Why I Write

BY SANDRA GAIL LAMBERT

I don’t have one of those stories. I didn’t write my first short fiction at age five with my favorite forest-green crayon. I wasn’t part of the high school yearbook club. I didn’t yearn to be accepted at the Iowa Writers’ Workshop or even know what an MFA was. But from first grade when I would hide my Hardy Boys story inside my math book to the 1980s when I managed a feminist bookstore, I was a reader. At the bookstore my work, as I perceived it, was to promote writers and spread lesbian and feminist literature. I sold the early works of Alice Walker, Dorothy Allison, Sarah Schulman, Octavia Butler, and so many others.

I was immersed in a lesbian-feminist literary community bursting with the energy of having our own writers, publishers, journals, and bookstores. We wanted to know about each other, and content was valued as much as and sometimes more than craft. This gave me the courage to try writing. I started with our bookstore catalog where my job was to make people spend their money after reading only fifty words of description. I had no idea how important learning this sort of preciseness and compression would be for my future writing.

But none of this explains why, as I approached forty, I wanted to write. I had polio as a baby. Many of us who had polio were taught to ignore, to overcome, to adapt, to work hard, and to always be silent about disability. We, our families, and the country considered the way we fit in without complaint to be a strength and something to be admired.

But by the late eighties my body changed. I woke up with pain and a deep fatigue that only worsened through the day. The skill and grace I’d acquired from a lifetime of using braces and crutches often failed me. I’d fall at odd times, surprising both myself and the people around me. The way I used to bend my elbows, position the crutches, and lift myself back to standing with the formidable strength of my arms wasn’t possible anymore. Grocery shopping used up all the day’s energy. Then lifting pots and chopping vegetables made my arms hurt for days. We polios were discovering the existence of post-polio syndrome, which was the result of a lifetime of the daily overworking of damaged muscle fibers.

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So for perhaps the first time I had to notice my body, and for the first time I had to be honest. I hurt. I was weaker. I really was disabled. Surviving now meant learning to complain, to rest, to no longer try to fit in. As I pushed against the horror of my family and the disdain of medical professionals to get myself a wheelchair, quit my job, and qualify for Social Security Disability, I wrote. I wrote underwhelming poems, poorly crafted short stories, and overwrought personal essays. The more honest I was about my body, the more I wrote. In the midst of so much change and fear, it made me happy.

It was also practical work for this new life that I had to figure out. I had no job, which had not been true since I started babysitting when I was eleven. Writing helped shield me from the shame of this. And I had so very little money. But I had time. I sat propped up in bed and tried to make my writing better. I studied the books I read as I read them to suss out how the dialogue worked or why a particular ending was deeply satisfying. If an author spoke in town, I’d go and be that audience member up front who asked too many questions. I took the work ethic and discipline that had hurt me and found a new use for them. Way before I had much skill or was ever published, the work of writing provided me with joy and purpose. That continues to this day.

SANDRA GAIL LAMBERT is a writer of both fiction and memoir. She is the author of The River’s Memory. She was awarded an NEA fellowship based on an excerpt from A Certain Loneliness.
Ideologies Are Not Eradicated with Guns

An interview with former ambassador Prudence Bushnell, author of *Terrorism, Betrayal and Resilience: My Story of the 1998 U.S. Embassy Bombings*

Prudence Bushnell is an American diplomat who has held a series of leadership positions with the U.S. Department of State, including deputy assistant secretary for African Affairs, ambassador to the republics of Kenya and Guatemala, and dean of the Leadership and Management School at the Foreign Service Institute. She is retired from the Foreign Service and founder of the Levitt Leadership Institute at Hamilton College in New York. She has earned numerous awards for her leadership and diplomacy, including three honorary doctoral degrees.

In 1998 when the bombs went off in Kenya and Tanzania, Congress was in recess. The White House, along with the entire country, was focused on the Monica Lewinsky scandal and the efforts to impeach President Bill Clinton. Afterward, Congress held no hearings about the bombings, and the national security community held no after-action reviews. And yet the intelligence available before these bombings made it clear that al Qaeda was a looming and ominous threat. How did our government fail to keep you and your colleagues safe?

Prudence Bushnell: Years of inadequate and erratic funding for diplomacy and development—which continues to this day—encouraged senior State Department managers and policy makers to waive the department’s own security regulations in order to stay in budget. For two years before the bombing, I sent cables of concern about our downtown location and vulnerabilities. I was instructed to “stop nagging.” After the bombing, the Accountability Review Board noted “a collective failure by several Administrations and Congresses over the past decade” and recommended reforms, many of which were never implemented.

The board did not address intelligence and policy failures. It took the 9/11 attacks to uncover the bureaucratic stovepipes, turf battles, personal conflicts, and failed strategies that were apparent before and after 1998, had anyone bothered to look. The FBI hid information from the CIA, which could not convince the NSA to share transcripts, while senior-level personalities feuded with one another. Had the National Security Council or units of the FBI and CIA that focused on al Qaeda activities shared information they had in hand in 1997 with one another, the embassy, and Kenyan intelligence, we could have prevented or mitigated the attacks. Business as usual continued after the attacks, thereby avoiding strategic lessons from a historic event and demonstrating manifest indifference to the major assaults on diplomatic facilities, the hundreds of people who died, and the thousands who were injured, in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam.

