

Alaska Center for the Book
2015 CLIA Awards

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE June 19, 2015

Contact: Carol Sturgulewski, carolben@gci.net, (907) 764-1604

A long-time southeast Alaska bookseller, a Barrow children's author, a library program focused on teen readers, and the author of a dictionary on the Inupiat language share the 2015 Contributions to Literacy in Alaska (CLIA) awards.

Honorees include bookseller and historian Dee Longenbaugh of Juneau; Barrow novelist Debby Dahl Edwardson; and educator Edna McLean, of Barrow and Anchorage. The Sue Sherif Literacy Award goes to "Alaska Spirit of Reading", a program for middle school readers which is based in Sitka.

The CLIA Awards will be presented Tuesday, July 14 in room 150 of the Arts Building on the University of Alaska Anchorage campus. A dessert reception begins at 7:30 p.m., with a brief awards ceremony at 8 p.m. The event will be followed by readings from Elizabeth Bradfield and Rich Chiappone as part of the Northern Renaissance Arts and Sciences Reading Series of UAA's summer low-residency MFA program. The evening's events are free and open to the public.

The CLIA awards are presented annually by the Alaska Center for the Book, Alaska's liaison with the U.S. Library of Congress Center for the Book. The awards go to people and institutions who have made a significant contribution in literacy, the literary arts, or the preservation of the written or spoken word in Alaska. More than 70 people and organizations statewide have been honored over the past 23 years.

Founded in 1991, ACB is a non-profit, all-volunteer organization. ACB participates in Reading Rendezvous, Letters about Literature, the UAA/Alaska Dispatch News Creative Writing Contest, the National Book Festival, Poems in Place, Alaska Book Week, Alaska Native/American Indian Heritage Month, and more. For more information, see www.alaskacenterforthebook.org/.

Notes on our winners and presenters:

Debby Dahl Edwardson is the author of "My Name is Not Easy," a finalist for the National Book Award, and "Blessing's Bead," a young adult novel named in the American Library Association's 2011 Best Fiction for Young Adults and Booklist's Top 10 Historical Fiction for Youth of 2010. Her writing is inspired by a lack of children's books that reflected her own children's experience as Alaska Natives. She has reached beyond writing to teach children's literature at Ilisagvik College, given school and library presentations, and maintained an active presence in discussions of diversity in children's literature. Edwardson has also served as president of the North Slope Board of Education and is an active advocate for schools and libraries.

Dee Longenbaugh is a historian, bookseller and book reviewer in Juneau. In 1977 she opened The Observatory, the first rare and used bookstore in southeast Alaska, starting in Sitka and later moving to Juneau. The store is known for its historical map collection and books on Alaska. Her fascination with Alaska's history led her to become a Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society, and she has presented papers at international conferences in Europe and

Russia. Longenbaugh is the only certified book appraiser in the state. She is a former board member of the Alaska Historical Society and editor of its newsletter. She has also served on the Alaska Historical Commission, as well as civic groups.

Edna McLean recently completed an exhaustive Inupiaq-English dictionary, *Inupiatun Uqaluit Taniktun Sivuninit/Inupiaq*, published by the University of Alaska Press in 2014. The work took more than 30 years of compilation and collaboration. With a doctorate from Stanford and years of language teaching at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and elsewhere, she kept on with the ambitious project while serving as president of Ilisagvik College in Barrow and special assistant to the Alaska Commissioner of Education. She also served on the steering committee and task force that created the statewide early literacy initiative Best Beginnings. A longtime resident of Barrow, she now lives in Anchorage.

“Alaska Spirit of Reading” is an annual literary event that distributes books to students in schools statewide, brings the author to the schools, and uses social media and public radio to increase the author’s reach to other schools. The grant-funded project pays special attention to diversity and to under-served and rural students. For seven years, authors, poets and graphic artists have visited juvenile detention centers in Fairbanks and Juneau, as well as schools in Bethel, Craig, Fairbanks, Juneau, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Palmer, Sitka, Talkeetna and Wasilla. It was founded by Kari Sagel and Ginny Blackson of Sitka, under the auspices of the Alaska Association of School Librarians.

Presenters

Elizabeth Bradfield, a former Alaskan, now lives on Cape Cod and works as a naturalist around the globe. Her work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Orion*, and many other publications, as well as in numerous anthologies. The founder of Broadsided Press, she is also a contributing editor to *Alaska Quarterly Review* and teaches in the low-residency MFA program at UAA. Her newest poetry collection, *Once Removed*, will be released in August.

Rich Chiappone is the author of two collections of short fiction and essays: *Water of an Undetermined Depth* and *Opening Days*. His work has appeared in publications ranging from *Alaska* magazine and *Playboy*, to *Gray’s Sporting Journal* and numerous literary reviews. A former construction contractor, he has also been a senior associate editor at *Alaska Quarterly Review*. He teaches at Kenai Peninsula College’s Kachemak Bay campus and UAA’s low-residency MFA program.

###