



News Release

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Library of Michigan Announces 2020 Michigan Notable Book Awards

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LANSING – The celebrated literature on this year’s list of Michigan Notable Books encompasses the entire Great Lakes basin from the far reaches of the Upper Peninsula to stories about Detroit; and even cookery from the west side of Michigan.

The Library of Michigan shared that this year’s list of 20 titles reflects the rich stories and culture of our state. Each year, the Michigan Notable Book (MNB) list features 20 books published during the previous calendar year that are about, or set in Michigan; or are written by a Michigan author.

Selections include a variety of genres, both fiction and nonfiction, that appeal to many audiences and explore topics and issues close to the hearts of Michigan residents. The 2020 list includes titles exploring: the Red Scare of the 1950’s; the bankruptcy of Detroit; the life of Aretha Franklin; and the Anishinaabe Sharpshooters of the Civil War.

MNB is a statewide program that began as part of the 1991 Michigan Week celebration, designed to pay tribute and draw attention to the many people, places, and things that make Michigan life unique and vibrant.

“The Michigan Notable Books selections clearly demonstrate the rich subject matter Michigan offers to writers,” said State Librarian Randy Riley. “Everyone will find something of interest that speaks to their lives or experiences in our great state.”

This year’s MNB selection committee included representatives from the Library of Michigan; the Library of Michigan Foundation; Detroit Public Library; Howard Miller Public Library in Zeeland; Clinton-Macomb District Library; Capital Area

District Libraries; Salem-South Lyon District Library; Cooley Law School; Lansing City Pulse newspaper; Michigan's State Historic Preservation Office; Wayne State University; Michigan Department of Education; Michigan Center for the Book; and Michigan Humanities.

For more information or questions about the Michigan Notable Book program, contact the Library of Michigan at 517-373-1300, visit www.michigan.gov/notablebooks, or email librarian@michigan.gov.

2020 Michigan Notable Books

***A Good American Family: The Red Scare and My Father* by David Maraniss - Simon & Schuster**

Elliott Maraniss, the author's father, a World War II veteran who had commanded an all-black company in the Pacific, was spied on by the FBI; named as a communist by an informant; called before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1952; fired from his newspaper job; and blacklisted for five years. Yet he never lost faith in America and emerged on the other side with his family and optimism intact. Maraniss weaves his father's story through the lives of his inquisitors and defenders as they struggle with the vital 20th Century issues of race, fascism, communism, and First Amendment freedoms.

***All Manner of Things* by Susie Finkbeiner - Revell: Baker Publishing Group**

After Annie Jacobson's brother, Mike, enlists as a medic in the Army in 1967, he mails her the address of their long-estranged father. If anything should happen to him in Vietnam, Mike says, Annie must let their father know. In Mike's absence, their father returns to face tragedy at home, adding an extra measure of complication to an already tense time. Annie and her family will grapple with the tension of holding both hope and grief in the same hand, even as they learn to turn to the one who binds the wounds of the brokenhearted.

***Broke: Hardship and Resilience in a City of Broken Promises* by Jodie Adams Kirshner - St. Martins Press**

Bankruptcy and the austerity it represents have become a common "solution" for struggling American cities. What do the spending cuts and limited resources do to the lives of city residents? In *Broke*, Jodie Adams Kirshner follows seven Detroiters as they navigate life during and after their city's bankruptcy. For them, financial issues are mired within the larger ramifications of poor urban policies, restorative negligence on the state and federal level and – even before the decision to declare Detroit bankrupt in 2013 – the root causes of a city's fiscal demise.

***Camera Hunter: George Shiras III and the birth of wildlife photography*
by James H. McCommons - University of New Mexico Press**

In 1906, George Shiras III (1859–1942) published a series of remarkable nighttime photographs in National Geographic magazine. Taken with crude equipment, the black-and-white photographs featured leaping whitetail deer; a beaver gnawing on a tree; and a snowy owl perched along the shore of a lake in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. *Camera Hunter* recounts Shiras's life and craft as he traveled to wild country in North America, refined his trail-camera techniques, and advocated for the protection of wildlife. This biography serves as an important record of Shiras's accomplishments as a visual artist, wildlife conservationist, adventurer, and legislator.