*Terrorism, Betrayal, and Resilience* is a sobering reminder of just how important and dangerous the job of diplomacy can be. Kenya aside, you grew up in a Foreign Service family among the ruins of World War II and in

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Cold War-era Pakistan and Iran. With thousands of Foreign Service men and women working across the globe, putting their lives in danger every day, was an aim of your book to shed light on the perils these diplomats face in the field?

Prudence Bushnell: Yes, and to shed light on what we actually accomplish. Before we were blown up in Nairobi, Americans were working with Kenyans in and outside of the embassy to level the political playing field, safeguard resources and wildlife, increase prosperity, and decrease rates of malaria and HIV/AIDS. The 1997 Kenyan presidential elections were deemed “generally free and fair,” wildlife is flourishing in and outside of game parks, people have prospered despite pervasive corruption, and they are living longer. Of the forty-six U.S. government employees killed in the bombing on August 7, thirty-four were Kenyan and twelve American.

Twenty years later, we have Foreign Service families choking for breath in India and China, attentive to armed gangs in Nicaragua, accommodating political unrest in Burundi, and coping with terrorist threats across Europe and the Middle East. Hundreds of others are living without their families in war zones. While the department is now providing the necessary bunkers for security—after the Benghazi deadly assault in 2012, it dare not do less—the perils of PTSD and unmet family needs and separations remain unaddressed by key department officials. The heroic efforts of the Foreign Service Institute’s Deployment Stress Management Program are no substitute for responsible leadership at the highest levels.

i.e.: Take us back to that terrible day on August 7, 1998, the day of the bombings. You had been in Nairobi for two years, serving your first ambassadorship after three years in the State Department’s Africa Bureau, so you had already earned your disaster stripes. But nothing can possibly prepare an ambassador for a full on terrorist attack. What do you remember most about that day? And how do you think it tested or defined you as a leader?

Prudence Bushnell: August 7, 1998, began as an ordinary day, cool and sunny. Fridays usually meant a senior staff meeting, but I could not attend because I had a meeting in the high-rise building on the other side of our rear parking lot with the Kenyan minister of commerce.

In the minister’s office, we heard a loud explosion. Almost everyone in the room went to the window. I was the last to get up and found myself thrown across the room by a blast that came seconds after the initial explosion, a stun grenade we later learned. I thought I was going to die, but instead an embassy colleague and I descended endless stairs with hundreds of shocked, silent, bleeding Kenyans. It was only when we got out onto the street and I saw the charred remains of what was once a human being and the devastation of the embassy that I got a sense of what had happened.

Thousands of Kenyans had raced to the scene to use their bare hands to dig people out of the rubble of an office building that had collapsed next to the embassy. There was no 911, no firefighters, no rescue squads. In our embassy, victims had turned into their own first responders, returning into a death trap to gather up the dead, seek out the wounded, and uncover colleagues buried in debris. Meanwhile, teams had set up a crisis center, which I joined as soon as a doctor declared me fit an hour or so after the explosion. We had to tend to the wounded, find the missing, console the bereaved, make space for the rescuers, assist FBI agents, answer Washington’s questions, deal with the press, assess what we could do to help Kenyans and Nairobi’s overwhelmed medical infrastructure . . . and on, and on, and on.

The day after the bombing, as I was asked to be in multiple places at once, I remembered the written words of a mentor: take care of your people, and the rest will take care of itself. What was a mantra the first couple of days turned into my leadership strategy. Over the next ten months, as we dug ourselves out of a trench...
of despair, reconstructed our organization, struggled to heal, and repaired the bonds of friendship with the Kenyan people, I learned what taking care of people really means—and the results it produces.

**i.e.:** You entered the Foreign Service at a time few women served in midlevel and senior ranks. What was it like to work in a traditionally male profession?

**Prudence Bushnell:** I entered the service in the early 1980s through an affirmative action program designed to redress years of discrimination against women and minorities. I was in my midthirties and already experienced in dealing with double standards, macho jerks and institutional biases, which I continued to address head on. I had men and women bosses who gave me opportunities to shine, and male and female mentors who gave me practical advice and were strong role models. As a senior representative of the U.S. government, powerful men in other countries had no choice but to interact with me however unpleasant they sometimes let me know it was. I learned to use the advantages of being a woman diplomat—one can say and do things men cannot—to persevere and face down bullies. After al Qaeda blew up our embassy in 1998, I found taking care of people to be the most natural and challenging experience of my life. When some of my Kenyan colleagues called me “mama” I took it as the title of respect it was meant to be. I had taken charge and taken care.

**i.e.:** As terrorist threats and our conflicts with jihadists continue through a fourth presidency, what has our government learned from the 1998 embassy bombings? What’s changed after twenty years? Is our military strategy working? Is the war on terror one in which we might one day declare victory?

