



Minnesota
Humanities
Center

2022 American Library Association (ALA) Youth Media Awards to Minnesota Humanities Center (MHC)

Minnesota Native American Lives series biographies on Ella Cara Deloria and Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan named American Indian Youth Literature Middle-grade Honor Books

Minnesota Humanities Center (MHC) is proud to announce the prestigious 2022 American Library Association (ALA) Youth Media Awards named two MHC middle-reader books American Indian Youth Literature Honor Books. Two of the three books in MHC's [Minnesota Native American Lives series](#) have been selected as Middle-grade Honor Books.

Ella Cara Deloria: Dakota Language Protector, written by Diane Wilson (Dakota) and illustrated by Tashia Hart (Red Lake Anishinaabe), and *Peggy Flanagan: Ogimaa Kwe, Lieutenant Governor*, written by Jessica Engelking (White Earth Band of Ojibwe) and also illustrated by Tashia Hart, were among those honored as top books, digital media, video and audio books for children and young adults – including the Caldecott, Coretta Scott King, Newbery and Printz awards – at the ALA's LibLearnX: The Library Learning Experience, taking place virtually from Chicago, Illinois on January 24. (The full [ALA Youth Media Awards press release](#) is available online.)

"We are extremely honored to have the books in our Minnesota Native American Lives series recognized by the American Library Association with such a prestigious honor," said Kevin Lindsey, MHC CEO. "Understanding the pressing need for such books in schools, we look forward to collaborating on future books with Minnesota's Native American communities."

The Minnesota Native American Lives series launched in 2020 with Minnesota Indigenous writers Gwen Westerman (Dakota) and Heid Erdrich (Turtle Mountain Ojibwe) as series editors, and include the inaugural title, *Charles Albert Bender: National Hall of Fame Pitcher*, written by Kade Ferris (Turtle Mountain Ojibwe) and illustrated by Tashia Hart.

The series came out of conversations with the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC), the main collaborating partner for the "Why Treaties Matter: Self-Governance in the Dakota and Ojibwe Nations" exhibit, and other scholars and community members who were part of creating the exhibit, to create books that help promote literacy and build knowledge of Dakota and Ojibwe people in and around Minnesota.

“We are extremely pleased that the lives and voices of American Indian people are being amplified and we are appreciative of our partnership with the Minnesota Humanities Center. Representation matters,” said Shannon Geshick, MIAC Executive Director.

Author Diane Wilson recently spoke on Minnesota Public Radio News | Minnesota Now with senior producer Melissa Townsend and Hennepin County Library Community Liaison Allison Waukau (Menominee/Navajo Nations) about writing one of the books honored: <https://www.mprnews.org/episode/2022/02/07/minnesotans-among-those-honored-in-american-indian-youth-literature-awards>

MHC humanities officer Jennifer Tonko is the project lead for the series and is planning conversations on potential next books. “Working with the editors, authors, and artists on this project was a tremendous joy! Their passions for bringing these remarkable lives to the page animated the whole project and shine through in the finished books. Each book tells the story of a Native leader, but it was also created by Native leaders. These books raise up heroes from the past and present while helping to inspire the next generation.”

About the Minnesota Humanities Center. The Humanities Center connects our past, present, and future by bringing people together to increase understanding and spark change. Using story as a catalyst and the humanities to explore the question of what it means to be human, MHC seeks to create a just society that is curious, connected, and compassionate. MHC, founded in 1971, is a statewide nonprofit organization affiliated with and supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities. MHC operates a full-service Event Center in a historic building on St. Paul’s East Side. More information available at mnhum.org. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#).

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For more information on the MHC Minnesota Native American Lives series and Native Nations of Minnesota programming, please visit <https://mnhum.org/stories-and-culture/minnesota-native-american-lives-series/> and <https://mnhum.org/native-nations-minnesota/>.

