

Contemporary Authors

volume 156

Contemporary Authors®

A Bio-Bibliographical Guide to
Current Writers in Fiction, General Nonfiction,
Poetry, Journalism, Drama, Motion Pictures,
Television, and Other Fields

TERRIE M. ROONEY,
Editor



volume 156



DETROIT • NEW YORK • TORONTO • LONDON

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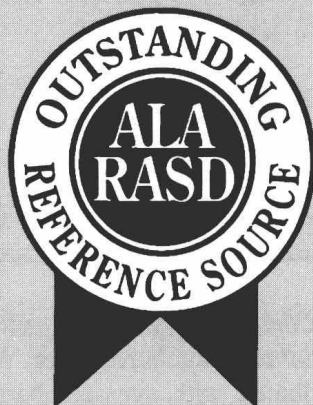
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Contemporary Authors
was named an
"Outstanding
Reference Source," by
the American Library
Association Reference
and Adult Services
Division after its 1962
inception.

In 1985 it was listed by
the same organization
as one of the
twenty-five most
distinguished reference
titles published in the
past twenty-five years.

Preface

Contemporary Authors (CA) provides information on approximately 100,000 writers in a wide range of media, including:

- Current writers of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama whose works have been issued by commercial publishers, risk publishers, or university presses (authors whose books have been published only by known vanity or author-subsidized firms are ordinarily not included)
- Prominent print and broadcast journalists, editors, photojournalists, syndicated cartoonists, graphic novelists, screenwriters, television scriptwriters, and other media people
- Authors who write in languages other than English, provided their works have been published in the United States or translated into English
- Literary greats of the early twentieth century whose works are popular in today's high school and college curriculums and continue to elicit critical attention

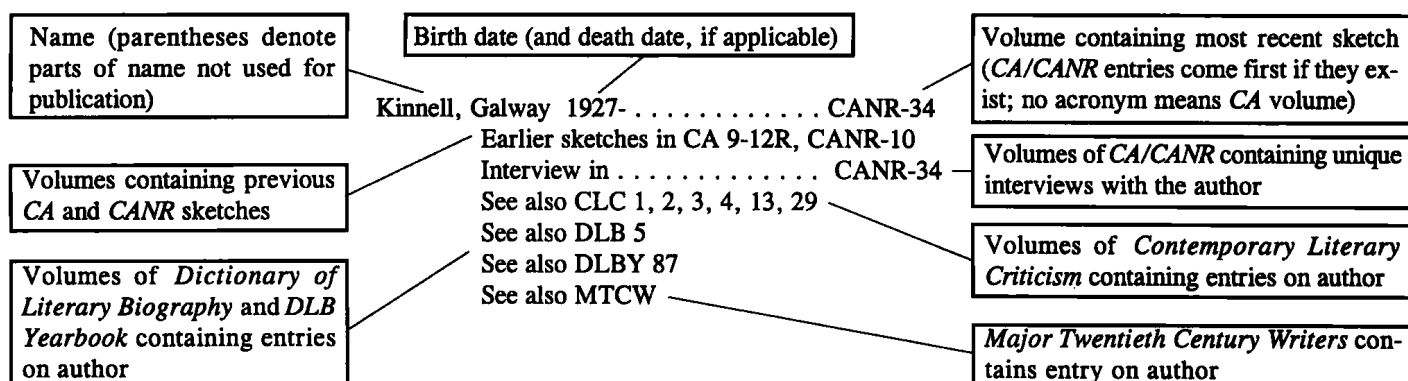
A CA listing entails no charge or obligation. Authors are included on the basis of the above criteria and their interest to CA users. Sources of potential listees include trade periodicals, publishers' catalogs, librarians, and other users.

How to Get the Most out of CA: Use the Index

The key to locating an author's most recent entry is the CA cumulative index, which is published separately and distributed with even-numbered original volumes and odd-numbered revision volumes. It provides access to *all* entries in CA and *Contemporary Authors New Revision Series* (CANR). Always consult the latest index to find an author's most recent entry.

For the convenience of users, the CA cumulative index also includes references to all entries in these Gale literary series: *Authors and Artists for Young Adults*, *Authors in the News*, *Bestsellers*, *Black Literature Criticism*, *Black Writers*, *Children's Literature Review*, *Concise Dictionary of American Literary Biography*, *Concise Dictionary of British Literary Biography*, *Contemporary Authors Autobiography Series*, *Contemporary Authors Bibliographical Series*, *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, *Dictionary of Literary Biography Documentary Series*, *Dictionary of Literary Biography Yearbook*, *DIScovering Authors*, *DIScovering Authors: British*, *DIScovering Authors: Canadian*, *DIScovering Authors: Modules* (including modules for Dramatists, Most-Studied Authors, Multicultural Authors, Novelists, Poets, and Popular/Genre Authors), *Drama Criticism*, *Hispanic Literature Criticism*, *Hispanic Writers*, *Junior DIScovering Authors*, *Major Authors and Illustrators for Children and Young Adults*, *Major 20th-Century Writers*, *Native North American Literature*, *Poetry Criticism*, *Short Story Criticism*, *Something about the Author*, *Something about the Author Autobiography Series*, *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*, *World Literature Criticism*, and *Yesterday's Authors of Books for Children*.