**Prudence Bushnell:** The so-called war on terror is the longest war in this nation’s history with no victory or end in sight. We redeploy volunteer soldiers to pay for failed military strategies in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, the Horn of Africa, and other distant places, causing at least seven thousand deaths and tens of thousands of injuries among our military. Financial costs are also high: Americans have spent over $2 trillion, adding 10 percent to our budget deficit. Largely unreported is the toll on civilians in conflict areas. Estimates surpass a million innocent people who have died, suffered wounds, fled their homes, left their countries, or live in fear and misery. Meanwhile, jihadist groups continue to spread. I would not call our strategy successful; I would call it collective stupidity.

Ideologies are not eradicated with guns, tactics to terrorize civilians are not stopped by war, and our military might cannot substitute for diplomacy, development, and innovative strategies to create change through peaceful means.
PAB Member Garza Calls Service to Press “Sacred”

All scholarly books published by the University of Nebraska Press go through a rigorous review process culminating in approval by our faculty board, known as the Press Advisory Board (PAB). In our newsletter, we take a look at the faculty members who serve on the PAB. Our first profile is of James A. Garza, associate professor of history and ethnic studies and director of the Institute for Ethnic Studies at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

**P**rofessor James Garza hails from Laredo, Texas, a border town his grandparents fled to after the Mexican Revolution of 1910. He grew up bilingual (although Spanish was really his first language) and always loved the rich history of Mexico that came from the oral histories people like his grandmother told him.

James says his family always “valued education,” and he was the first in his family to go to college. His mother was a school secretary, and his father worked for an electric company. James went through public school in Laredo before he went to community college and then Laredo State University (later renamed Texas A&M International University), where he got a BA in business administration. He worked in private industry for a few years, but his love of learning called to him. He went to night school to get his teaching certificate and then taught fifth grade for four years. But history—and in particular, Mexican history—was his first love, so he went back to night school to earn a master’s degree. His advisor at the time encouraged him to get his doctorate, so he moved to Fort Worth and began his studies at Texas Christian University, where he received his PhD in history. His first book—published by the University of Nebraska Press in 2008—is an outgrowth of his dissertation and is titled *The Imagined Underworld: Sex, Crime, and Vice in Porfirian Mexico.*

In addition to teaching and being director of the Institute for Ethnic Studies, Garza is hard at work on his next book, which will be a transnational and environmental history of the Gran Canal (a project undertaken by the Mexican government and the British engineering firm Pearson and Son) and how its construction changed the Basin of Mexico.

Garza has been at the university since 2001. He was asked to join the PAB in 2014. “It’s service to the profession,” he says of being on the PAB. “I use the word ‘sacred.’ It’s an honor to look at others’ life work.” Garza says it’s thrilling to approve a book and then a year or two later perhaps meet the author or see the book displayed at a conference.

When asked if there are any books approved by the PAB during his tenure that stand out, he mentioned Sandra C. Mendiola Garcia’s *Street Democracy: Vendors, Violence, and Public Space in Late Twentieth-Century Mexico* and James David Nicholls’s *The Limits of Liberty: Mobility and the Making of the Eastern U.S.-Mexico Border.* One book not in his own field that stands out is *Paradise Destroyed:*
Catastrophe and Citizenship in the French Caribbean by Christopher M. Church.

Garza is well-read, and books have had a monumental influence on his life and his life’s work. He listed a few that have had a great impact on him. First is Robert Darnton’s The Great Cat Massacre: And Other Episodes in French Cultural History (Basic Books, 2009), which he says changed his life. “It gets you to think about cultural history. What is it? What is a folk tale? What is a story?”

Paul Vanderwood’s Disorder and Progress: Bandits, Police, and Mexican Development (Roman and Littlefield, 1992) also affected him. Garza says, despite being scholarly, the writing is lively and the story is interesting.

Another book that influenced Garza’s writing was Ann S. Blum’s Domestic Economies: Family, Work, and Welfare in Mexico City, 1884-1943 (Nebraska, 2010). “Her study is one of the best books I have read, not only on family history but on the Mexican Revolution, and I tell graduate students that it’s a classic example of masterful writing and organization. It has greatly affected my own writing in a deep and thoughtful way,” he says.

He himself is deep and thoughtful, and the Press is thankful for his continued service on the PAB.
The university fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30. I’m pleased to report that the University of Nebraska Press had a banner year for sales and other revenue. People often ask me where the money comes from, so we decided to share with you a pie chart on the sources of our revenue.

As you can see, far and away our revenue comes from the sales of our books and journals (over 90 percent). Subsidiary rights—the licensing of parts or all of our material for other uses—accounts for another 2 percent, and other non-publishing income (such as fees for distributing other presses’ books) accounts for another small amount of revenue. Our support from the university and from the state of Nebraska is about 6 percent of total revenue.