***Care and Feeding of Ravenously Hungry Girls* by Anissa Gray - Berkley:
Penguin Random House**

Althea, the eldest sister and substitute matriarch, is a force to be reckoned with and her younger sisters have alternately appreciated and chafed at her strong will. They are as stunned as the rest of the small community when she and her husband, Proctor, are arrested. In a heartbeat, the family goes from one of the most respected in town to utter disgrace. The worst part is, not even her sisters are sure exactly what happened.

***Come See About Me, Marvin* by Brian G. Gilmore - Wayne State University
Press**

In this collection, Brian G. Gilmore seeks to invite the reader into a fantastical dialogue between himself and Marvin Gaye – two black men who were born in the nation's capital, but who moved to the Midwest for professional ambitions. In trying to acclimate himself to a new job in a new place – a place that seemed so different from the home he had always known -- Gilmore often looked to Marvin Gaye as an example for how to be. These poems were derived as a means of coping in a strange land.

***Deadly Aim: The Civil War Story of Michigan's Anishinaabe
Sharpshooters* by Sally M. Walker - Henry Holt and Company**

Sally M. Walker explores the extraordinary lives of Michigan's Anishinaabe sharpshooters. These courageous soldiers served with honor and heroism in the line of duty, despite enduring broken treaties, loss of tribal lands, and racism. Learn about Company K, the elite band of sharpshooters, and Daniel Mwakewenah, the chief who killed more than 32 rebels in a single battle despite being gravely wounded.

***Deer Camp: A Memoir of a Father, A Family, and the Land That Healed Them* by Dean Kuipers - Bloomsbury Publishing**

Bruce Kuipers was good at hunting, fishing, and working, but not at much else that makes a real father or husband. Conflicted, angry, and a serial cheater, he destroyed his relationship with his wife, Nancy, and alienated his three sons – journalist Dean, woodsman Brett, and troubled yet brilliant fisherman Joe. He distrusted people and clung to rural America as a place to hide. When Bruce purchased a 100-acre hunting property as a way to reconnect with his sons, they resisted. What happened next was a miracle of nature.

***Detroit's Birwood Wall: Hatred & Healing in the West Eight Mile Community* by Gerald Van Dusen - History Press**

In 1941, a real estate developer in northwest Detroit faced a dilemma. He needed federal financing for white clients purchasing lots in a new subdivision abutting a community of primarily African Americans. When the banks deemed the development too risky because of potential racial tension, the developer proposed a novel solution. He built a six-foot-tall, one-foot-thick concrete barrier extending from Eight Mile Road south for three city blocks – the infamous Birwood Wall. It changed life in West Eight Mile forever.

***Guardians of Detroit: Architectural Sculpture in the Motor City* by Jeff Morrison - Painted Turtle Books: Wayne State University Press**

Architectural Sculpture in the Motor City is a 332-page book with 770 original photos. It is a unique effort to explore, explain, and document Detroit's amazing collection of architectural sculpture on a building-by-building basis. Using telephoto photography, building details that are barely visible to the naked eye are brought down from the heights and made available for up-close appreciation. In some cases, ornamental elements that have been hidden from public view for more than 100 years are now brought to light.

***The Queen Next Door: Aretha Franklin, An Intimate Portrait* by Linda Solomon - Painted Turtle Books: Wayne State University Press**

The Queen Next Door: Aretha Franklin, An Intimate Portrait is a book full of firsts as Solomon was invited to capture historical events in Aretha's music career showcasing Detroit, and join in with the Franklin family's most intimate and cherished moments in her beloved hometown. From performance rehearsals with James Brown to off-camera shenanigans while filming a music video with the Rolling Stones; from her first television special to her first time performing with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra; to her last performance with her sisters at her father's church and her son's college graduation celebration.

***Ruffage: A Practical Guide to Vegetables* by Abra Berens - Chronicle Books**

It is Abra Berens's first cookbook and rooted in her experiences as a chef, former farmer, and everyday eater. It is a teaching cookbook that aims to help build the reader's confidence in preparing vegetables by providing easy-to-follow recipes, detailed explanation of cooking techniques, and a myriad of variations for each recipe to inspire future dishes.

***Shades: Detroit Love Stories* by Esperanza Cintrón - Wayne State University Press**

Esperanza Cintrón's *Shades: Detroit Love Stories* is a short story collection that is distinctly Detroit. By touching on a number of romantic encounters that span the historical and temporal spaces of the city, each of these interconnected stories examines the obstacles an individual faces and the choices he or she makes in order to cope and, hopefully, survive in the changing urban landscape.