A Sample Index Entry:



How Are Entries Compiled?

The editors make every effort to secure new information directly from the authors; listees' responses to our questionnaires and query letters provide most of the information featured in *CA*. For deceased writers, or those who fail to reply to requests for data, we consult other reliable biographical sources, such as those indexed in Gale's *Biography and Genealogy Master Index*, and bibliographical sources, including *National Union Catalog*, *LC MARC*, and *British National Bibliography*. Further details come from published interviews, feature stories, and book reviews, as well as information supplied by the authors' publishers and agents.

An asterisk () at the end of a sketch indicates that the listing has been compiled from secondary sources believed to be reliable but has not been personally verified for this edition by the author sketched.*

What Kinds of Information Does an Entry Provide?

Sketches in *CA* contain the following biographical and bibliographical information:

- **Entry heading:** the most complete form of author's name, plus any pseudonyms or name variations used for writing
- **Personal information:** author's date and place of birth, family data, ethnicity, educational background, political and religious affiliations, and hobbies and leisure interests
- **Addresses:** author's home, office, or agent's addresses, plus e-mail and fax numbers, as available
- **Career summary:** name of employer, position, and dates held for each career post; resume of other vocational achievements; military service
- **Membership information:** professional, civic, and other association memberships and any official posts held
- **Awards and honors:** military and civic citations, major prizes and nominations, fellowships, grants, and honorary degrees
- **Writings:** a comprehensive, chronological list of titles, publishers, dates of original publication and revised editions, and production information for plays, television scripts, and screenplays
- **Adaptations:** a list of films, plays, and other media which have been adapted from the author's work
- **Work in progress:** current or planned projects, with dates of completion and/or publication, and expected publisher, when known
- **Sidelights:** a biographical portrait of the author's development; information about the critical reception of the author's works; revealing comments, often by the author, on personal interests, aspirations, motivations, and thoughts on writing
- **Biographical and critical sources:** a list of books and periodicals in which additional information on an author's life and/or writings appears

Obituary Notices in *CA* provide date and place of birth as well as death information about authors whose full-length sketches appeared in the series before their deaths. These entries also summarize the authors' careers and writings and list other sources of biographical and death information.

Related Titles in the CA Series

Contemporary Authors Autobiography Series complements *CA* original and revised volumes with specially commissioned autobiographical essays by important current authors, illustrated with personal photographs they provide. Common topics include their motivations for writing, the people and experiences that shaped their careers, the rewards they derive from their work, and their impressions of the current literary scene.

Contemporary Authors Bibliographical Series surveys writings by and about important American authors since World War II. Each volume concentrates on a specific genre and features approximately ten writers; entries list works written by and about the author and contain a bibliographical essay discussing the merits and deficiencies of major critical and scholarly studies in detail.

Available in Electronic Formats

CD-ROM. Full-text bio-bibliographic entries from the entire *CA* series, covering approximately 100,000 writers, are available on CD-ROM through lease and purchase plans. The disc combines entries from the *CA*, *CANR*, and *Contemporary Authors Permanent Series (CAP)* print series to provide the most recent author listings. The *CA CD-ROM* is searchable by name, title, subject/genre, nationality/ethnicity, and personal data, as well as by using Boolean logic. The disc is updated every six months. For more information, call 1-800-877-GALE.

Contemporary Authors is soon to be available on CD-ROM from SilverPlatter Information, Inc.

Online. The *Contemporary Authors* database is made available online to libraries and their patrons through online public access catalog (OPAC) vendors. Currently, *CA* is offered through Ameritech Library Services' Vista Online (formerly Dynix).

GaleNet. *CA* is available on a subscription basis through GaleNet, an online information resource that features an easy-to-use end-user interface, the powerful search capabilities of the BRS/Search retrieval software, and ease of access through the World-Wide Web. For more information, call 1-800-877-GALE.

Magnetic Tape. *CA* is available for licensing on magnetic tape in a fielded format. Either the complete database or a custom selection of entries may be ordered. The database is available for internal data processing and nonpublishing purposes only. For more information, call 1-800-877-GALE.