What I love about pie charts is seeing the pie grow rather than just getting split up differently. One way for the UNP pie to get larger is for our gift support from individuals to increase. This support happens through donations to Friends of UNP, contributions to our funds at the University of Nebraska Foundation (University of Nebraska Press Fund 01019260), and donor sponsorships of individual books, series, or subject areas. These funds are crucial in helping the Press bring you the incredible array of books we publish.

This season brings another crop of excellent books. Why not help us continue with our good works?
Nicole Eisenbraun and Abby Goodwin, both former interns in UNP’s Editorial, Design, and Production Department, spent their spring breaks in the Big Apple, working with an agent for Curtis Brown Ltd., one of the world’s leading literary agencies.

The trip was a high point of a semester-long internship with agent Noah Ballard, who is a University of Nebraska–Lincoln alumnus. The students served as his readers, reviewing manuscripts and proposals from authors and aspiring authors each week, writing reports and conferring with Ballard via Skype.

“He requires us to do a reader’s report on whether or not he should take it on and why,” Nicole explains. “You need to think about what makes a book work and what doesn’t—what that means, outside of your own personal preferences.” Nicole dreams of a New York City publishing career. After graduation in May, she moved back home to Wall, South Dakota, and plans to work to save money for her big move. In addition to Curtis Brown and UNP, she’s had internships at the Prairie Schooner and with an independent publisher in Pasadena, California.

“I’ve been a book nerd for a long time,” she says. “I’ve taken lots of English classes, but I tried different fields. When I landed on English, my mom’s exact words were, ‘I wouldn’t have expected anything different.’ They knew I wanted to go into publishing before I even knew.”

Abby, who is now a full-time employee at the Press, feels the same way about publishing.

“I had to be an English major, I had to,” she says. “It was the only thing that was calling me. I love English and books. We’ve been given so many books. There’re just stacks of them. It’s wonderful.”

Ann Baker, manager of Editorial, Production, and Design at UNP, says, “We always appreciate the enthusiasm of our student interns, whether they are sure of their next career steps or simply know they are ‘book people.’ It’s a win-win: they can experience firsthand the inner workings of a publisher, and we get more hands on deck.”

We at UNP had a strong feeling about both young women.

“We could see their commitment and passion to publishing,” says Donna Shear, UNP director. “We know both of them are at the beginning of long and exciting careers.”
In February the University of Nebraska Press lost a long-time colleague, Joy Margheim, to colon cancer.

Joy was originally hired at UNP as a project editor in 1997, and in 1998 she was promoted to managing editor. Joy grew up in Alliance, Nebraska, and had a stoic western Nebraska sensibility, keen intelligence, ranging curiosity, and dry wit. She was a copyeditor by nature: hardworking, disciplined, and kind. She was always more interested in improving a manuscript than in calling attention to herself. Good copyediting requires knowledge, skill, and diplomacy, and our books are much better for her contributions. While working at the Press, Joy also stealthily recruited some of UNP’s strongest teams for the Lincoln Corporate Run.

Joy moved to Portland in 2001 to work as an associate editor for the Oregon Historical Society Press. After pursuing graduate work in public policy she did freelance editing for a number of university presses, including Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oregon, Princeton, and Yale. By the Press’s count she copyedited eighty-six manuscripts for UNP alone. After living in Portland for fifteen years and traveling to several countries, she and her husband, Robb, relocated to St. Louis.

Following a six-month treatment for colon cancer, Joy moved back to Lincoln in August 2017, and in October her cancer was declared in remission. Last fall UNP had the pleasure of hiring Joy as an associate project editor, but the cancer returned and she passed away on February 19, 2018.

In Joy’s fifty years she managed to pack in a prodigious amount of work, education, travel, and dog walking. In her forties she carved out time for classes in drawing and metal working and started making jewelry and weaving. After she and Robb adopted their dog Roxanne, one of Joy’s favorite pursuits was taking Roxanne on long walks.

If UNP had a Hall of Fame, Joy would be a shoo-in. Robb has dedicated a bench in Joy’s honor along the MoPac Trail, east of Lincoln. Current and former staff members shared stories and memories of Joy in a blog post (https://unpblog.com/2018/03/23/remembering-joy-margheim/).
JOHN CHRISTGAU • 1934–2018

John Christgau wrote numerous books about sports and American history, including eight titles published by the University of Nebraska Press. Two of his UNP books are *Tricksters in the Madhouse: Lakers vs. Globetrotters, 1948* and *Birch Coulie: The Epic Battle of the Dakota War*.

CAROLYN POPE EDWARDS • 1947–2018

Carolyn Pope Edwards was UNL professor emerita of psychology and child, youth, and family studies and coeditor of two UNP books: *Ngecha: A Kenyan Village in a Time of Rapid Social Change* and *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation, Volume 51: Moral Motivation through the Life Span*.

JEFFREY H. SMITH • 1943–2018

Jeffrey H. Smith was a member of the UNP Advancement Council, a longtime member of Friends of UNP, and author of the UNP book *The 1862 Plot to Kidnap Jefferson Davis*.

