which **Sam Weller** recalled at the awards dinner on May 9, 2006, in the Chicago Athletic Association, when he accepted the biography award for his book *The Bradbury Chronicles: The Life of Ray Bradbury*. And what if the wings don't open? – a question posed by Mrs. Bradbury. Then “shut up and drink your gin.”

“Poetry rewards patience,” then-Illinois Poet Laureate **Kevin Stein**, said at the same ceremony, as he accepted the poetry award for *American Ghost Roses*.

He argued that reading poetry is good for you, providing a “soulful lollygag” and respite from daily pressures. You can't speed-read poetry, he said.

*Literary  
License*  
**Robert  
Loerzel**





**Note from the SMA Board of Directors:** *Members of the Society of Midland Authors are encouraged to nominate authors from our 12-state region who have published with a recognized publisher. The nominations will be considered by the SMA board at its next meeting. The 12 states are Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin. The nomination form is below. Send it to Society of Midland Authors, P.O. Box 10419, Chicago, IL 60610. You can also email it as a PDF to Membership Secretary Thomas Frisbie at tomfrisbie@aol.com.*

**For the use of members only.**



## NOMINATION FORM

**Author Member:** Author Members must be an "author or co-author of a book demonstrating literary style and published by a recognized publisher, or of a published or professionally produced play."

**Associate Member:** Associate members (without voting rights) may be "persons having some connection with literature, such as librarians, teachers, publishers, and editors."

Name:

Phone number(s):

Address:

E-mail address:

Qualifying residence or place of birth:

Name of proposer:

Signature:

Date:

Biography:

### WORKS:

Title:

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