Suggestions Are Welcome

The editors welcome comments and suggestions from users on any aspects of the *CA* series. If readers would like to recommend authors for inclusion in future volumes of the series, they are cordially invited to write: The Editors, *Contemporary Authors*, 835 Penobscot Bldg., 645 Griswold St., Detroit, MI 48226-4094; call toll-free at 1-800-347-GALE; or fax at 1-313-961-6599.

CA Numbering System and Volume Update Chart

Occasionally questions arise about the *CA* numbering system and which volumes, if any, can be discarded. Despite numbers like "29-32R," "97-100" and "156," the entire *CA* print series consists of only 140 physical volumes with the publication of *CA* Volume 156. The following charts note changes in the numbering system and cover design, and indicate which volumes are essential for the most complete, up-to-date coverage.

CA First Revision

- 1-4R through 41-44R (11 books)
Cover: Brown with black and gold trim.
There will be no further First Revision volumes because revised entries are now being handled exclusively through the more efficient *New Revision Series* mentioned below.

CA Original Volumes

- 45-48 through 97-100 (14 books)
Cover: Brown with black and gold trim.
- 101 through 156 (56 books)
Cover: Blue and black with orange bands.
The same as previous *CA* original volumes but with a new, simplified numbering system and new cover design.

CA Permanent Series

- CAP-1 and CAP-2 (2 books)
Cover: Brown with red and gold trim.
There will be no further *Permanent Series* volumes because revised entries are now being handled exclusively through the more efficient *New Revision Series* mentioned below.

CA New Revision Series

- CANR-1 through CANR-57 (57 books)
Cover: Blue and black with green bands.
Includes only sketches requiring significant changes; sketches are taken from any previously published *CA*, *CAP*, or *CANR* volume.

If You Have:

You May Discard:

CA First Revision Volumes 1-4R through 41-44R and CA Permanent Series Volumes 1 and 2	CA Original Volumes 1, 2, 3, 4 Volumes 5-6 through 41-44
CA Original Volumes 45-48 through 97-100 and 101 through 156	NONE: These volumes will not be superseded by corresponding revised volumes. Individual entries from these and all other volumes appearing in the left column of this chart may be revised and included in the various volumes of the <i>New Revision Series</i> .
CA New Revision Series Volumes CANR-1 through CANR-57	NONE: The <i>New Revision Series</i> does not replace any single volume of <i>CA</i> . Instead, volumes of <i>CANR</i> include entries from many previous <i>CA</i> series volumes. All <i>New Revision Series</i> volumes must be retained for full coverage.

A Sampling of Authors and Media People Featured in This Volume

Peter H. Alson

Going from Harvard Square to a Brooklyn betting parlor to jail to the bestseller lists, Alson chronicles his life as a student, bookmaker, and author in *Confessions of an Ivy League Bookie*.

Laurie Anderson

With groundbreaking works such as *United States I-IV* and *Home of the Brave*, renowned performance and recording artist Anderson is in the vanguard of multimedia art and letters.

Marjorie Faith Barnard

Focusing on her home country Australia, Barnard's works include *Lachlan Macquarie* and *Miles Franklin*, and several collaborations with Flora Sydney Patricia Eldershaw under the joint pseudonym M. Barnard Eldershaw.

Nick Castle

Child actor turned workhorse director, Hollywood veteran Castle has written and directed an array of movies, including *The Boy Who Could Fly*, *Dennis the Menace*, *The Last Starfighter*, *Escape from New York*, and *Tap*.

Gerard Depardieu

Energetic French film actor, director, and producer, Depardieu has amassed more than a dozen acting awards, including Cannes Film Festival, best male actor for *Cyrano de Bergerac*, and the Golden Globe Award for *Green Card*.

(Minnie) Joycelyn Elders

Former and first female Surgeon General Elders wrote *From Sharecropper's Daughter to Surgeon General of the United States of America*, a personal history and a legacy of her dynamic ideas to combat prejudice and ignorance.

Murray Gell-Mann

Nobel Prize winning nuclear physicist, deemed successor to Einstein, Gell-Mann untangles elementary particles—his renowned quark theory—in *The Quark and the Jaguar: Adventures in the Simple and the Complex*.

Ann (Maret) Jones

Author and Journalist of the year in 1986, Jones' provoking writings about violence by and against women garnered the award, while first novel *Uncle Tom's Campus*, revealed her employer's ambiguous objectives.

Emir Kusturica

During his relatively short career director Kusturica has earned numerous honors, including the Roberto Rossellini Prize for lifetime achievement, for films including *When Father Was away on Business* and *Time of the Gypsies*.

Jonathan Larson

Larson is credited with re-inventing the musical play for a younger generation of theatergoers. His "Rock Opera of the Nineties" *Rent* showcases a variety of musical styles ranging from Motown to classical operatic counterpoint.

Himilce Novas

An expert on Latino history and culture, Novas has written a number of works, including *Everything You Need to Know about Latino History*, that familiarize readers with the richness of Latin Americans' influence on world culture.

Robert L(eslie) Shapiro

Star lawyer Shapiro has defended many celebrity clients, one of the most recent being O. J. Simpson. His *The Search for Justice: A Defense Attorney's Brief on the O.J. Simpson Case* gives his account of the controversial murder trial.

Mark Slouka

In his *War of the Worlds: Cyberspace and the Hi-Tech Assault on Reality* educator Slouka examines the negative effects of the Internet on society and cautions against over-enthusiastic expectations of the "information superhighway."

Urvashi Vaid

A prominent advocate of homosexual rights, Vaid is the author of several books, including *Virtual Equality: The Mainstreaming of Gay and Lesbian Liberation*, which sets forth the history of the lesbian-gay liberation movement.

Lisa Vice

Wyoming-based writer Vice garnered critical accolades for her first novel, *Reckless Driver*, a tale told from a six-year-old's viewpoint of life in an abusive family. Vice is also the author of a number of short stories.

Sarah (Ragle) Weddington

Weddington argued the landmark case *Roe vs. Wade* before the U. S. Supreme Court, securing the 1973 legalization of abortion. *A Question of Choice* recounts the story behind *Roe vs. Wade* and argues that abortion should remain legal.

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Indexing note: All *Contemporary Authors* entries are indexed in the *Contemporary Authors* cumulative index, which is published separately and distributed with even-numbered *Contemporary Authors* original volumes and odd-numbered *Contemporary Authors New Revision Series* volumes.

As always, the most recent *Contemporary Authors* cumulative index continues to be the user's guide to the location of an individual author's listing.

A

**Indicates that a listing has been compiled from secondary sources believed to be reliable, but has not been personally verified for this edition by the author sketched.*

ABEL, Sam 1957-

PERSONAL: Born October 5, 1957, in Norwood, MA; son of Robert (a civil engineer) and Evelyn (Shuman) Abel; commitment ceremony to Craig B. Palmer (a Germanist) on July 23, 1994. **Education:** Dartmouth College, A.B. (drama), 1979; Indiana University, M.A. (theatre and drama), 1981, Ph.D. (theatre and drama), 1984. **Avocational interests:** Cooking.

ADDRESSES: *Home*—P.O. Box 555, Hartford, VT 05047. *Office*—Dartmouth College, 6204 Hopkins Center, Hanover, NH 03755. *E-mail*—Samuel.d.abel@dartmouth.edu.

CAREER: Indiana University, Bloomington, associate instructor, 1981-82; Moorhead State University, Moorhead, MN, instructor, 1983-84; DePauw University, Greencastle, IN, assistant professor, 1985-90; Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, assistant professor, 1990—. *New England Theatre Journal*, book review editor and reader, 1990-93, co-editor, 1993—; *Theatre History Studies*, consulting editor, 1996—; consultant for Oxford University Press, University of Michigan Press, and Bedford Books.

Directed various stage productions at Center Theatre, DePauw University, Indiana University, and Warner Bentley Theatre.

MEMBER: Association for Theatre in Higher Education, Modern Language Association, American Soci-

ety for Theatre Research, Popular Culture Association.

AWARDS, HONORS: Dartmouth College's Marcus Heiman Award for the Creative and Performing Arts, 1979, and Burke Research Grant, 1990-93; Indiana University Graduate Fellow, 1979-80; American College Theatre Festival's Regional Award for Dramatic Criticism, 1980, and Regional Award for Playwriting, 1981; DePauw University, creative project grant, 1988, and course development grant, 1989.

WRITINGS:

Opera in the Flesh: Sexuality in Operatic Performance, Westview Press/HarperCollins (Boulder, CO), 1996.

Contributor of articles and reviews to periodicals, journals, and anthologies, including *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, *Journal of Popular Culture*, *Memory, Practice, Desire: Gay Performances*, *New England Theatre Journal*, *A Night at the Opera: Media Representation of Opera*, *Notable Gays and Lesbians in American Theatre History*, *Opera News*, *Terrance McNally: A Casebook* (edited by Toby Zinman), *Theatre Annual: A Journal of Performance Studies*, *Theatre History Studies*, *Theatre Journal*, *Theatre Survey*, *Theatre Topics*, and *Western European Stages*.

WORK IN PROGRESS: *Irrational Entertainment: Reflections on Opera for the Twenty-First Century*, Yale University Press (New Haven, CT), 1998.

ABRAMSON, Jill 1954-

PERSONAL: Born in 1954.

ADDRESSES: *Agent*—c/o Houghton Mifflin, 215 Park Ave. S., New York, NY 10003.