BRENDA SEROTTE • 1946–2018

Brenda Serotte was a poet, adjunct professor at Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and author of the UNP book *The Fortune Teller’s Kiss*.
As the Press’s geography list grows, so is the attention it is garnering from scholars in the field. That is why the Historical Geography Specialty Group of the American Association of Geographers chose UNP when it wanted a publishing partner for its official journal, *Historical Geography*.

“We are excited to join UNP’s top-notch journals catalog,” says the journal’s coeditor Arn Keeling of Memorial University of Newfoundland. “It offers *Historical Geography* a greater profile for the kind of excellent scholarship, reviews, and features we’ve been publishing for the past thirty-five years.” *Historical Geography*’s readers can now choose either print or online format. Previously, it had been available as an online journal only.

The journal’s other coeditors are Briony McDonagh, University of Hull, and Michael Wise, University of North Texas. Book review editor John Bauer, University of Nebraska at Kearney, rounds out the editorial team.

*Historical Geography* and the previously announced UNP title *Journal of Magazine Media* were two of only twelve journals to earn coveted slots as additions to Project MUSE’s Premium Collection for 2019.

The Press’s journals program continues to attract important journals in all fields of the humanities and social sciences, making it the fourth-largest journals program among Big Ten university presses.

UNP has also increased its presence in geography with important books such as the recently released *How the West Was Drawn: Mapping, Indians, and the Construction of the Trans-Mississippi West* by David Bernstein and *Thinking Big Data in Geography: New Regimes, New Research*, edited and with an introduction by Jim Thatcher, Josef Eckert, and Andrew Shears.
The 2018 Nebraska Book Festival took place on Saturday, August 25, at a new location: UNL's City Campus Union. Local UNP authors and Nebraskans Jeff Kurrus and Michael Forsberg were among the eight presenting authors. Melissa Fraterrigo, author of *Glory Days*, and Brandon Vogel, coauthor with Coach John Cook of *Dream Like a Champion*, also made feature presentations.

The vendor room featured forty publishers, literary organizations, booksellers, and authors from Nebraska and the surrounding region.

The Center for Great Plains Studies (CGPS) hosted a Friday evening event that featured the two new books in the Discover the Great Plains series, *Great Plains Literature* by Linda M. Pratt and *Great Plains Politics* by Peter J. Longo. The series is published by UNP and CGPS.

Support for the Nebraska Book Festival this year came from Concierge Marketing, Friends of the University of Nebraska Press, Humanities Nebraska, Lincoln City Libraries, Nebraska Center for the Book, Nebraska Library Commission, Nebraska Writers Guild, the University of Nebraska Press, and Union Bank. The Friends of the University of Nebraska Press sponsored the appearance of Jeff Kurrus and Melissa Fraterrigo. The festival was free and open to the public.

“The Nebraska Book Festival continues to be an opportunity to gather in celebration of Nebraska’s community of literacy,” says Rosemary Sekora, publicity manager at UNP and chair of the festival’s organizing committee. “We are already working on next year’s festival, hoping to make it a staple event for Lincoln’s book lovers.”
Author William F. S. Miles received the Past Presidents’ Silver Book Award 2017 from the Association of Borderland Studies for his 2014 UNP book *Scars of Partition: Postcolonial Legacies in French and British Borderlands*.

The SABR Baseball Research Awards honor outstanding research projects completed during the preceding calendar year that have significantly expanded our knowledge or understanding of baseball. Two of the three winners for 2018 are UNP titles: *From the Dugouts to the Trenches: Baseball during the Great War* by Jim Leuke and *Urban Shocker: Silent Hero of Baseball’s Golden Age* by Steve Steinberg. *From the Dugouts to the Trenches* also won SABR’s 2018 Larry Ritter Book Award, given to the best book about baseball between 1901 and 1919 published during the previous calendar year. *Urban Shocker* was a finalist for this award.

*Black Jesus and Other Superheroes* by Venita Blackburn was a finalist for the New York Public Library’s 2018 Young Lions Fiction Award. The Young Lions Fiction Award is given annually to an American writer thirty-five or younger for either a novel or a collection of short stories. Each year, five young fiction writers are selected as finalists by a reading committee of writers, editors, and librarians.

Two UNP titles earned 2018 Independent Publisher Book Awards. *Pain Woman Takes Your Keys and Other Essays from a Nervous System* by Sonya Huber won a Gold IPPY Medal and was named one of only eight “Outstanding Books of the Year.” *I’ll Be Your Mirror: Essays and Aphorisms* by David Lazar took the Silver IPPY Medal in Essays/Creative Nonfiction.

*The Modoc War: A Story of Genocide at the Dawn of America’s Gilded Age* by Robert Aquinas McNally won the 2018 California Book Award in the category of Californiana and a 2018 Northern California Book Award in the Nonfiction category.
Margaret Jacobs, author of three UNP books, was among thirty-one scholars named 2018 Andrew Carnegie Fellows. The award grants each recipient $200,000 over two years to complete a major project. Winners were chosen by a jury from a pool of 270 nominees. Jacobs will take a two-year sabbatical to research and write a book asking how the United States can confront and take responsibility for the human rights abuses against indigenous children, their families, and their nations that occurred when children were forced into Indian boarding schools in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Amina Gautier, author of *Now We Will Be Happy*, a collection of stories in UNP’s Prairie Schooner Book Prize in Fiction series, received the 2018 PEN/Malamud Award for Excellence in the Short Story.


