Charlotte S. Huck was a former elementary school teacher who joined the faculty of education at The Ohio State University in 1955. She established the first course in children’s literature at the university and went on to establish master’s and doctoral programs in children’s literature with a wide range of special topics. Many of her students became leaders in the field. In 1961, she published the first edition of *Children’s Literature in Education* with her colleague, Doris Kuhn. The book is now in its 10th edition.

Over the course of her career, Huck received numerous awards and honors, including membership in the Reading Hall of Fame. She served as President of NCTE and developed an annual children’s literature conference at Ohio State. Huck believed that good literature should be at the heart and center of the elementary school curriculum. She was convinced that if children found joy in books, they would want to learn to read and then read avidly. One of her goals was that children become lifelong readers. The Charlotte Huck Award for Outstanding Fiction for Children was established to honor her contribution to children and teachers and to further the belief that literature has the potential to transform children’s lives.

**Charlotte Huck Winner**

*Stella by Starlight*

Written by Sharon Draper


Ten-year-old Stella Mills is the embodiment of #blackgirlmagic, a hashtag for the purpose of celebrating, inspiring, and motivating Black women and girls. After all, Stella is brilliant, resourceful, and full of optimism for the future,
even though she lives in the segregated town of
Bumblebee, North Carolina. It is 1932 and readers
first meet Stella after she and her brother Jojo
witness an unnerving event on the outskirts of
their small town, one that signals the return of the
Ku Klux Klan. As the news of the cross-burning
spreads among Stella’s neighbors and hushed
conversations turn into meetings, Stella’s family
and fellow community members come to realize
their lives will never be the same. Narrated through
Stella’s perspective, readers quickly learn how
to navigate each pressing issue and potentially
dangerous situation alongside Stella and her family
and friends. Author Sharon Draper provides a
glimpse into the lives of Black America during the
Great Depression in the South. Her use of vivid
language includes colloquialisms of that time and
adds warmth and vitality to the characters. As a
result, readers have a front-row seat as Stella and
her neighbors rely on each other to cope with the
uncertainty of life in Bumblebee. (DPD and DD)

Honor Books

Little Tree
Written and illustrated by Loren Long

Change is hard, and sometimes we want things to
stay just the way they are. But when we are open
to changing and to letting go, great things happen.
In this story, Loren Long introduces us to Little
Tree, a small tree in a forest filled with a variety
of trees and animals. Little Tree likes things the way
they are. When autumn comes, Little Tree doesn’t
want to let go of his leaves—even when all of the
other trees do. So he holds on, season after season,
afraid to let go of his leaves. But eventually,
Little Tree is brave and lets go of his leaves, and
he grows and grows. The combination of simple
text and stunning illustrations draws readers
into Little Tree’s internal struggle—a struggle
that both young children and adults will be able
to understand. This story of change, patience,
and acceptance will resonate with many young
readers. (SR)

New Shoes
Written by Susan Lynn Meyer
Illustrated by Eric Velasquez

“Can’t colored folks try on new shoes?” Ella Mae
asked her mother this question after she experienced
the dehumanizing process of purchasing shoes from
the local shoe store. Through poignant conversations
and vibrant illustrations, Meyer and Velasquez take
the reader on a difficult journey back to the time
of Jim Crow. Meyer introduces the reader to two
young African American girls who lean on each
other to cope with the psychological and economic
realities of discrimination. Meyer’s vivid language
coupled with Velasquez’s illustrations in oils capture
the innocence, discontent, and creativity of the two
cousins as they decide to take action. Meyer creates
two strong heroines for the reader to cheer as they
do something to address one of the inequities that
African Americans experience each day in their
community. Velasquez’s attention to detail and use
of pastels creates warmth and depth on each page.
It allows the reader to imagine the urgency, pride,
and sense of purpose Ella Mae and Charlotte have
in what they are doing for themselves and for their
friends and families. (DPD)
difficulties of holding on to dreams in the face of tremendous obstacles. Readers will develop true feelings of compassion for Ari and her paper things. (AZ)

