

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **MAX & RUBY Books Author/Illustrator to Tour Alaska**

Acclaimed children's book author and illustrator Rosemary Wells will sweep across Alaska from Sept. 10 to 16 in a tour that she hopes will meet two goals: inspire adults to read more with their favorite kids, and inspire children to nourish their creative impulses as young writers and artists.

Wells, who has written and/or illustrated as many as 120 books, dozens of them bestsellers, and may be best known for her famous Max & Ruby books about two adventurous, curious bunnies, stars of a beloved cartoon spin-off. Her latest release is titled "Hand in Hand," from Holt & Co.

In an incredibly generous move, after Wells' tour has ended, she's donating a selection of two dozen pieces of her original art to keep Alaskans' imaginations fueled. They will be displayed in public libraries across the state on a semi-permanent basis. Original art from the Max & Ruby books, Stella's Starliner, the Sophie books, Nora books, and other Bunny books will be on display at her two public presentations in mid-September, and the artwork will then be distributed to smaller venues across the state.

While touring Alaska, Wells will meet the public in two major presentations—in Anchorage and Juneau—and will visit four schools along the Railbelt. Her schedule:

- Sun., Sept. 10, from 3 - 5 p.m., Wells will be an honored guest at the Best Beginnings fundraiser, held annually in Anchorage at the Atwood Estate.
- Mon., Sept. 11, in Wells' first public presentation, she will address parents, educators, early-education specialists, and any others who promote literacy in children (kids are welcome as well). From 6 – 8 p.m., she'll present in the Wilda Marston Theater, Loussac Library, in a talk titled "Booking Up Our Kids," with a reading and book-signing to follow. The library also will present "Max & Ruby and Friends," a display of Wells' original art.
- From Tues., Sept. 12 through Fri., Sept. 15, Wells will be sharing her Young Writers/Artists Workshop presentation with students in four schools, among them Rabbit Creek Elementary, Anchorage; Weller Elementary, Fairbanks; Wonder Park Elementary, Anchorage; and Swanson Elementary, Palmer. Parents and guardians of students will have opportunity to obtain signed books at these locations.
- Sat., Sept. 16, the Juneau Public Library will host Wells from 3:30 to 5 p.m. at the Andrew P. Kashevaroff State Library, Archives, and Museum. Her talk, "Booking Up Our Kids," will address a largely adult audience (although children are welcome), with a message on the benefits of reading aloud with children. A reading and book-signing will follow, and patrons may view a selection of Wells' original artwork.

Alaska has an estimated 54,000 children who are under age five, and of those, 38 percent are enrolled in a program to receive free books through Best Beginnings, the Alaska incarnation of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. The Loussac Library's Ready to Read Resource Center likewise reaches out to hundreds of young readers and their parents. These groups and others are all part of a statewide push to reach parents as well as children, backed by sponsoring organizations: the Alaska Center for the Book, the Alaska State Library, Anchorage Public Library, the Anchorage Friends of the Library, Juneau Public Library, and Juneau Friends of the Library. Wells' visit was funded by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services to the Alaska State Library under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act.