*Paradise Destroyed: Catastrophe and Citizenship in the French Caribbean* by Christopher M. Church won the 2017 Alf Andrew Heggoy Book Prize from the French Colonial Historical Society.

*Siberian Exile: Blood, War, and a Granddaughter’s Reckoning* by Julija Šukys won the 2018 Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies Book Prize.

*The January Children* by Safia Elhillo won the 2018 Arab American Book Award in the category of Poetry.
SELECT REVIEWS

**The Zoo at Night** by Susan Gubernat
“Rising out of experience—painful, beautiful, disruptive—**The Zoo at Night** offers an unflinching look at an imperfect world underlain with a conviction to hope.”—Lisa Higgs, Kenyon Review

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**When We Were Ghouls: A Memoir of Ghost Stories** by Amy E. Wallen
“The author writes powerfully through the haze of 40-year-old memories. . . . In disbelief at her family’s actions, from taking pottery out of Peruvian graves to ignoring dead bodies in the African streets, Wallen questions the inherent goodness children assume about their loved ones. Lyrical and haunting.”—Booklist

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**Stray** by Bernard Farai Matambo
“Matambo deconstructs the tense and often contradictory immigrant experience in his excellent debut collection.”—Publishers Weekly

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**Telling Stories: The Craft of Narrative and the Writing Life** by Lee Martin
“[Martin’s] own sentences are like bright sun-polished bones on a beach: sparse outlines nevertheless telling their own devastating story. No doubt aspiring writers will appreciate this honesty, and may find many of the writing prompts here helpful, particularly to unclog a blockage. But it is Martin’s own literary journey that is most compelling.”—Sara Lonsdale, Times Literary Supplement

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**American Colossus: Big Bill Tilden and the Creation of Modern Tennis** by Allen M. Hornblum
“However you judge his colourful and complex story, Tilden remains the closest antecedent we have to Federer’s miraculous longevity.”—Simon Briggs, Telegraph
**The Modoc War: A Story of Genocide at the Dawn of America’s Gilded Age** by Robert Aquinas McNally

“McNally is a strong storyteller with a conversational style and an eye for telling details. . . . This honest accounting of the cruelty, corruption, and savagery of the settlers—who believed their actions were smiled upon by God—takes a step forward in correcting a sanitized and muffled history.”—Publishers Weekly

**When History Is Personal** by Mimi Schwartz

“Although the essays are highly personal, most readers will relate to the larger pictures of human rights, racism, the women’s movement, and a score of other topics. Expressive, intimate snapshots of one woman’s life set atop the backdrop of global history.”—Kirkus

**Sugar: Micheal Ray Richardson, Eighties Excess, and the NBA** by Charley Rosen

“Richardson . . . was a four-time All-Star, three-time steals leader, and two-time All-Defensive selection. Suspended four times for drug use—and ultimately banned from the game—he was also the poster child for the abuse scandal that nearly did the league in during that period. . . . [Sugar] should provide fans of today’s worldwide, multibillion dollar NBA with an understanding of the league’s history.”—Wes Lukowsky, Booklist, starred review

**Alou: My Baseball Journey** by Felipe Alou with Peter Kerasotis

“Hall of Fame pitcher Alou, who made history in 1958 as the first person to go from the Dominican Republic to playing with a major league team, delivers a fascinating memoir of his baseball career. . . . This is a powerful memoir of a remarkable player who made a lasting impact on America’s pastime.”—Publishers Weekly

**In Command: Theodore Roosevelt and the American Military** by Matthew Oyos

“Oyos . . . delivers a convincing portrait of Theodore Roosevelt as a feisty war hero turned chief executive—first as New York governor and then as the 26th president. . . . Oyos also takes stock of Roosevelt’s missteps, including his disgraceful treatment of African-American soldiers after the 1906 Brownsville, Tex., riot. Roosevelt buffs and hardcore fans of 20th-century military history will sink their teeth into this.”—Publishers Weekly
**Raising the Flag: America’s First Envoys in Faraway Lands** by Peter D. Eicher
"Retired diplomat Eicher unearths tales of some of the fledgling United States’ first envoys to foreign lands—‘foreign’ at the time including Louisiana and California, as well as the Ottoman Empire, China, and Africa’s Barbary Coast. . . . This book brings to light little-known stories that will fascinate early-America enthusiasts."—Publishers Weekly

**Phoebe Apperson Hearst: A Life of Power and Politics** by Alexandra M. Nickliss
"Phoebe Apperson Hearst is deeply researched, and the persistent reader will be rewarded with a vivid portrait of the challenges faced by women with ambitions outside the home in the latter part of the 19th century. . . . [Hearst’s] life story shows how women—especially rich women—exercised power before they had the right to vote."—Melanie Kirkpatrick, Wall Street Journal

