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## **Literary Community Celebrates Connecticut's Notable Authors, Illustrators and Book Designers**

August 26, 2009, Hartford, Connecticut: The eighth annual Connecticut Book Awards will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, September 20, 2009 in the atrium of Hartford Public Library.

This tribute to Connecticut's vigorous and varied literary community recognizes and honors books with specific ties to our state: the author, illustrator, or designer must be native-born or have been a legal resident of Connecticut for at least three years, or the book must have a Connecticut setting in order to be considered. Eligible books are those first published in the previous calendar year. Katharine Weber, winner of the 2008 award for Fiction, said that the Awards, "remind us that our state not only possesses a magnificent literary heritage but also has a significant, thriving contemporary population of notable writers of all persuasions."

The Awards program, presented annually by Connecticut Center for the Book at Hartford Public Library since 2002, is free and open to the public. The following reception with book signings will be a ticketed event: nominated books will be for sale and all attending finalists will be available to sign their books. Tickets are \$45. per person and will be held at the door; call 860.695.6320 or email [klyons@hplct.org](mailto:klyons@hplct.org) by 14 September to reserve.

Winners in each category will be announced for the first time during the program. ~~Meriden-born children's book author/illustrator Tomie dePaola will deliver the keynote. Published for 40 years and author/illustrator of more than 200 books, his work has been recognized with the Caldecott Honor Award, the Newbery Honor Award, and Smithsonian Institution's Smithsonian Medal. He is the recipient of several honorary doctorate degrees, most recently from Pratt Institute, from which he received his BFA and was presented a Living Treasure Award from New Hampshire Governor's Arts Awards.~~ **September 20, 2009** *Due to unforeseen health issues, Tomie dePaola cannot be with us on Sunday. Leslie Connor, winner of the 2005 Connecticut Book Award for Children's Author, will be our keynote speaker.*

Matthew K. Poland, Interim Co-Director of Hartford Public Library, will serve as Master of Ceremonies. Fran Keilty, proprietor of Hickory Stick Bookshop in Washington Depot, will speak on behalf of the Connecticut Center for the Book Advisory Council, as its Chairperson.

The Lifetime Achievement in Service to the Literary Community Award will be

presented to Bessy Reyna during the ceremony. Reyna is well-known throughout the state for both print and broadcast journalism, in both English and Spanish; for poetry readings and events, in both English and Spanish; and, for the poetry- and memoir-writing workshops she has offered at writers' conferences and in public venues. Her many awards include: the 2001 Latina Citizen of the Year Award from the State of Connecticut Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission; the 2007 One Woman Makes a Difference Award from the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund; and, the 2009 Outstanding Latina Cultural Arts, Literary Arts and Publications Award from the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education. Among her literary awards are First Prize in the Joseph E. Brodine Poetry Competition and artist award grants from the Connecticut Commission on the Arts and the Greater Hartford Arts Council. She has been a Master Teaching Artist for the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism

This program is made possible in part by support from the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism.

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### **Finalists for 2009:**

#### **Biography & Memoir**

*Joseph Hopkins Twichell: The Life and Times of Mark Twain's Closest Friend*  
The University of Georgia Press  
Written by Steve Courtney

*The Prodigal Daughter: Reclaiming an Unfinished Childhood*  
University of Missouri Press  
Written by Margaret Gibson

#### **Children's Author**

*Fly, Monarch, Fly!*  
Marshall Cavendish Children  
Written by Nancy Elizabeth Wallace

*The Freedom Business, Including a Narrative of the Life & Adventures of Venture, a Native of Africa*  
Wordsong: Boyds Mills Press  
Written by Marilyn Nelson

*Waiting for Normal*  
Katherine Tegen Books: HarperCollins Publishers  
Written by Leslie Connor

#### **Children's Illustrator**

*Baseball Hour*  
Marshall Cavendish Children  
Illustrated by Bill Thomson

*The Freedom Business, Including a Narrative of the Life & Adventures of  
Venture, a Native of Africa*  
Wordsong: Boyds Mills Press  
Illustrated by Deborah Dancy

*The Wolves Are Back*  
Dutton Children's Books: Penguin Young Readers Group  
Illustrated by Wendell Minor

## **Design**

*Scrapbooks: An American History*  
Yale University Press  
Designed by Jessica Helfand

## **Fiction**

*Dinosaurs on the Roof*  
Simon & Schuster  
Written by David Rabe

*Nothing Is Quite Forgotten in Brooklyn*  
HarperCollins  
Written by Alice Mattison

*Songs for the Missing*  
Viking  
Written by Stewart O'Nan

## **Nonfiction**

*Bad Money: Reckless Finance, Failed Politics, and the Global Crisis of American  
Capitalism*  
Viking  
Written by Kevin Phillips

*Comfortably Numb: How Psychiatry Is Medicating a Nation*  
Pantheon  
Written by Charles Barber

*Dishonorable Passions: Sodomy Laws in America, 1861-2003*

Viking  
Written by William N. Eskridge, Jr.

*The Quest for Democracy in Iran: A Century of Struggle against Authoritarian Rule*

Harvard University Press  
Written by Fakhreddin Azimi

*Thinking Beyond the Unthinkable: Harnessing Doom from the Cold War to the Age of Terror*

Viking  
Written by Jonathan Stevenson

## **Poetry**

*Let's Not Call It Consequence*

Shearsman Books (UK)  
Written by Richard Deming

*The Odes of Horace*

The Johns Hopkins University Press  
Translated by Jeffrey H. Kaimowitz

*Present Vanishing*

Sarabande Books  
Written by Dick Allen

Connecticut Center for the Book is a program of Hartford Public Library, and is Connecticut's affiliate of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. Its mission is to celebrate books, writers and readers who engender and sustain the life of the imagination and to highlight authors, illustrators, printers, publishers and the literary heritage of the State of Connecticut.