CAREER: Journalist and nonfiction writer. *American Lawyer* magazine, reporter; *Wall Street Journal*, reporter, then deputy bureau chief in Washington, DC.

AWARDS, HONORS: National Book Award nomination (with Jane Mayer), National Book Foundation, 1994, for *Strange Justice: The Selling of Clarence Thomas*.

WRITINGS:

(With Barbara Franklin) *Where They Are Now: The Story of the Women of Harvard Law 1974*, Doubleday (Garden City, NY), 1986.

(With Jane Mayer) *Strange Justice: The Selling of Clarence Thomas*, Houghton Mifflin (New York), 1994.

SIDELIGHTS: Jill Abramson is a reporter and nonfiction writer noted for her insouciant prose style and her investigative skills. Her first book-length publication, written with fellow journalist Barbara Franklin, was the 1986 volume, *Where They Are Now: The Story of the Women of Harvard Law 1974*. In this work the authors interviewed most of the seventy women who graduated with law degrees from Harvard University in 1974, the first year the percentage of female law students exceeded ten percent of the class as a whole. From this pool, Abramson and Franklin selected twelve representative stories, augmented by quotes from other graduates, male and female, and previous female graduates of the prestigious law school. The result, according to *Ms.* magazine contributor Marilyn Machlowitz, is "a sophisticated analysis and assessment of the subtle interplay of personal, societal, and professional factors women face."

Where They Are Now was widely, and generally positively, reviewed. Critics found interesting and enlightening the authors' in-depth examination of individual lives as well as such trends as career burn-out, balancing family and career, and the ongoing problem of sex discrimination. In addition, according to Jack Weir, writing in *Best Sellers*, "The book serves as a primer on the rites of passage in private legal prac-

tice." However, Weir questioned the authors' implication that "the feelings of doubt and inadequacy described are experienced only by the female members of the class." Some critics focused on the authors' ambivalent attitude toward the degree of success achieved by the subjects in *Where They Are Now*, failing to understand whether the fact that few of these women achieved what Linda Greenhouse described in the *New York Times Book Review* as "the classic Harvard Law School model of a successful career in big-time corporate law," is due to outside factors or because they decided such a career was not worth the price. "The authors dwell on the compromises and lowered expectations of these women," wrote Anne Twitchell in *Library Journal*, "but the reader is struck by their perseverance and successes." Further, *Where They Are Now* is written in a style that Greenhouse dubbed "relentlessly anecdotal," and Weir called "breezy, journalistic," largely because of the authors' refusal to draw overarching conclusions from their small, individualized sample. Nonetheless, according to Weir, "they have really presented, in microcosm, a sample of the travails of the 'baby boom generation' in navigating the transition from their youthful student ideals to their current concerns about career, family, and fulfillment."

In Abramson's second book, 1994's *Strange Justice: The Selling of Clarence Thomas*, coauthored with Jane Mayer, the subject is the controversial nomination of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court in 1991. Ultimately confirmed by Congress, then-President George Bush's nominee was almost stopped from ascending to one of the highest offices in the land when one of his former employees, law professor Anita Hill, came forward to testify that Thomas had sexually harassed her when he was her employer. Hill's testimony was nationally televised and the subject of much public debate. *Strange Justice* is the result of three years of investigation by its journalist authors into the facts of the case based on numerous interviews and examination of documents. While Abramson and Mayer do not resolve definitively who lied to the Senate confirmation committee, they conclude that it was likely Thomas, calling into further question the federal nominating and confirming process itself.

Nominated for a National Book Award before its official release date, *Strange Justice* garnered strong responses from all areas of the political spectrum. While the reviewer for the *Economist* accused Abramson and Mayer of presenting the facts "lopsid-

edly, and with undeniable feminine sympathy," *New York Times Book Review* contributor Martin Walker described *Strange Justice* as "a fine and rational work, a cogent and persuasive account of the Thomas nomination and confirmation in which the rules of logic are observed, evidence is judiciously weighed and Justice Thomas is convincingly portrayed by named sources as a man with a penchant for pornography and for talking dirty."

Strange Justice and its authors were the subjects of a thirty-page attack in the *American Spectator* by David Brock, author of a book titled *The Real Anita Hill*, who called the "embrace" of *Strange Justice* by other critics a "scandal." In that essay Brock contended: "In addition to relying on fake evidence, doctored quotes, and unsupported hearsay, the book is brimming with anonymous and discreditable sources. . . . And a whole array of alleged facts—small and large—are simply wrong." But many other critics found Abramson and Mayer's argument convincing. "Anyone with intellectual humility has to retain a sliver of doubt about who was telling the truth," observed Jon Margolis in the *Chicago Tribune*. "But Mayer and Abramson reduce that sliver to a speck." National Public Radio correspondent Nina Totenberg, in a review in the *Los Angeles Times Book Review* that drew attention to the authors' ability to make difficult and complex material "as easy to consume as a lollipop," called *Strange Justice* "comprehensive, objective and probing, . . . a compelling narrative that will keep you awake at night."