**The Integration of the Pacific Coast League: Race and Baseball on the West Coast** by Amy Essington
“The West Coast’s reputation as socially progressive was a factor even in sports. Amy Essington . . . tells the story of how the Pacific Coast League, a popular minor league before the majors’ westward expansion, became one of the first leagues in any sport to integrate throughout.”
—Ross Atkin, Christian Science Monitor

**A Civil Life in an Uncivil Time: Julia Wilbur’s Struggle for Purpose** by Paula Tarnapol Whitacre
“Whitacre paints an intimate portrait of her subject. In doing so, she reveals the challenges and struggles of an ordinary single woman doing extraordinary work during a tumultuous period of political and social change in American history.”—Mary Lynn Bayliss, Virginia Magazine

**The Presidents and the Pastime: The History of Baseball and the White House** by Curt Smith
“As a former presidential speechwriter and the author of Voices of the Game, the classic history of baseball broadcasting, Smith is the ideal person to unearth a rich vein of anecdotal material.”
—Ross Atkin, Christian Science Monitor

“Smith’s book makes clear baseball’s indelible mark on our national life and the president’s own role in baseball’s annual cycle. This comes through most clearly in his account of FDR—the president who more than any of his predecessors forged a personal bond with the American people, primarily through their radios but also through baseball.”—Adam J. White, Weekly Standard

“This may be the most innovative and interesting book on military strategy ever published.”—Jerry Lenaburg, New York Journal of Books

“You might be forgiven for thinking the never-ending Star Wars franchise was simply a cash cow built of sequels, spin-offs and toys. But the space saga is actually helping further the discussion about military strategy right here on Earth.”—Chad Jones, San Francisco Chronicle

Island in the City: A Memoir by Micah McCrary

“In the latest entry in the publisher’s American Lives series, McCrary writes of becoming aware of his black heritage early in life but also about the impression his skin color had on others in small-town Normal, Illinois, in the 1980s and ’90s. . . . A slim yet potent and intimately ruminative debut memoir on travel, maturity, and culture.”—Kirkus

It’s a Question of Space: An Ordinary Astronaut’s Answers to Sometimes Extraordinary Questions by Clayton C. Anderson

“Covering an impressive amount of material, It’s a Question of Space is an engaging read for those fascinated by the history of the space program.”—Jeff Fleischer, Foreword Reviews

The Rebounders: A Division I Basketball Journey by Amanda Ottaway

“Ottaway is a fine writer who exhibits both compassion and insight throughout this story of one woman’s coming-of-age as an athlete.”—Wes Lukowsky, Booklist

The I-35W Bridge Collapse: A Survivor’s Account of America’s Crumbling Infrastructure by Kimberly J. Brown

“In her riveting memoir . . . Brown combines her personal story with clear technical explanations of how bridges are constructed and inspectors’ reports that were not acted on.”—Mary Ann Grossmann, Twin Cities Pioneer Press
A Certain Loneliness: A Memoir by Sandra Gail Lambert
“A powerful testimony to the determination and strength necessary to persevere despite assumptions, scrutiny, and societal stigmatization.”—Kirkus

Tom Yawkey: Patriarch of the Boston Red Sox by Bill Nowlin
“Immaculately researched, well-written.”—Wall Street Journal
“This is the most in-depth book written about Yawkey; Red Sox and baseball history fans will appreciate it.”—Gus Palas, Library Journal

The Three-Minute Outdoorsman Returns: From Mammoth on the Menu to the Benefits of Moose Drool by Robert M. Zink

Better Times: Short Stories by Sara Batkie
“Nine tales—four from the past, four in the present, one set in the not-too-distant future—compose Batkie’s stellar debut, all memorably portraying an ineffable yearning from well-drawn characters who may have known or will know better times. . . . In this remarkable collection, Batkie creates strong, evocative imagery with economy and precision. She elevates both the common and uncommon experiences of her characters, resulting in something quite extraordinary.”—Publishers Weekly, starred review

American Radiance by Luisa Muradyan
“Through generous associative leaps, Muradyan turns a narrative of assimilation into a debut collection that is as playful as it is wrenching. . . . Muradyan reveals herself to be a savvy and thoroughly modern poet, observing her subjects with a dispassionate, often droll eye.”—Publishers Weekly
In the February 6, 2018, “By the Book” feature in the New York Times, Tayari Jones called Kathryn Vaz “the sort of fiction writer who makes me wonder why the rest of us even bother.” Jones wrote, “My favorite book of Vaz’s is *Our Lady of the Artichokes*."


C-SPAN Book TV interviewed Abigail Markwyn about her book *Empress San Francisco: The Pacific Rim, the Great West, and California at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition* at the Organization of American Historians’ annual meeting in Sacramento, California, on April 13, 2018.
UNP’s baseball books annually capture tremendous media attention in anticipation of MLB’s opening day; 2018 was no exception.

