

# JUVENILE MISCELLANY



SUMMER 2024 • KARLIE HERNDON, EDITOR



**H**ello, friends and supporters of the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection! This past academic year has been filled with changes, and I'm excited to share some of them with you in this issue of *Juvenile Miscellany*.

One change you may already have noticed is a new face here on page one. Last year, our beloved curator, Ellen Ruffin, began her much-deserved retirement, but she has continued to encourage and support us from beach-side lounges, backyard soirées, and beyond. You'll hear a little from Ellen, remembering her very first day at de Grummond, in an article on *The Park Book*. Ellen is also serving as our current chair of the EJK Award Committee—her support of excellent children's literature certainly didn't end with retirement. In October 2023, I officially transitioned from assistant curator/interim curator to curator, and I've been delighted to serve in this role. I've spoken with so many incredible people over the past year—curious patrons, fascinated school children, and passionate donors—and those experiences have enriched and inspired me to continue the work of building a one-of-a-kind collection, collaborating with the community, and implementing programming to ensure everyone knows the name, de Grummond.

With the assistant curator position open, I was so grateful to welcome Kim Holifield to the team in March 2024, just in time for our annual Fay B. Kaigler Children's Book

Festival. Kim brings a wealth of historical knowledge and the calm, patient, organized mindset of a 15-year public school teacher. I'm certain her article on memory and her work so far in de Grummond will remind us all about how important children's literature and archival collections are.



*Karlie Herndon*

Our steadfast collection specialist, Marge Sauls, is not only completing a Master of Library and Information Science, but she is also working behind the scenes to support our EJK Award and process and shelve hundreds of incoming books each month. You'll see her pictured in the EJK group shot and in Kim's article on our work as memory keepers—Marge is certainly an invaluable member of the memory keeping team here at de Grummond.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Juvenile Miscellany*, and I hope our work stirs some fond memories, sparks good change, and brings you joy as we move into a (blessedly cooler!) season.

All the best,  
Karlie Herndon  
Curator, de Grummond Collection



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# Mystery Donor Sets a Million-Dollar Challenge

By Karlie Herndon

If you're receiving this newsletter in the mail, then you no doubt have a good idea of just how special the de Grummond Collection is. In 1966, Lena Y. de Grummond came to The University of Southern Mississippi to teach library science. She discovered that students were unfamiliar with the work and processes that go into making children's books, and she thought her students deserved the best possible education she could provide. To round out their understanding of children's book publishing and their appreciation of quality children's literature, Dr. de Grummond began a letter-writing campaign, asking authors, illustrators, editors, and publishers to send her anything they could.

With a little humor and a lot of sincerity, her letters hit the right chord, and as materials poured in, the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection began on its trajectory to becoming one of the leading children's literature collections in the world. With archival collections of over 1,400 authors' and illustrators' papers and roughly 250,000 books, the de Grummond isn't showing any signs of stopping its tremendous growth.

To curate a collection of this size takes expertise, resources, and many, many hours of employees' time. In support of this important work, USM launched a campaign initiative in April 2023 to raise \$2,000,000 for a new de Grummond Children's Literature Curatorship Endowment. The fund began to grow at a good pace, but early in 2024, something wonderful happened. For years, an anonymous donor has supported de Grummond from behind the scenes, and now that donor has set a challenge for all of us.

***If \$1,000,000 in gifts can be raised collectively for the Curatorship Endowment, the anonymous donor has agreed to match that support with a \$1,000,000 gift of their own, but only if that fundraising milestone is reached by December 31, 2024.***

As we climb closer to our goal, we are so grateful for all the donations that have poured in, but we could still use your help! If you've been thinking about donating, now is the time to make the most of your money. For every dollar we receive, we're one tiny step closer to meeting our anonymous donor's incredible matching offer.



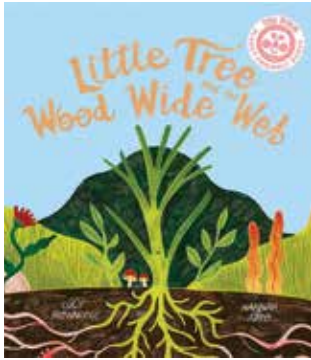
If you are interested in learning more or making a gift to the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection Curatorship Endowment, visit [usmfoundation.com/curatorship](https://usmfoundation.com/curatorship), or [securelib.imodules.com/s/1149/foundation/index.aspx?sid=1149&gid=1&pgid=1043&cid=2307](https://securelib.imodules.com/s/1149/foundation/index.aspx?sid=1149&gid=1&pgid=1043&cid=2307), or contact Brooke Cruthirds, USM Foundation development officer and de Grummond liaison, at 601.266.4881 or [brooke.cruthirds@usm.edu](mailto:brooke.cruthirds@usm.edu).

# The Giverny Award Comes to de Grummond and Kaigler

By Karlie Herndon

The Giverny Award is presented annually to the best children's science picture book that serves our youngest readers, ages 4-8. Each year, the 15<sup>o</sup> Laboratory chooses one science picture book, published in the English language in the previous five years, that teaches young readers at least one important scientific

principle or promotes science-related attitudes, pursuits, or inquiries. Artwork, illustrations, and graphics must work in harmony with the story's text; hence, both the author and illustrator receive the award. The award's name alludes to the renowned French village that provided the setting and inspiration for Monet's famous impressionist paintings. Molly Bang, the first Giverny Award recipient, designed the award's seal.



This year, de Grummond partnered with the Giverny Award to present the award at the Fay B. Kaigler Children's Book Festival. The winner of this year's award is *Little Tree and the Wood Wide Web*, by author Lucy Brownridge and illustrator Hannah Abbo, a book that explores the ways trees communicate underground through their root systems. We were delighted to highlight this entrancing dive into some of the newest science on trees by awarding it the prestigious Giverny Award for 2024.

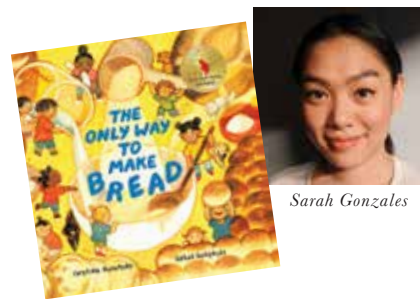
# Meet EJK Winners and Honors at the Mississippi Book Festival

By Karlie Herndon

We are thrilled to announce that this year, at the Mississippi Book Festival's 10th anniversary, we will have our first ever Ezra Jack Keats Panel! Our former curator, Ellen Ruffin, will moderate the panel with two winners, Sarah Gonzales and Anne Wynter, as well as two honors, Helena Ku Rhee and Kim Rogers. Be sure to come meet these rising stars of the picture book world on Saturday, September 14, 2024, in Jackson, Miss. The event is free and open to everyone!



Anne Wynter



Sarah Gonzales



Kim Rogers



Helena Ku Rhee

# A Walk in *The Park Book*: Strolling Through Layers of Story

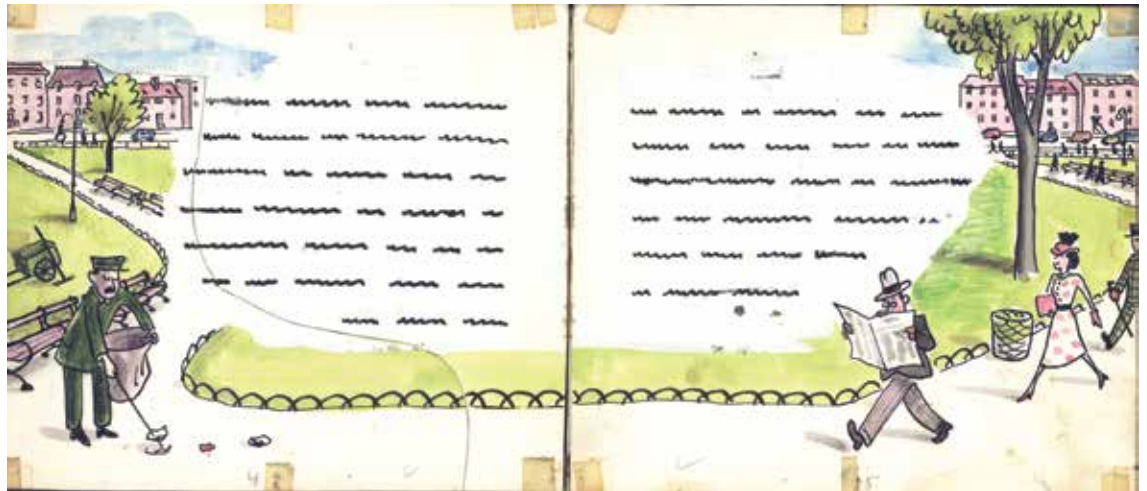
By Karlie Herndon

Charlotte Zolotow never meant to be “just” an author. As a young child, she wished to be both a writer and an illustrator. As she grew older, part of her wish came true: writing stories was easy, but she was never able to master the art of illustration. “However,” she noted, “most of the artists for my books have done them so beautifully that I have gained from the part that did not come true.” It was in her very first published book, *The Park Book* (1944), that she realized what a boon it was to have someone else experiencing her story: a first reader who could fully imagine a world in the author’s words. She discovered that other illustrators gave her stories “a marvelous extra dimension. All good artists do that.”

