

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cheryl Minnema Wins 2020 Charlotte Zolotow Award for *Johnny's Pheasant*

Madison, WI – *Johnny's Pheasant*, written by Cheryl Minnema and illustrated by Julie Flett, is the winner of the twenty-third annual Charlotte Zolotow Award for outstanding writing in a picture book. The award is given by the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC), a library of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. *Johnny's Pheasant* was edited by Erik Anderson, and published in the United States in 2019 by the University of Minnesota Press.

This gorgeous, graceful story about a Native family, written by an Ojibwe author and illustrated by a Cree-Métis artist, centers on small moments of surprise. When Johnny urges his grandma to pull over for a “small feathery hump” near the ditch, they discover it’s a pheasant. Johnny’s certain it’s sleeping. Grandma guesses it was hit by a car, but she can use the feathers in her craftwork. With a “Hoot! Hoot!” from both boy and bird, this perfectly paced narrative offers humor, wonder, warmth, and a child-centered sensibility.

The 2020 Zolotow Award committee named five Honor Books: *Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story*, written by Kevin Noble Maillard, illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal, edited by Connie Hsu, and published by Roaring Brook Press, appeals to the senses while celebrating complex cultural concepts centering on a food of many Native American tribal nations; *A Map into the World*, written by Kao Kalia Yang, illustrated by Seo Kim, edited by Carol Hinz, and published by Carolrhoda Books, quietly tracks a year in the life of a Hmong American girl observing changes small and large at home and in her neighborhood; *Pokko and the Drum*, written and illustrated by Matthew Forsythe, edited by Paula Wiseman, and published by Paula Wiseman Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, uses

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sublime pacing to capture the mounting exuberance and rising volume triggered when frog parents gift their daughter with a drum; *Saturday*, written and illustrated by Oge Mora, edited by Andrea Spooner, and published by Little, Brown and Company, celebrates the resilience of a mother and daughter who support each other through disappointments and confirm that time spent together ultimately defines the day's success; and, *Truman*, written by Jean Reidy, illustrated by Lucy Ruth Cummins, edited by Alexa Pastor, and published by Atheneum Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division, which chronicles the herculean efforts of a small tortoise determined to be reunited with his beloved human.

The 2020 Zolotow Award committee also cited seven titles as Highly Commended:

Beware of the Crocodile written by Martin Jenkins, illustrated by Satoshi Kitamura (U.S. edition: Candlewick Press); *Daniel's Good Day* written and illustrated by Micha Archer (Nancy Paulsen Books / Penguin Random House); *Goodbye, Friend! Hello, Friend!* written and illustrated by Cori Doerrfeld (Dial Books / Penguin Random House); *My Papi Has a Motorcycle* written by Isabel Quintero, illustrated by Zeke Peña (Kokila / Penguin Random House); *One Fox: A Counting Book Thriller* written and illustrated by Kate Read (Peachtree); *Small in the City* written and illustrated by Sydney Smith (Neal Porter Books / Holiday House); and *The Thing about Bees: A Love Letter* written and illustrated by Shabazz Larkin (Readers to Eaters).

Established in 1998, the Charlotte Zolotow Award honors the work of Charlotte Zolotow, a distinguished children's book editor for 38 years with Harper Junior Books, and author of more than 70 picture books, including such classic works as *Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present*

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(Harper, 1962) and *William's Doll* (Harper, 1972). Ms. Zolotow attended the University of Wisconsin in Madison on a writing scholarship from 1933 to 1936, where she studied with Professor Helen C. White. Ms. Zolotow died in November, 2013, at the age of 98.

The award is given annually for outstanding writing in a picture book for children in the birth-through-seven age range published in the United States in the preceding year. The 2020 award will be given at an award ceremony in Madison at a date to be determined.

Members of the 2020 Zolotow Award committee were: Merri Lindgren, chair (Librarian, Cooperative Children's Book Center, Madison, Wisconsin); Shannon Furman (School Librarian, Lake View Elementary School, Madison, Wisconsin); Kelsey Johnson-Kaiser (Youth Services Manager, St. Paul Public Library, St. Paul, Minnesota); Bridget Nolan (Kindergarten Teacher, Paul J. Olson Elementary School, Verona, Wisconsin); and Jeni Schomber (Head of Library Services, Beloit Public Library, Beloit, Wisconsin).

The Cooperative Children's Book Center is a noncirculating library for adults with a professional, career or academic interest in children's and young adult literature. The Friends of the CCBC, Inc., cosponsors of the award event, is a nonprofit organization offering lectures, book sales and other benefits for members, in addition to supporting the work of the Cooperative Children's Book Center.

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