***Sport: Ship Dog of the Great Lakes* by Pamela Cameron, illustrated by Renée Graef - Wisconsin Historical Society Press**

A stray dog wanders the Milwaukee docks until he realizes his calling – to be a ship dog! After being rescued from the Milwaukee River, Sport lives on the lighthouse tender ship, The Hyacinth. He helps the crew as they deliver supplies to lighthouses and maintains buoys and other safety features on the lake. Through Sport's story, young readers will learn how working on Lake Michigan during the early 20th Century was both dangerous and thrilling, and about the role of the lighthouse tender in keeping ships on the lake safe.

***Teacher/Pizza Guy* by Jeff Kass- Wayne State University Press**

Teacher/Pizza Guy is a collection of autobiographical poems from the 2016–17 school year in which Jeff Kass worked as a full-time English teacher and a part-time director for a literary arts organization. He still had to supplement his income by delivering pizzas a few nights a week. In the collection, Kass is unapologetically political without distracting from the poems themselves, and adds layers and nuances to the fight for the middle class and for educators as a profession.

***The Girls: An All-American Town, a Predatory Doctor, and the Untold Story of the Gymnasts Who Brought Him Down* by Abigail Pesta – Seal Press**

The Girls is a profound exploration of trust, ambition, betrayal, and self-discovery. Award-winning journalist Abigail Pesta unveils this deeply-reported narrative at a time when the nation is wrestling with the implications of the MeToo movement. How do the women who grew up with Nassar reconcile the monster in the news with the man they once trusted? In *The Girls*, we learn that their answers to that wrenching question are as rich, insightful, and varied as the human experience itself.

***We Hope for Better Things* by Erin Bartels - Revell: Baker Publishing Group**

When journalist Elizabeth Balsam is asked to deliver a box of old photos to a relative that she didn't know she had, the strange request seems like it isn't worth her time. But as she explores her great-aunt's farmhouse, with its locked doors and hidden graves, she soon discovers just how dramatic some of the most newsworthy events of the previous two centuries shaped her own family. As she searches for answers to the riddles around her, the remarkable stories of two women who lived in this very house emerge as testaments to love, resilience, and courage in the face of war, racism, and misunderstanding.

***Where Today Meets Tomorrow: Eero Saarinen and the General Motors Technical Center* by Susan Skarsgard - Princeton Architectural Press**

Longtime GM designer Susan Skarsgard weaves a detailed insider's account of the early days of General Motors; the initiation of the technical center project under Eliel Saarinen; its design and construction under Eero Saarinen; and the enthusiastic acclaim the campus received upon its opening. Many leading lights of midcentury modernism were involved in the project as design consultants or artists, including Harry Bertoia, Alexander Girard, Florence Knoll, and Alexander Calder. This lavishly illustrated account is a unique document of a landmark project, presented in photographs and architectural drawings, interviews, documents, and ephemera, many of which have never been seen.

***Women of Copper Country* by Mary Doria Russell - Atria Books**

In July 1913, 25-year-old Annie Clements had seen enough of the world to know that it was unfair. She spent her whole life in the Upper Peninsula copper-mining town of Calumet, where men risk their lives for meager salaries and had barely enough to put food on the table and clothes on their backs. The women labor in the houses of the elite and send their husbands and sons deep underground each day, dreading the fateful call of the company man telling them their loved ones aren't coming home. When Annie decides to stand up for herself, and the entire town of Calumet, nearly everyone believes she may have taken on more than she is prepared to handle.

***World According to Fannie Davis: My Mother's Life in the Detroit Numbers* by Bridgett M. Davis – Little, Brown and Company**

In 1958, the very same year that an unknown songwriter named Berry Gordy borrowed \$800 to found Motown Records, a pretty young mother from Nashville, Tennessee borrowed \$100 from her brother to run a numbers racket out of her home. That woman was Fannie Davis, the author's mother. Part bookie, part banker, mother, wife, granddaughter of slaves, Fannie ran her numbers business for 34 years, doing what it took to survive in a legitimate business that just happened to be illegal.

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The Library of Michigan – Michigan's official state library agency for more than 190 years – is part of the Michigan Department of Education. To learn more, visit www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan.