

Katahdin Lifetime Achievement Award Statement

Several months ago, I got a phone call from Jill Hooper informing me that I had been selected to receive the Katahdin Award for lifetime achievement. I was thrilled! She told me that I could share the news with my wife Karen but no one else. Karen was excited about the news when I told her. My teenage son happened to overhear our celebration. "You can't tell anyone yet." I informed him. "Don't worry", he replied in a deadpan voice, "Lifetime achievement just means they think you're about done."

I want to thank the members of the Katahdin Award committee for their time and consideration. Though I am sure they meant no such thing, I want to assure them that I am definitely not done yet!

I could never have imagined at the time of that phone call that we would be where we are at today - in the midst of a world pandemic. My local library, like many of yours, is closed and suddenly I am looking for other alternatives to checking out books. I am brought to an abrupt reminder that books mean A LOT to me.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for the incredible gift you have given to so many, myself included. Reading has changed my life fundamentally and forever.

Thanks also to all the fantastic authors whose work I have been privileged to illustrate. Many thanks to the editors, art directors, production staff, printers, marketing staff and booksellers who are working to bring books by truck and plane and boat and train and "hiffer-back too" into the hands of children everywhere; so that in all this uncertainty and stress, they can grip something familiar and steady and safe and hopeful and maybe even funny. So I congratulate all of you on your own lifetime achievements of bringing books into the hands of children.

Special thanks to Sherry Hodges who gave me the tools of art and to Glen Edwards who gave me the vision to see children's books as a way. To Susan Pearson, my first editor, who said those fairy tale words "I want to be your publisher." Thanks to my Mom and Dad who read tales to me by firelight in an old ramshackle house in those bone-cracking, cold French winters. Thanks to my children who have provided me with countless hours of reading and reliving my own childhood. Lastly, thanks to Karen who somehow was ok with all this. She has been my agent, manager, reality check, and very best friend.

I look forward to many more years of bringing books to life!

Kindest wishes and stay well
Kevin Hawkes
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