



## *Press Release*

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### **Library of Michigan Announces 2021 Michigan Notable Book Awards**

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LANSING – The 2021 Michigan Notable Books (MNB), announced today by the Library of Michigan (LM), provide a homegrown celebration of Michigan.

The MNB's annual list features 20 books, published during the previous calendar year, which are about, or set, in Michigan or written by a Michigan author. Selections span a diverse topics and genres, both fiction and nonfiction.

The latest list doesn't disappoint, exploring the visionary work of Charlevoix's Earl A. Young; the contemporary verse of the Anishinaabe; the life of music legend Aretha Franklin; the natural mysteries of our state; and more.

"The MNB 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."

Michigan's State Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice said: "The diversity of these books reflects the diversity of our state. People, especially children, need to experience through reading the lives and contributions of people like themselves in addition to others about whom they are not familiar. Books should be mirrors that reflect our own lives, as well as windows for us to see others."

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

This year's MNB selection committee includes representatives from the Library of Michigan; the Library of Michigan Foundation; Detroit Public Library; Howard Miller Public Library; 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 about MNBs, contact the LM at 517-335-1477, visit [www.Michigan.gov/NotableBooks](http://www.Michigan.gov/NotableBooks), or email [Librarian@Michigan.gov](mailto:Librarian@Michigan.gov).  
The 2021 MNB selections are:

## 2021 Michigan Notable Books

### ***Black Bottom Saints* by Alice Randall – Amistad**

A columnist, nightclub emcee and fine arts philanthropist draws inspiration from the Catholic Saints Day books while reflecting on his encounters with legendary black artists from the Great Depression through the post-World War II years.

### ***Boulders: The Life and Creations of Earl A. Young in Charlevoix, Michigan* by David L. Miles, photography by Mike Barton – Charlevoix Historical Society Press**

Earl A. Young is celebrated as one of Charlevoix's most recognized figures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Using vintage photos and contemporary color shots, this biography showcases the legacy of the renowned builder in stone as well as the growing appreciation for his visionary boulder homes and structures that have been visited by people from around the world.

### ***City of Champions: A History of Triumph and Defeat in Detroit* by Stefan Szymanski and Silke-Maria Weineck – The New Press**

*City of Champions* explores the history of Detroit through the stories of its most-gifted athletes and most-celebrated teams, linking iconic events in the history of Motown sports to the city's shifting fortunes. Driven by the conviction that sports not only mirror society but also have a special power to create both community and enduring narratives that help define a city's sense of self, *City of Champions* is a unique history of the most American of cities.

### ***The Dead Are Arising: The Life of Malcolm X* by Les Payne and Tamara Payne – Liveright**

A revisionary portrait of the iconic civil rights leader draws on hundreds of hours of interviews with surviving family members, intelligence officers and political leaders to offer new insights into Malcolm X's Depression-era youth, religious conversion, and 1965 assassination.

### ***Grief's Country: A Memoir in Pieces* by Gail Griffin – Wayne State University Press**

Gail Griffin had only been married for four months when her husband's body was found in the Manistee River, just a few yards from their cabin door. *Grief's Country: A Memoir in Pieces* explores what grief does to the mind, heart, and body; and how it functions almost as an organism. The book's intimacy is at times nearly disarming and its honesty about struggling through grief, unflinching.

### ***Half* by Sharon Harrigan – University of Wisconsin Press**

Growing up, identical twins Paula and Artis speak in one voice—until they can't. After years apart, with lives, partners, and children of their own, they are reunited on the occasion of their father's funeral. Seeking to repair the damage wrought upon their relationship by outside forces, the twins retrace their early lives to uncover what happened—but risk unraveling their carefully constructed cocoons.

***I Have Something to Tell You: A Memoir* by Chasten Buttigieg – Atria Books**

A moving, hopeful, and refreshingly candid memoir by the husband of former Democratic presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg about growing up gay in his small Midwestern Michigan town, his relationship with Pete, and his hope for America's future.

***Isaiah Dunn Is My Hero* by Kelly J. Baptist – Crown Books for Young Readers**

Referring to his late father's journal for advice on how to be the man of the house, young Isaiah taps the support and ideas of two school friends who help him navigate rules and manage without superpowers.

***The King of Confidence: A Tale of Utopian Dreamers, Frontier Schemers, True Believers, False Prophets, and the Murder of an American Monarch* by Miles Harvey – Little, Brown and Company**

In the summer of 1843, James Strang, a charismatic young lawyer and avowed atheist, vanished from a rural town in New York. Months later he reappeared on the Midwestern frontier and converted to a burgeoning religious movement known as Mormonism. In the wake of the murder of the sect's leader, Joseph Smith, Strang unveiled a letter purportedly from the prophet naming him successor, and persuaded hundreds of fellow converts to follow him to an island in Lake Michigan, where he declared himself a divine king. *The King of Confidence* tells this fascinating but largely forgotten story. Centering his narrative on this charlatan's turbulent 12 years in power, Miles Harvey gets to the root of a timeless American original: the confidence man.

