

St. Paul Author Honored as Midwest Book Awards Finalist for 'It's About Time' (Millions of Copies Sold for Dad)

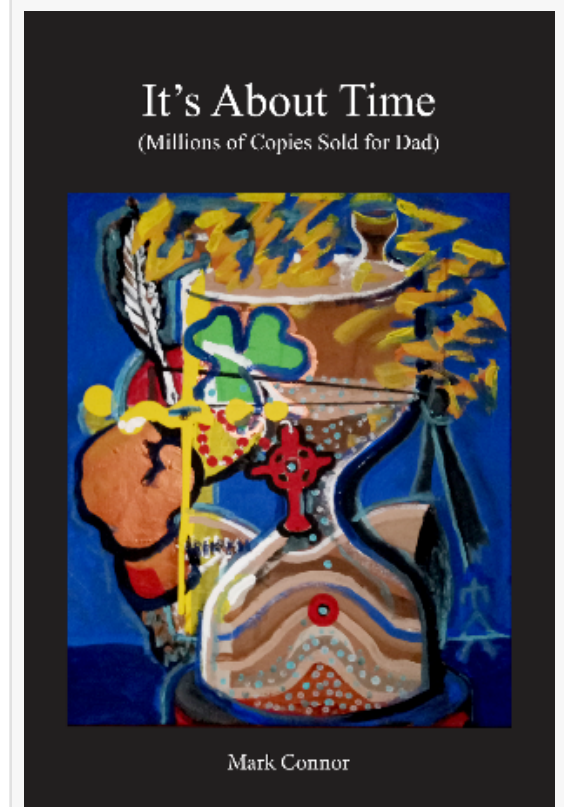
A Former Minnesota Amateur boxing champions autobiography reads like a novel wrapped around a package of poems

ST PAUL, MN, UNITED STATES, May 13, 2025

/EINPresswire.com/ -- Former Minnesota amateur boxing champion and author Mark Connor, from Saint Paul, is a finalist in the Religion/Philosophy category of the 35th annual Midwest [Book Awards](#) for his debut book, "It's About Time (Millions of Copies Sold for Dad)."

Connemara Patch Press

In this saga wrapped around a package of poems, guarded by angels, Connor guides readers from memory to memory with a style that reads like a novel, sharing the values of love, family and life. Mourning his father's death in 2019, he addresses the fleeting gift of life and the desperate fight to savor it, sharing the experience of growing up Catholic in Saint Paul, his pursuit of boxing and writing, and his embrace of Irish heritage that uniquely informs the identity of Minnesota's capital city.



Book Cover

Grateful for simple fatherly guidance, he grieves that his father never saw him accomplish his dreams – like marriage, family, higher achievement in boxing, and publishing his first book – before they slipped through his fingers into the whipping winds of time. Still, the Catholic faith modeled by his father (and nurtured by his mother) compels him forward in the virtue of hope, tempered and forged through friendship with traditional Lakota Native American Indians, who welcome and employ him at Ain Dah Yung (Our Home Center) for homeless and at-risk youth in Saint Paul, encouraging him as he honors their religious tradition while further embracing his own.

"Seeing him as I led Mom in prayer while he died," Connor has said, "I just kept thinking, 'I need more time. He never saw me become world champion, or get married and have kids, and he'll never see me publish a book.'" Later that day, Connor wrote the first sentence of the book he'd

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Mark Connor author

finally sit and write to completion in March 2021: “I came up with the title of this book on September 30, 2019, the day my father died.”

Connor reminisces poignant events throughout his life and the lessons learned and encouragement received from his father, Robert J. Connor, a combat wounded Vietnam Veteran medically discharged as a 1st Lieutenant from the

U.S. Army, who spent his entire adult life helping veterans with the DAV, VFW and Military Order of the Purple Heart. Connor also honors his father’s loving partnership with his mother, Nanette J. Connor, a schoolteacher who eventually became a lawyer. From celebrating his Upper Midwest Golden Gloves lightweight championship to consoling him in his failure to win the Pan Am Games trials at the U.S. Olympic Training Center, Connor recalls unwavering fatherly dedication in his victories and his defeats. “I am a combination of them,” Connor writes in Chapter IV, “a one flesh union, an expression of their love.” P 45

While financially struggling as a boxing trainer and writer, Connor recalls in chapter III how his father insisted they meet weekly to maintain communication in his adult life, having breakfast together Monday mornings after Connor leaves his overnight job at Ain Dah Yung, where he had to comfort a scared, sleepless five-year-old boy.

“Anyway, he picked me up Monday morning after the weekend I’d worked when I had to comfort that five-year-old boy alone at the shelter. He said ‘Hi,’ and we sat for a moment as I told him about it, and I just couldn’t help it – I started to cry a little. It was good to be with my dad. I always knew who he was and that he was in my life and I was always his son. I never had any confusion about who I was or to whose family I belonged.” p35-36

Recognizing and honoring the value of fatherhood and the blessing of marriage to stabilize childhood development, Connor pays homage to the universality of these values and traditions, especially in Lakota and other indigenous American nations, reaching the point at which he sees the truth, goodness, and beauty in the religious faith of America’s first people, while accepted and encouraged by them in re-embracing the beauty, goodness and truth in his own.

The Midwest Book Awards are presented by the Midwest Independent Publishers Association, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting independent publishers in the Midwest. The awards are open to all books published in the Midwest in the previous year. MiPA founders organized the first Midwest Book Awards in 1989, and today the Midwest Book Awards is one of the longest-running literary recognition programs in the country. Judges for the prestigious literary program are booksellers, university staff, and librarians who are subject matter experts and collectively represent each of MiPA's twelve states.

This year's awards will honor excellence across 32 categories, showcasing the exceptional quality

and diverse voices that define our region's independent publishing community. View all finalists at www.mipa.org. The June 28, 2025, event is open to the public. Advance registration is required. Find out more at www.mipa.org/bookawards.

About the Author:

Mark Connor is a literary pugilist from Saint Paul, Minnesota. A lifelong boxer and boxing trainer, he runs a service called, Fighting Chance/Boxing for Life. His writing about Boxing, as well as his training services, can be found at <https://boxersandwritersmagazine.com/>. He writes fiction, poetry, and journalism. He is the 2022 Boxing inductee to the Mancini's St. Paul Sports Hall of Fame. He attended the University of St. Thomas in Saint Paul, Regis University in Denver, Colorado, and graduated with a BA in English from the University of Minnesota. He has written and published many articles about Boxing, Irish culture, and people and events related to Irish freedom. He has also published local news and features on business, politics, and current affairs in Minnesota and the U.S. His Substack newsletter, Irish, Catholic, Punchdrunk in Saint Paul, can be found at <https://markconnoricpunchdrunk.substack.com/>.

Attention Editors and Show Producers:

Author Mark Connor is available to be scheduled for interviews, live or taped. To coordinate contact publicist Robb Leer at 612.701.0608 or robbl@leercommunication.com.

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