

Novelist-Professor Max McCoy Appointed Executive Director Of Western Writers of America

Spur Award-winning author will also serve as secretary-treasurer for literary organization that has more than 700 members worldwide

CENTRAL, UTAH, UNITED STATES, June 6, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Max McCoy, a longtime member of [Western Writers of America](#) and three-time winner of the organization's Spur Awards, has been appointed WWA executive director.

McCoy replaces Rachelle "Rocky" Gibbons, who is stepping down after WWA's annual convention, scheduled for June 21-24 in Rapid City, South Dakota, but will likely assist McCoy during a transitional period for one or two months.

"We're excited to have Max McCoy on board," WWA President Melody Groves said. "Max brings to the office a high level of management and organizational experience. His input will no doubt be invaluable."

For the past 17 years, McCoy taught journalism at Emporia (Kansas) State University, where he was a tenured professor. For several years he was director of the Center for Great Plains Studies and coordinated the Tallgrass Writing Workshop. His mentor in WWA was the late Don Coldsmith, a fellow Kansan and past WWA president.

"America has given the world a unique genre, the Western, which is reinvented by each new generation of writers," McCoy said, "and it continually improves our understanding of all things West and ourselves. We have gathered histories and poetry and song and made films that are centered not only on an aesthetic built on tradition – honesty, curiosity and daring – but also on an evolution of perspectives that has come from study, mindfulness and respect.

"It is my desire to serve the membership of WWA and to respect and encourage the breadth and diversity of voices that continue to shape the story of the American West."

WWA was founded in the early 1950s by writers Harry Sinclair Drago (1888-1979), Norman A. Fox (1911-1960), D.B. Newton (1916-2013), Nelson C. Nye (1907-1997), Wayne D. Overholser (1906-1996) and Thomas Thompson (1933-1982) to promote and honor literature and writers of the American West.

The organization has grown from writers of traditional Western fiction to writers across the world, including bestselling novelists C.J. Box, Sandra Dallas, Anne Hillerman, Craig Johnson, David Morrell and the husband-wife team of W. Michael and Kathleen O'Neal Gear; award-winning nonfiction authors Tom Clavin, Jeff Guinn, Paul Andrew Hutton, W.K. Stratton and Tom Zoellner; agents, editors, poets, publishers, screenwriters and songwriters.

In addition to Gibbons, who was appointed executive director in June 2022 by WWA's board of directors, former executive directors are James A. Crutchfield (2004-2006), Paul Andrew Hutton (2006-2011) and Candy Moulton (2011-2022).

McCoy's books include *The Sixth Rider*, which was published by Doubleday and won a Spur for best first novel; the novelization of Steven Spielberg's epic miniseries *Into the West*; four original Indiana Jones adventures licensed by Lucasfilm and published by Bantam; and the nonfiction book *Elevations: A Personal Exploration of the Arkansas River*, which won a National Outdoor Book Award in history/biography. His most recent title is *American Odyssey*, a novel of the fur trade published by Kensington Books.

As a journalist, McCoy was an award-winning investigative writer for the Joplin (Missouri) Globe and a reporter at the Pittsburg (Kansas) Morning Sun. He is also a newspaper and magazine writer and a research scholar specializing in the life and work of Mark Twain and his biographer, Albert Bigelow Paine.

McCoy is a frequent speaker at history and writing conferences. He has a master's degree in English from Emporia State and a bachelor's in communication from Pittsburg State University.

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