



Editor's Note

The Year of Noteworthy Losses

By Sharon Verbeten

Thanks to the pandemic, 2020 will go down as a total blur, a dumpster fire, one big Zoom meeting. But 2021 has its own notorious distinction—the year of unspeakable losses for children's literature.

If it weren't a list of obituaries, it would read as a Who's Who of children's lit greats—Jerry Pinkney, Eric Carle, Floyd Cooper, Gary Paulsen, Lois Ehlert, Beverly Cleary, Patricia Reilly Giff. Their individual contributions have been notable and memorable. But collectively, it has librarians and children's book lovers saddened en masse.

It forces us to recall our favorite books or anecdotes about them. When Cleary died, for example, I marveled at her long life (104!) and the fact that her books are still beloved by children.

And I fondly recall interviewing fellow Milwaukeean Lois Ehlert in 2003, when the Milwaukee Art Museum featured an exhibit of her art. After she graciously walked the exhibit with me, she invited me to visit her lakefront apartment to show me her studio. It was a once-in-a-lifetime treat.

Maybe you sat mesmerized by an award speech by one of these greats. Or you have your fingers crossed—like me!—for a posthumous Caldecott award for the very deserving Cooper.

Whatever your memories, hold them tight and revel in this amazing career we have where we get to interact so intimately with our heroes. &



Melrose (MA) Public Library's bronze Little Reader statue was created by artist Carolyn Wirth in 1999. For more on the library's podcast book club, see page 34.

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