BIOGRAPHICAL/CRITICAL SOURCES:

PERIODICALS

- American Spectator*, January, 1994, pp. 30-41, 68-77.
Best Sellers, July, 1986, p. 122.
Booklist, February 15, 1986, p. 837.
Chicago Tribune, November 13, 1994, sec. 14, p. 3.
Economist, November 12, 1994, pp. 117-18.
Library Journal, February 15, 1986, p. 190.
Los Angeles Times Book Review, November 13, 1994, pp. 2, 12.
Ms., June, 1986, p. 36.
New York Times, October 8, 1994, p. A18.
New York Times Book Review, February 23, 1986, p. 12; November 20, 1994, p. 15.
Publishers Weekly, January 10, 1986, p. 77.
Time, November 14, 1994, p. 101.
Washington Post Book World, November 20, 1994, pp. 1, 8.*

ACKERMAN, Susan Yoder 1945-

PERSONAL: Born November 2, 1945, in Newport News, VA; daughter of Lauren A. (a dairy business owner) and Nina Viola (a homemaker; maiden name, Stemen) Yoder; married Robert W. Ackerman II (in business administration), July 2, 1969; children: Ilse Lieve, Hans Christian, Elsbeth Anje. **Education:** Attended Eastern Mennonite College, 1962-64; College of William and Mary, B.A., 1968; graduate study at University of Virginia, Longwood College, and Hampton University. **Religion:** Christian.

ADDRESSES: Home and office—524 Marlin Dr., Newport News, VA 23602. E-mail—sackerma@pen.K12.va.us.

CAREER: Elementary school teacher, Newport News, VA, 1966-67, 1972; teacher of English as a foreign language, Lubumbashi, Zaire, 1969-70, and Kongolo, Zaire, 1979-80; high school English teacher, Dunn, NC, 1970-72; middle and high school French teacher, Newport News, 1984-86, 1989-96. Day care director, Newport News, 1989-90. Speaker on African experiences and on writing; leader of workshops on writing juvenile fiction.

MEMBER: Foreign Language Association of Virginia.

WRITINGS:

Copper Moons, Herald Press, 1990.

The Flying Pie and Other Stories, Herald Press, 1996.

Contributor of stories and articles to periodicals, including *Cricket*, *On the Line*, *With, Instructor*, *Story Friends*, *Christian Living*, *Purpose*, *Together*, and *Live*. Also contributor to McGraw-Hill testing materials.

WORK IN PROGRESS: "More personal experiences in Africa; further collections of children's stories; researching and compiling a book of letters, documents, drawings, and other primary sources covering one hundred years of the Mennonite community I grew up in."

SIDELIGHTS: Susan Yoder Ackerman commented: "I used to dream of writing fantasy. But real life kept happening in such compelling detail that so far I haven't needed to bring out the wild imagination. . . . A baby crow swallows the tweezers my daughter is using to feed him. . . . An elephant chases us out of a swimming pool. . . . My teasing brother tries to use

a lemon meringue pie to illustrate centripetal force and something goes wrong. These stories crowd to the forefront, and I take pleasure in sharing them.

"My great-grandfather was a poet, an oxymoron in a Mennonite community where hard, practical work was encouraged and flights of fancy frowned on. His son, my grandfather, published his own memoirs at eighty-eight and left me with the house he built nearly one hundred years ago. I can place my computer on the old roll-top desk, look out the window into honeysuckle and wild roses, and by writing, make peace with the Yoder ghosts of death, birth, love, and practical jokes!

"So much for roots . . . what about wings? My fiance had been working as a volunteer in the Congo when he asked me to fly out and marry him. Thus began a series of adventures that still beg to be written. *Copper Moons* describes that first year. I knew I had done something right when a man called to say he had to stay home from work the day after reading the book—the story had stirred up so many memories of his own African experience!

"A total of eight years in Africa furnished me with more material as well as more writing time than I've ever found while back in Virginia where teaching French skims the cream off my energy and time. But at least I no longer write manuscripts by hand in the heat of a glowing Aladdin lamp to the whine of mosquitoes!"

* * *

ACOCCELLA, Marisa 1960(?)-

PERSONAL: Born in c. 1960.

ADDRESSES: *Agent*—c/o *Mirabella*, Murdoch Magazines, 200 Madison Ave., 8th floor, New York, NY 10016; fax: 212-447-4762.

CAREER: Young and Rubicam (advertising agency), New York City, senior vice president; writer.