Paper Things
Written by Jennifer Richard Jacobson

Before her death four years earlier, Ari and Gage’s mother pleaded that the siblings stay together always. And they do, living with Jena (a family friend) until Ari is asked to choose between living with her guardian or her big brother. Ari chooses to follow Gage. In the months that follow this life-changing decision, the two navigate the challenges of finding a stable place to call home. For Ari, the stress of their sudden homelessness and staying on top of her school assignments soon becomes more difficult than she could have imagined. The shame of occasional nights in shelters and soup kitchens challenges her friendships as well. It is Ari’s imaginative play with her “Paper Things,” a beloved pretend family made of cut-out magazine ads, that gives her the stability she craves and the hope to attend Carter, a middle school for gifted students. A fresh take and exploration of homelessness among children, Jacobson’s writing produces an honest and up-close look into the

Strictly No Elephants
Written by Lisa Mantchev
Illustrated by Taeun Yoo

Have you ever felt like you never quite fit in? The children in this picturebook certainly have. Instead of conforming to mainstream norms by having traditional pets like dogs and cats in their neighborhood of brownstone houses, the children’s animal companions include a miniature elephant, a skunk, and other real and fanciful species that one might see in a zoo. Unfortunately, such animals are not permitted at the local “Pet Club” meeting at house #17, which requires the children to decide: Do they abandon their nontraditional
pets or do they demonstrate their solidarity with them? Choosing the latter, the children direct their energies toward an inclusive solution that makes for a satisfying ending to this story. Young readers will want to pour over the illustrations, rendered in Photoshop from linoleum block prints and colored pencil, that feature a diverse cast of human and non-human characters. Primary grade teachers and librarians will want to make this book a staple in their collection of titles for initiating conversations about friendship, pluralism, and individuality in cosmopolitan communities. (DD)

**Tiger Boy**
Written by Mitali Perkins
Illustrated by Jamie Hogan

“One of the new tiger cubs has escaped!” (p. 8). In Neel’s village, adjacent to a tiger reserve in the Sunderbans of India, a tiger cub has escaped and is presumed to be hiding in the village. Mr. Gupta, a greedy, corrupt businessman, plans to find the cub and sell its hide on the black market. Neel’s knowledge about the island’s terrain leads him to abandon his studies in order to search for the cub. His decision leads to hard choices and sacrifices regarding his education. Mitali Perkins’s prolific descriptions of the Sunderbans generate strong imagery. Jamie Hogan’s rich charcoal illustrations provide a glimpse into lives of the Bengali people. Themes related to gender roles, resilience, the importance of education, and integrity are sure to provoke discussion. (SR)

**Recommended Books**

**George**
Written by Alex Gino

Meet George: fourth grader, messy hair, red backpack, checkers expert. Secretly, however, George knows that she is a girl. She hides a tote bag full of teen girl magazines in her closet. On the playground, she wishes she could join girls from her class jumping rope. She dreads having to use the boys’ bathroom at school. George decides that the perfect way to announce to everyone that she is a girl is to be Charlotte in the class play of *Charlotte’s Web*. When she auditions for the
part of Charlotte, her narrow-minded teacher has other plans. Author Alex Gino creates a cast of characters who provide insight into the struggles of a young girl and her family as they come to terms with her identity. Gino delves into the experiences of a transgender child with a sense of openness and sensitivity. George is “radiant” and “terrific” (p. 70). (JH)

Circus Mirandus  
Written by Cassie Beasley  

“Just because a magic is small doesn’t mean it is unimportant . . . Even the smallest magics can grow” (p. 120). Cassie Beasley’s debut novel is a book full of hope, mystery, and magic. It is the story of a young boy named Micah Tuttle who has faith in his grandfather’s trusted friend, the Lightbender, to work a miracle. Beasley has created a world full of complex characters that are passionate about their beliefs and show great strength and resolve in difficult times. Micah’s gentle spirit and willingness to believe in the impossible allow him to cultivate an unexpected friendship and experience a once-in-a-lifetime adventure. It is his capacity to believe in small magic that makes the impossible an option and takes the reader on a remarkable journey that privileges love and imagination. (DPD)

