



Jo Osborne Award for Humor in Children's Literature

Ohio Library Foundation, 35 E. Gay Street, Ste 305, Columbus, Ohio 43215-3138

May 26, 2000

Rosemary Wells

Dear Ms. Wells:

I am very happy to announce that you are the winner of the Jo Osborne Award for Humor in Children's Literature for 2001. The award was established five years ago to honor the memory of Jo Osborne, a well-loved children's librarian who touched the lives of thousands of children with her own humor and that of authors and illustrators like you.

Ms. Osborne's friends and family wanted to carry on the spirit of her life's work by recognizing the importance of a genre in children's literature that has been undervalued. Children, of course, often ask for funny books, enjoy them and even learn from them. With this award, we expect more adults to take humor seriously!

A local committee of librarians, teachers, and academicians conferred and produced a list of five nominees for a national jury that ultimately decided the winner. This year's jury is comprised of Roger Sutton, Editor of Horn Book, Julie Cummins, Head of Children's Services at New York Public Library, and Nancy Johnson, Associate Professor of Children's Literature at Western Washington University. The jury was impressed with your ability to mix heart and humor in both narrative and illustrations.

To emphasize the importance of humor across the professions, the award is presented at the Ohio State University Children's Literature Conference each year, where the winner is invited to be an honored guest and speaker. Janet Hickman, professor and one of the conference coordinators, will be contacting you soon with an invitation to the conference January 25-27, 2001, and with information about an honorarium that would be separate from the Osborne Award of \$500.

We hope that you will be able to accept this award in person, so that your style of humor will be represented and promoted authentically. Mark Twain once said that the classics are something that people praise, but don't read. Humorous books have the opposite problem—the are read, but not praised enough. As a recipient of this award, you will be instrumental in turning that attitude around. You are in great company; the previous winners in this relatively new award are: Patricia Polacco, Sid Fleischman, Steven Kellogg, John Scieszka, and William Steig.

Jo Osborne approached life with two goals in mind: to work hard and have fun. I would like to thank you and congratulate you for all your hard work that has enabled so many people to smile, chortle, and have fun while reading.

Best Regards and Grins,

Rachel Alexander

Chairperson,

Jo Osborne Award for Humor in Children's Literature Committee