***Lakewood* by Megan Giddings – Amistad**

Forced to drop out of school to help support her family, Lena takes a lucrative job as a secret laboratory subject before devastating side effects make her question how much she can sacrifice.

***The Mason House* by T. Marie Bertineau – Lanternfish Press**

After her father's untimely death, Theresa faced a rocky and unstable childhood. But there was one place she felt safe: her grandmother's house in Mason, a depressed former copper mining town in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Gram's passing leaves Theresa once again at the mercy of the lasting, sometimes destructive grief of her Ojibwe mother and white stepfather. As the family travels back and forth across the country in search of a better life, one thing becomes clear: if they want to find peace, they will need to return to their roots.

***A People's Atlas of Detroit* edited by Linda Campbell, Andrew Newman, Sara Safransky, and Tim Stallmann – Wayne State University Press**

Developed from a community-based participatory project, this book narrates the lived experiences of people engaged in political battles central to Detroit's future and that of urban America. Featuring contributions by more than 50 figures from movement-building efforts in Detroit, it speaks to the challenges of fighting for land and housing justice, food sovereignty, economic democracy, accountable governance, and the right to the city. It weaves together maps, poetry, interviews, photographs, essays, and stories to critique status quo urban governance while elucidating radical visions for change.

***R E S P E C T: The Poetry of Detroit Music* edited by Jim Daniels and M.L. Liebler – Michigan State University Press**

This collection of poems and lyrics covers numerous genres including jazz, blues, doo-wop, Motown, classic rock, punk, hip-hop, and techno. Detroit artists have forged the paths in many of these genres, producing waves of creative energy that continue to reverberate across the country and around the world. While documenting and celebrating Detroit's incredible musical history, this book captures the emotions that the music inspired in its creators and in its listeners.

***RESPECT: Aretha Franklin, the Queen of Soul* by Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Frank Morrison – Atheneum Books for Young Readers**

Aretha Franklin was born to sing. Her musical talent was clear from her earliest days in her father's Detroit church where her soaring voice spanned more than three octaves. Her string of hit songs earned her the title "the Queen of Soul," multiple Grammy Awards, and a place in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. But Aretha didn't just raise her voice in song, she also spoke out against injustice and fought for civil rights.

***The Ship We Built* by Lexie Bean – Dial Books**

A fifth-grader whose best friends walked away, whose mother is detached, and whose father does unspeakable things, copes with the help of friend Sofie and anonymous letters tied to balloons and released.

***The Star in the Sycamore: Discovering Nature's Hidden Virtues in the Wild Nearby* by Tom Springer, illustrated by Patrick Dengate – Mission Point Press**

In the "wild nearby," we can still discover places rich in natural mysteries. Through a collection of essays organized by seasons-within-the-seasons, Tom Springer finds them in secret urban fishing holes, motherly old trees and even the curious link between stars, trees, and souls.

***The Wicked Sister* by Karen Dionne – G.P. Putnam's Sons**

Living in self-imposed exile in a psychiatric facility where she is tortured by fractured memories of her parents' murder, Rachel uncovers maternal secrets and an unspeakable act of evil that unveils the true nature of her bond with her sister.

***Wolf Island: Discovering the Secrets of a Mythic Animal* by L. David Mech, with Greg Breining – University of Minnesota Press**

Recounts three extraordinary summers and winters L. David Mech spent on the isolated outpost of Isle Royale National Park, tracking and observing wolves and moose on foot and by airplane, and upending the common misperception of wolves as destructive killers of insatiable appetite.

***Words like Thunder: New and Used Anishinaabe Prayers* by Lois Beardslee – Wayne State University Press**

A collection of poetry by award-winning Ojibwe author Lois Beardslee. Much of the book centers around native people of the Great Lakes but has a universal relevance to modern indigenous people worldwide. Beardslee tackles contemporary topics like climate change and socioeconomic equality with a grace and readability that empowers readers and celebrates the strengths of today's indigenous peoples. She transforms the mundane into the sacred. Beardslee lures in readers with the promise of traditional cultural material, even stereotypes, before quickly pivoting toward a direction of respect for the contemporaneity and adaptability of indigenous people's tenacious hold on traditions.

***You're in the Wrong Place* by Joseph Harris – Wayne State University Press**

The book, composed of 12 stories, begins in the fall of 2008 with the shuttering of Dynamic Fabricating—a fictional industrial shop located in the Detroit suburb of Ferndale. Over the next seven years, the shop's former employees—as well as their friends and families—struggle to find money, purpose, and levity in a landscape suddenly devoid of work, faith, and love.

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The Library of Michigan is an agency within the Michigan Department of Education and is dedicated to providing the people of this State and their government one perpetual institution to collect, preserve and provide access to the story of the State, and to support libraries in their role as essential community anchors. To learn more, visit [www.Michigan.gov/LibraryofMichigan](http://www.Michigan.gov/LibraryofMichigan).