H. A. Rey was, of course, a good artist. Already several years into his career as a picture book illustrator, Rey was able to capture just the right moments and details to enrich the story. In *The Park Book*, Rey “has people coming into the park in the morning and the wastebaskets are empty; when they come back at night the wastebaskets are overflowing. I didn’t have that in the text. He felt his way into the story and gave it that extra reflection.” Rey, who created the wonderful Curious George with his wife, Margret Rey, did what great picture book artists do: he followed the crumbs of interesting paths, like a curious little monkey, and explored aspects of the story that add to the words on the page. Rey envisioned the overflowing wastebaskets, but he also saw the efforts of the park employee, working throughout the day to keep the park tidy. Unusual for the time, but not an unusual choice for Rey to make, a Black child appears in the park, playing by a fountain—another detail never mentioned in the text. Adults, children, birds, dogs, and even the toy boats that float in the park fountain help to depict the nuance and depth that Zolotow’s words introduce to readers.

Ellen Ruffin, curator emerita of the de Grummond Collection, has been impressed by the book for years. “From the very beginning of my time at de Grummond, I loved the book,” she said. “I love how it’s a clear example of how the interdependence of picture books work. The words tell the story, but the complete story is filled in with the illustrations. It is a true collaboration of ideas.” After 17 years of working with the papers of Zolotow, the Reys, and countless other authors and illustrators, Ruffin continues to marvel at the detail of the illustrations and the way the

author/illustrator so complemented one another’s ideas for the story. As Zolotow stated, she “would have done drawings that would literally have shown what the text already said.” Rey took the engaging story Zolotow wrote and contributed not the same or even another story, but additional layers of activity and dimension.



Part of what made this combination of author/illustrator, words/pictures so effective was that both the Reys and the Zolotows lived near the titular park. Zolotow recalled that she “lived near Washington Square Park and was fascinated by the cycle of hours down there. A different park at different times of day. The mood in the park shifted completely from hour to hour.” The Reys lived near Washington Square Park from 1941-49; Margret Rey even created a large needlepoint to commemorate the time she and H. A. spent living near the park. After seeing the book’s final product, Zolotow wrote to Rey to express her delight and gratitude. “Thank you for drawing such a beautiful park book! I love it – it’s so green and sunny and summery and totally delightful. I love all the little details,” she wrote in expressive green ink.



*The Park Book*, an innovative story of the day in the life of a particular place, captures a moment in time for readers today. *The Park Book* is a lasting legacy to the magic of picture books for adults and children alike; with this perfectly captured day in the park, readers today can take a stroll any time.

## Bibliography

“Charlotte S. Zolotow (1915-).” *Something About the Author*, edited by Anne Commire, 237-245. Vol. 35. Detroit, MI: Gale, 1984.

Letter received from Charlotte Zolotow, n.d., H.A. and Margret Rey Papers, DG0812, Box 26, Folder 13, de Grummond Children’s Literature Collection, Special Collections, The University of Southern Mississippi Libraries.

# de Grummond: More Than a Collection



By Kim Holifield

Recently, a visitor to de Grummond asked me, “Why do you think adults write children’s books?” I know myself well enough to imagine the look of perplexity that came across my face as I said, “Well . . .” In that moment when a pause enables the human mind to search and retrieve an answer, I noted, “that’s an excellent question.”

After fully absorbing the question, one word came to mind: *memory*. I thought of my late father, who rarely took a step in this world without a book in hand. I thought of my mother, who read to me every night of my childhood until I became an independent reader. “Perhaps,” I elaborated, “those who write children’s books wish to provide others with an opportunity to create lasting memories that guide them into adulthood.”

The look of annoyance began to fade from the face of the inquirer. A nod of approval followed. Then came the *pièce de résistance*: “I can understand that.”

*Veni, vidi, vici*. I came. I saw. I conquered. I took a moment to reflect on the travails of Caesar, wondering if crossing the Rubicon involved nearly as much soul searching.