WRITINGS:

Just Who the Hell Is She, Anyway?: The Autobiography of She (comic-strip novel), Harmony Books (New York), 1994.

Author of comic strip "She" in *Mirabella*, 1993-94.

SIDELIGHTS: Marisa Acocella is a business executive serving as senior vice president at Young and Rubicam, a well-known advertising agency in New York City. Acocella is probably better known, at least to enthusiasts of graphic novels, as the author of *Just Who the Hell Is She, Anyway?: The Autobiography of She*, a comic-strip tale about a working woman in the highly technological, and highly competitive, world of advertising. Acocella introduced her heroine, known simply as She, in a comic strip of the same title in the magazine *Mirabella*. Karal Ann Marling, writing in the *New York Times Book Review*, called *Just Who the Hell Is She, Anyway?* "a dandy novel in pictures." Marling added, "Ms. Acocella is a tart critic of pop culture, taking deadly aim at a variety of icons and anti-icons."

BIOGRAPHICAL/CRITICAL SOURCES:

PERIODICALS

New York Times Book Review, October 9, 1994, p. 11.

Publishers Weekly, September 19, 1994, p. 64.*

* * *

ADAIR, Virginia Hamilton 1913-

PERSONAL: Born February 28, 1913, in New York, NY; daughter of Robert Browning (a poet) and Katharine Temple (maiden name, Hopson) Hamilton; married Douglass G. Adair (a history professor), June 26, 1937 (deceased, 1968); children: Robert, Douglass G. III, Katharine Adair Waugh. **Education:** Mt. Holyoke College, A.B., 1933; Radcliffe College, M.A., 1935; postgraduate study at the University of Wisconsin, 1935-37; University of Washington, 1953-54; and Claremont Graduate School, 1957-58. **Politics:** Democrat. **Religion:** Episcopalian.

ADDRESSES: *Home*—489 West Sixth St., Claremont, CA 91711.

CAREER: College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, part-time teacher, 1948-51; California State Polytechnic University, staff member beginning 1957, professor of English, 1970; freelance poet. Bibliotherapist at Eastern State Hospital in Williamsburg, 1950-53.

MEMBER: Phi Beta Kappa.

WRITINGS:

Ants on the Melon: A Collection of Poems, Random House (New York), 1996.

Contributor of poetry to periodicals, including *Atlantic* and *New Yorker*.

WORK IN PROGRESS: Further poetry collections.

SIDELIGHTS: For many years, Virginia Hamilton Adair supplemented her roles as wife and mother and professor of English at California State Polytechnic University by writing a great deal of poetry. She contributed some of her poetry to major magazines, such as the *Atlantic* and the *New Yorker*, but she never had any of them collected and published in book form until she was eighty-three years old and blind. With selection help from her friend and fellow professor Robert Mezey, who urged Adair to the task, her first collection, *Ants on the Melon: A Collection of Poems*, saw print in 1996. The volume met with much acclaim, and Adair's poetry has since been compared to that of famed poets such as T.S. Eliot and Robert Frost. John Elson, discussing Adair's work in *Time* magazine, quoted critic Eric Ormsby as calling her "the best American poet since Wallace Stevens."

Though born in New York City in 1913, Adair spent much of her youth in neighboring New Jersey. Her father, Robert Browning Hamilton, was a poet as well, and read to her when she was a baby. Perhaps this practice led to Adair's composing her first poem at the age of two. Since then, she has written over a thousand poems, and some seventy or so have been published in journals and magazines. She told Alex Tresniowski in *People* that while she was still a university professor, she didn't have time to collect any of her work for a book. "I got tremendously interested in teaching and scholarship and getting married and then the three children," she explained. Adair also felt that "publishing takes a sort of canniness that I didn't really think went with poetry. I was afraid of writing to please somebody else instead of myself."

The poems in *Ants on the Melon* take their inspiration from many sources, including her childhood home in New Jersey, the teaching life, and her children. Some, however, explore her memories surrounding the night in 1968 that her husband, history professor Douglass G. Adair, walked into their bedroom and committed suicide. Elson cited one of these in par-

ticular, "One Ordinary Evening," as being worthy of praise. It begins by describing a pleasant time when the couple sat and listened to an album of German composer Richard Wagner's classical music, then ends: "Later that year/ you were dead/ By your own hand/ Blood your blood/ I have never understood/ I will never understand." Elson concluded: "In the spare, dying fall of that coda lies an ocean of tears—and a sensibility of genius."

Since the publication of *Ants on the Melon*, Adair continues to write poetry, rising at five o'clock in the morning first to meditate and then to compose. Though she has lost her sight, she can still type, and she has two assistants to help her correct her efforts. She averages anywhere from one to five poems a day in this manner, and plans to issue more collections of her work in the future.