Crenshaw  
Written by Katherine Applegate  

Imaginary friends show up just when you need them. For Jackson, that time was at the end of first grade. Jackson’s dad was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and quit his construction job due to health-related issues. As a result, Jackson and his family were evicted from their house and forced to live in their minivan. At this desperate time in his life, Crenshaw, the tall cat on a
skateboard who wears a San Francisco Giants ball cap, appears. From that point forward, Crenshaw is a constant companion to Jackson that only he can see. In Applegate’s tender story of a family living in poverty, Crenshaw softens the out-of-control feeling for Jackson. Homelessness through the eyes of a child disrupts stereotypes and creates compassion, caring, and a sense of community. (JH)

Francine Poulet Meets the Ghost Raccoon: Tales from Deckawoo Drive
Written by Kate DiCamillo
Illustrated by Chris Van Dusen

Fans of Mercy Watson will be ready for this new series featuring other characters from Deckawoo Drive. In this book, readers are reintroduced to Francine Poulet, a skilled, third-generation, award-winning animal control officer. Her skills have never been challenged until she faces a shimmering, roof-dwelling, screaming ghost raccoon. This clever adversary diminishes Francine’s confidence, leading her to vacate her prized position of animal control officer. The book is written with both humor and depth, and readers will delight in a guest appearance from Mercy herself. Kate DiCamillo charms her readers with a tale of persistence, resilience, and overcoming fears. (FS)

Last Stop on Market Street
Written by Matt de la Peña
Illustrated by Christian Robinson

Inspired by de la Peña’s own childhood, this sensitive picturebook invites readers to consider the importance of volunteering and recognizing community assets over material wealth. As usual, young C. J. and his Nana followed their church service with a bus ride toward Market Street. On this day, C. J. “stared out the window feeling sorry for himself,” pining for the things other people had. Meanwhile, Nana highlighted the beautiful experiences that were not only immediately accessible to C. J., but were often overlooked. By the time they exited, C. J. was glad to have made

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the journey. Complemented by color-saturated illustrations reminiscent of Ezra Jack Keats, readers of all ages are likely to reflect on what’s most important in their lives, too. (DD)

Sidewalk Flowers
Written by JonArno Lawson
Illustrated by Sydney Smith

A young girl collects “sidewalk flowers” on the long walk home from the grocery store through the lively streets of the city in this wordless picturebook. Readers will step into the urban landscape as she does and will stop to note the colorful blooms somehow thriving in between the cracks of concrete sidewalks, the arid patches of grass, and the wooden slats of a construction site. As her father busies himself with a conversation on his cellphone and the responsibility of getting home quickly, the young girl collects her bouquet and then thoughtfully gives her flowers away to the most unexpected of creatures. Sweetly illustrated, this story inspires thinking, feelings of compassion, and the imagination needed to see the blooming possibilities of each day. (AZ)

“When we travel, I count what we see.” Told entirely through a young girl’s perspective, Two White Rabbits invites readers to experience the desert borderland and imagine what it is like to be a young immigrant with her father traveling to find a new home. At times, the young girl counts soldiers guarding the border; at other times, she
counts the stars and clouds zooming above. Her counting and her wondering about their final destination continue, whether they are jumping trains and crossing the river on a wooden raft or stopping for a few days so her father can fund their journey. What appears to be a simple picturebook offers readers a rich and profound experience of determination and resilience. (AZ)

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2016 NCTE Children’s Book Awards

The Charlotte Huck Award for Outstanding Fiction for Children and the Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction for Children awards will be presented at the Children’s Book Awards Luncheon during the NCTE Annual Convention in Atlanta, Georgia. Authors Don Brown and Sharon M. Draper will be the featured speakers and the 2017 Children’s Book Awards will be announced.

Learn more about the Orbis Pictus Award at http://www.ncte.org/awards/orbispictus and the Charlotte Huck Award at http://www.ncte.org/awards/charlotte-huck.