Latin phrases and artistic license aside, the world of story is reminiscent of the voice belonging to a beloved figure in our lives, whether it be a family member, teacher, or librarian who held books aloft so that our eyes might glimpse a whole new world to explore. Possibilities seemed endless while listening to the teller of these written tales. Some refer to it as a transformative experience. Others might speak of metaphorical doors, windows, and mirrors. Whatever

you choose to call it, there is something undeniably magical in the remembrance of it all.

As assistant curator of the de Grummond Children’s Literature Collection, I am privileged to step into this world. Looking out from my office, I see a table piled high with books from a personal library. Thirty-five archival boxes occupy the opposite table. Each shipping container is a treasure trove of original materials waiting to be processed. Like many archivists, I feel an emotional connection with the items I’m working



Professor Lena de Grummond, undated. *The University of Southern Mississippi Digital Collection*.

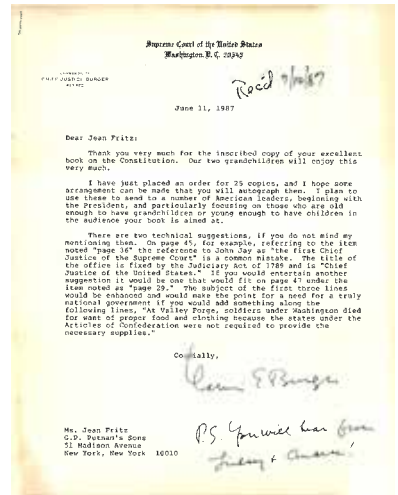
to preserve for future generations. These belonged to Jean Fritz, an award-winning author of children’s nonfiction. Beyond titles that span the Italian Renaissance to colonial America (i.e., *Leonardo’s Horse* and *Shh! We’re Writing the Constitution*), Fritz received a Newbery Honor Award for her autobiographical work, *Homesick*.

I read Fritz as a child. Her books chronicle the past and those who feature prominently in events that continue to shape the world in which we live. Stories like those written by Fritz ignited a passion for history within a little girl who grew up to teach the subject for 15 years. The thought makes me smile. With every typescript that features a handwritten revision, I am presented with a glimpse into the various stages of creating a memorable work for young readers. Now I am tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that each page of the Jean Fritz Papers is available for researchers who seek to piece together the puzzle of this amazing writer’s life and work. It is more than a job. It is an honor.

We are guardians of memory at the de Grummond Collection. The collections we house not only tell stories bound within volumes that line our repository shelves, but also the journey of their creators. Curious George might have become a memory lost, had the Reys not risked their lives to flee Nazi-occupied France. Had Keats not produced *The Snowy Day*—the first children’s book featuring a Black protagonist to win the Caldecott—the barrier between races in publishing might have stretched beyond the 1960s.

The human experience is a shared experience. Every voice plays a role. All are deserving of inclusion. Here at de Grummond, we proudly serve as a haven for children’s literature. In the spirit of “The New Colossus,” may de Grummond be likened to one who cries, “Send these . . . tempest-tost to me.”

We intend to keep them well.



Letter from former Chief Justice Warren Burger to Fritz regarding her work, *Shh! We’re Writing the Constitution*.



2024 de Grummond staff from L to R: Kim Holifield, Assistant Curator; Karlie Herndon, Curator; Marge Sauls, Collection Specialist.

# Ezra Jack Keats Award 2024

By Karlie Herndon

The annual Ezra Jack Keats (EJK) Award ceremony was held on Thursday, April 11, 2024, during the Fay B. Kaigler Children's Book Festival at USM in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. The Award celebrates exceptional early career authors and illustrators for portraying the multicultural nature of our world in the spirit of Ezra Jack Keats. Despite campus closures and storms on Wednesday, April 10, the festival was a great success, and all of the EJK winners and honors who planned to attend braved the weather and enjoyed a day of celebrations. A community-wide reception for the winners and festival attendees took place that evening at the historic Hattiesburg Train Depot.

"The 2024 EJK Award and Honor books are filled with the same joy and sense of recognition that have made EJK's books beloved classics," said **Deborah Pope**, executive director of the EJK Foundation.

"This year, the stories we celebrate include the deft resolution of tensions that often come with cultural differences, reflect children's concern with conservation, and highlight precious intergenerational connections, all through the lens of diversity, kindness, and humor. These books are bound to delight children for decades!" Deborah introduced the award, as well as an archival recording of Ezra Jack Keats discussing the importance of writing for children.



**Karlie Herndon**, curator of the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection, which holds the Ezra Jack Keats Papers, added, "The EJK Award supports so much more than good books. It recognizes the bravery, integrity, and creativity of new writers and illustrators working today to show up for the child readers who need their stories. I am so proud to be a part of an award that uplifts these creators while continuing to impart the Keats spirit in the world of picture book publishing."

