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ERIC CARLE MUSEUM LAUNCHES THE CARLE HONORS

New Awards Celebrate Creative Vision, Dedication in Picture Book Art

Amherst, Mass. (September 14, 2006) - The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art has announced the launch of The Carle Honors, a new constellation of awards designed to recognize those who have demonstrated a lifelong dedication to the creation, support, and promotion of the art of the picture book. The awards and their inaugural recipients—Rosemary Wells, Helen Bing, Ann Beneduce, and Mort Schindel—will be celebrated at the Museum’s September 25 Benefit Dinner in New York City.

Of the Museum’s founders, Eric and Barbara (Bobbie) Carle, Director Nick Clark said, “Part of Eric and Bobbie’s motivation for helping to found the Museum was to give back to the industry and all of those connected to it, so the next logical step was for the Museum to honor the shining lights in that universe.”

Clark added that The Carle Honors pay tribute to four distinct forms of creative vision and long-term dedication to picture book art and its vital role in supporting art appreciation, early literacy, and critical thinking. The four categories acknowledge the contributions of the field’s most innovative **Artists**; the significant work of the editors, designers, educators, and other **Mentors**, who champion the art form; of the **Angels** whose generous financial support is crucial to making picture book art exhibitions, education programs, and related projects a reality; and of **Bridges**—individuals and organizations—that have found inspired ways to bring the art of the picture book to larger audiences through work in other fields.

Speaking from her home and studio in Connecticut, Carle Honors recipient Rosemary Wells expressed her delight at being selected the first recipient of The Carle Honors – Artist award, “I am deeply honored to have been singled out for my contribution to the field of children’s illustrated literature.” The creator of such classic characters as Noisy Nora and Max and Ruby added, “For me, picture books are the key to unlocking the door to literacy. I applaud the Museum for its celebration of the art form and for its recognition of those of us who have made this our life’s work.”

ABOUT THE INAUGURAL CARLE HONORS RECIPIENTS

ARTIST – Rosemary Wells

Rosemary Wells's career as an illustrator and author spans more than 30 years and 60 books. She has given readers such unforgettable characters as Noisy Nora, Yoko, and Max and Ruby, the latter of whom made their first appearance in the now-ubiquitous board book format that Wells pioneered. Addressing universal childhood experiences with irresistible wit, high spirits, and an acute grasp of both the child's and parents' perspectives, Wells's picture books invite readers to explore their own feelings as they commiserate with her protagonists' dilemmas, celebrate their triumphs, and reflect on the nature of love, laughter, hope, and heroism.

MENTOR – Ann Beneduce

Since her first job in 1960 as assistant to the great Eunice Blake at J.B. Lippincott, Ann Beneduce has devoted her life's work to publishing children's books of the highest quality. The distinguished roster of artists she has cultivated and published over the years includes Bruno Munari, Eric Carle, Mitsumasa Anno, Ed Young, Satomi Ichigawa, Tasha Tudor, Gennady Spirin, Lois Ehlert, and Wendy Watson. Throughout her career, Beneduce has traveled the globe in search of new talent and in the conviction that picture books have a vital role to play in opening children to the world in all its cultural diversity.

ANGEL - Helen Bing

Among all of Helen Bing and her husband Peter's philanthropic interests, the nurturing of children has held an important place. From a nursery school at Stanford and a children's garden at the Huntington Library, to support of "Reach Out and Read" and other early literacy initiatives, Helen Bing recognizes the role of picture books in the lives of "children of all ages." Her commitment has resulted in the generous support and encouragement of individual artists and authors as well as of exhibitions and projects honoring the art form, including sponsorship of The Carle's Steig exhibition and the commissioning of *TOME*, a new work by Tom Patti..

BRIDGE – Morton Schindel

Morton Schindel is the founder of Weston Woods Studios and of the non-profit Weston Woods Institute. During a career spanning over five decades, he pioneered a new art form as he produced more than 300 animated, iconographic and live-motion pictures, and 450 filmstrips based on picture books by Maurice Sendak, Robert McCloskey, James Marshall, William Steig, Ezra Jack Keats, Pat Hutchins, and others. Schindel has been rightfully called both an innovator and a visionary for his work in giving treasured picture books new life on the screen, while remaining faithful to the originals.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM

Founded in part by Eric Carle, the renowned author and illustrator of more than 70 books, including the 1969 classic *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, and his wife Barbara, The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art is the first full-scale museum in this country devoted to national and international picture book art, conceived and built with the aim of celebrating the art that we are first exposed to as children. Through the exploration of images that are familiar and beloved, it is the Museum's goal to provide an enriching, dynamic, and supportive context for the development of literacy and to foster in visitors of all ages and backgrounds the confidence to appreciate and enjoy art of every kind.

The Museum—which houses three galleries dedicated to rotating exhibitions of picture book art, a hands-on Art Studio, a Reading Library, an Auditorium, a popular Café, and a Museum Shop—is located at 125 West Bay Road, Amherst, MA. Museum hours are Tuesday through Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday 12 noon to 5 p.m. Admission is \$7 for adults, \$5 for children under 18, and \$20 for a family of four. For further information and directions, call 413-658-1100 or visit the Museum's website at www.picturebookart.org.

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