The March 19, 2018, edition of Newsday included a piece titled “Baseball Bookshelf: 12 Titles for the New Season.” Two of these were UNP books: Tom Yawkey: Patriarch of the Boston Red Sox by Bill Nowlin and The Pitcher and the Dictator: Satchel Paige’s Unlikely Season in the Dominican Republic by Averill “Ace” Smith.


The March 26, 2018, edition of the Los Angeles Times included a feature story about The Pitcher and the Dictator and the book’s author, Averill “Ace” Smith. Smith is a lifelong baseball fanatic and thirty-year veteran of state and national politics who has directed winning campaigns from district attorney to president of the United States.

Felipe Alou and his book Alou: My Baseball Journey received extensive attention throughout the spring and summer in various media outlets, from Forbes.com, Yahoo Sports, the YES Network, and Yankees Magazine to the Palm Beach Post, the Tampa Bay Times, Dominican Today, and the San Francisco Chronicle. A commentary segment titled “Felipe Alou and Athlete Activism” appeared on the April 4, 2018, edition of WBUR’s radio program Only a Game. Host Bill Littlefield highlighted the book and discussed Alou’s “connection to the activism evident among various pro athletes today.”

Authors Philip Padgett and Paula Tarnapol Whitacre spoke about their new Potomac books on C-SPAN Book TV, as broadcast live from the Gaithersburg (MD) Book Festival on May 19, 2018. Padgett is author of Advocating Overlord: The D-Day Strategy and the Atomic Bomb, and Whitacre is author of A Civil Life in an Uncivil Time: Julia Wilbur’s Struggle for Purpose.

The Orange County Register listed UNP’s American Lives series title When We Were Ghouls: A Memoir of Ghost Stories by Amy E. Wallen as a “must-read” for May 2018.


C-SPAN televised the August 7, 2018, State Department event commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Prudence Bushnell, author of *Terrorism, Betrayal, and Resilience: My Story of the 1998 U.S. Embassy Bombings*, was one of the event’s speakers.
SELECT JPS AWARDS, REVIEWS, AND MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Path of the Prophets: The Ethics-Driven Life by Rabbi Barry L. Schwartz
“Schwartz’s new book works as both an intelligent class textbook, complete with appended study guide, and absorbing personal reading.”—Ray Olson, Booklist

The Zionist Ideas: Visions for the Jewish Homeland—Then, Now, Tomorrow by Gil Troy
“The Zionist Ideas: Visions for the Jewish Homeland—Then, Now, Tomorrow . . . takes a comprehensive approach to unpacking the challenges modern Zionism faces, while simultaneously expanding on the virtues of Jewish self-determination.”—Daniel J. Roth, Jerusalem Post

“Troy has done an extraordinary job in explaining the Zionist ideas that co-exist within Jewish life. As the subtitle puts it, this book explains the Zionism of the past, the debates going on in the present, and the visions of the future that occupy the minds and hearts of Zionists. Like Hertzberg’s original book, it explains and it inspires.”—Jack Riemer, Jewish Advocate

“Troy has delivered an anthology that will give us plenty to argue about for years to come.”—Elliot Jager, Jerusalem Report

“An excellent cross-section of Zionist thought, ideology and popular culture as well, and a worthy update of Hertzberg’s masterpiece. . . . Troy’s volume will help us make sense of an increasingly chaotic Zionist world.”—Jerome A. Chanes, New York Jewish Week

Turning Points in Jewish History by Marc J. Rosenstein
“Surveying more than three millennia—from the Call to Abraham in roughly 1500 B.C.E. to the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989—Rosenstein . . . highlights 30 events that have shaped Jewish life. . . . Each chapter is supremely readable, understandable, and enlightening, making the book a valuable addition to any library.”—Kirkus, starred review

“With strong overviews of foundational developments throughout Judaism—the exodus from Egypt, the destruction of the first and second temples, the expulsion of Iberian Jewry, the Holocaust, and the founding of the modern state of Israel—readers will appreciate Rosenstein’s evenhanded treatment.”—Publishers Weekly
The JPS B’nai Mitzvah Torah Commentary by Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin

“Highly accessible, informative, and engaging, this is an extraordinary reference source for anyone working with Bar or Bat Mitzvah students, as well as anyone needing to explore the writing of a D’var Torah.”—Kathy Bloomfield, Association of Jewish Libraries Reviews

The April 24, 2018, issue of America included a lengthy essay titled “What Christians Can Learn from New Books on Judaism.” In it, Jon M. Sweeney discussed three books including The Heart of Torah: Essays on the Weekly Torah Portion by Rabbi Shai Held.
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Nebraska’s only astronaut, Clayton Anderson, signs copies of his new book *It’s a Question of Space* in the UNP booth at Book Expo in New York, New York, in May 2018. This is Anderson’s second book with the Press. His first book was a memoir of becoming an astronaut titled *The Ordinary Spaceman: From Boyhood Dreams to Astronaut* (Nebraska, 2015).