The award was presented by EJK Committee chair, Shannan Hicks, with the assistance of de Grummond lecturer, Jason Chin, who served on the EJK Committee in prior award years. Five of the 2024 EJK committee members were also here in Hattiesburg for the celebration: Rita Auerbach, Sam Bloom, Melissa Iwai, Chris Raschka, and

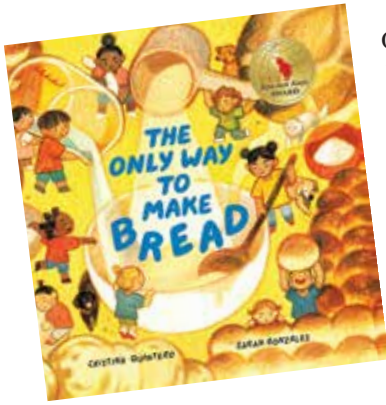
Deborah Taylor. EJK Foundation associate executive director, Diana Vozza, and director of media strategy, Jocelyn McCarthy, coordinated the award presentation program.



Anne Wynter

On winning the Writer Award for *Nell Plants a Tree* (illustrated by Daniel Miyares), **Anne Wynter** said, "Thank you to the committee for consistently celebrating diversity and recognizing how vital it is for children to see themselves in—not just a single book—but in many books! I'm so grateful to be a part of Ezra Jack Keats' extraordinary and enduring legacy."

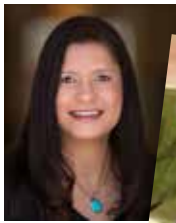




On winning the Illustrator Award for *The Only Way to Make Bread* (written by Cristina Quintero), **Sarah Gonzales** said, “The EJK Award illuminates human uniqueness and togetherness, the traits of Keats’ work that inspire me. In my resilient immigrant family, we were strong, as individuals and as a group. With Cristina’s beautiful words, I hoped to represent the strength of sharing as a community, the warmth of childhood memories, and the happiness of baking bread.”



*Sarah Gonzales*



*Kim Rogers*



Two of our 2024 Honors were also in attendance to receive their awards. Writer Honor **Kim Rogers** received her award for *Just Like Grandma* (illustrated by Julie Flett), and Illustrator Honor **Beatriz Gutierrez Hernandez** received her award for *Benito Juárez Fights for Justice*, which she also wrote.



*Beatriz Gutierrez Hernandez*



*Helena Ku Rhee*

Two additional Honors were unable to attend but sent in heartfelt video acceptance speeches. **Helena Ku Rhee** received a Writer Honor for *Sora’s Seashells* (illustrated by Stella Lim), and **Fran Alvarez** received an Illustrator Honor for *Dancing Hands* (written by Joanna Que and Charina Marquez).



*Fran Alvarez*



## New EJK Events in 2024

In addition to a lunchtime award ceremony followed by an autographing session, this year, the Kaigler Festival included another EJK event—a panel discussion with the winners and honors in attendance, as well as a viewing of the EJK documentary, *Tell Me Another Story*, in the Joe Paul Student Theater.

The panel was a delight, with winners and honors sharing more about their artistic processes, their inspiration, and what brings them the most joy in their work. EJK Committee Chair Shannan Hicks led the discussion, with Deborah Pope and Karlie Herndon adding their thoughts. Winners’ and honors’ family members even joined in with comments from the audience, and attendees had a chance to ask questions. We plan to continue this event in years to come!





THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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de Grummond Children's Literature Collection  
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## Upcoming Events and Deadlines

### 2024

**SEPTEMBER 14:** Mississippi Book Festival, Jackson, Miss. Free to the public. Visit [msbookfestival.com](https://msbookfestival.com) for more information and to plan your visit. Don't miss the Ezra Jack Keats Panel!

**SEPTEMBER 30:** Deadline to apply for the Syd Hoff Research Fellowship and the Ezra Jack Keats/Janina Domanska Research Fellowship. See [degrummond.org](https://degrummond.org) for details.

### 2025

**FEBRUARY 3:** Deadline to apply for the Richard Peck Scholarship to attend the Fay B. Kaigler Children's Book Festival. Visit [degrummond.org](https://degrummond.org) to learn more.

**APRIL 9-11:** Fay B. Kaigler Children's Book Festival. Visit [usm.edu/childrens-book-festival](https://usm.edu/childrens-book-festival) to learn more.