BIOGRAPHICAL/CRITICAL SOURCES:

PERIODICALS

People, August 19, 1996, p. 36.

Time, May 27, 1996, p. 80.*

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ALEXANDER, Harriet Semmes 1949-

PERSONAL: Born December 29, 1949, in Blytheville, AR; daughter of Philip Spencer (an accountant) and Mary (a teacher; maiden name, Borum) Alexander. **Education:** Arkansas State University, B.A., 1971; Memphis State University, M.A., 1972; University of Illinois, MLS, 1974.

ADDRESSES: *Home*—1117 Robin Hood Lane, Memphis, TN 38111. *Office*—University of Memphis Libraries, P.O. Box 526500, Memphis, TN 38152; fax: 901-678-8218. *E-mail*—Halexndr@memphis.edu.

CAREER: Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK, assistant reference librarian, 1974-77; University of Memphis, Memphis, TN, reference librarian, 1977—. *Tennessee Librarian*, editor, 1996—.

MEMBER: Tennessee Library Association, Zora Neale Hurston Society.

AWARDS, HONORS: Frances Neel Cheney Award, Tennessee Library Association, 1995.

WRITINGS:

American and British Poetry: A Guide to the Criticism, 1979-1990, Swallow Press, 1979.

American and British Poetry: A Guide to the Criticism, 1925-1978, Swallow Press, 1984.

English Language Criticism on the Foreign Novel, Swallow Press, 1989.

WORK IN PROGRESS: A book about Zora Neale Hurston.

SIDELIGHTS: Harriet Semmes Alexander told CA: "To do bibliographic research well is difficult. It requires massive amounts of time, stamina, and painstaking attention to detail. I love it!—a fact I came to realize only last year. Previously, I had always focused on the practical assistance that my work provided for students and other researchers.

"When I first came to the library at the University of Memphis (then Memphis State University) in 1977, the director of libraries suggested that I 'look around [me] and see what needed to be done.' It took me a year to figure it out, but I didn't have to look very far at all—for behind the reference desk, where we kept only the books absolutely essential to getting us through each semester, was a rather out-of-date volume containing listings of poetry criticism. I wrote to the publisher expressing my interest in revising it, and the rest, as they say, is history.

"My books, particularly the ones on poetry, continue to have value even as computers take over the world of bibliographic research. None of the standard bibliographies or indices makes entries at as basic a level as I do. I include pages, half-pages, and even paragraphs on particular poems—references often considered too insignificant to be represented in the other listings.

"In recent years, I have become interested in the works of African-American women writers—especially those of Zora Neale Hurston, the well-known anthropologist, novelist, short story writer, and raconteuse. I have started working on what I am calling a 'scholar's guide' to the vast amount of information emerging on her and her work. I am annotating entries for the first time and am really enjoying the chance to read and write as well as list. I hope that sometime in the future, others will be able to use my research to choose amongst all this data more effectively, and through its medium to enrich their knowledge of Hurston."

ALSON, Peter (H.) 1955-

PERSONAL: Born April 11, 1955, in New York, NY; son of Lawrence Alson and Barbara Mailer Alson. **Education:** Harvard University, B.A., 1977. **Avocational interests:** Tennis, yoga, poker.

ADDRESSES: *Home*—55 Hicks St., Apt. 35, Brooklyn, NY 11201-1373. *Agent*—Tom Wallace, Wallace Literary Agency, 177 East 70th St., New York, NY 10021. *E-mail*—peteralson@aol.com.

CAREER: Writer. Worked as a bookmaker in a betting parlor, New York City.

MEMBER: Writer's Guild of America, Writer's Room.

WRITINGS:

Confessions of an Ivy League Bookie, Crown (New York), 1996.

Contributor of articles to periodicals, including *Sports Illustrated*, *Premiere*, *People*, and *Esquire*; contributor of short stories to anthologies.

WORK IN PROGRESS: Screenplay of *Confessions of an Ivy League Bookie* for Paramount Pictures; an untitled novel.

SIDELIGHTS: While a student at Harvard University, Peter Alson aspired to the lofty ambition of becoming a writer. After graduating from college, however, he attempted several novels while holding a steady succession of odd jobs. His lack of immediate success as a novelist might not have deterred the average writer, but Alson felt a particular sense of personal failure: he is the nephew of bestselling author Norman Mailer.

At the age of thirty-three, wanting to get some distance between himself and a Chicago-based love relationship gone bad, Alson moved back to his hometown, New York. Unable to find a writing or editing job, he encountered an old acquaintance, a graduate of Brown University who had become a bookmaker for sporting events. At first, Alson thought he would use this connection to get information for an in-depth piece on the issue of gambling in sports, but he was soon pulled into the bookie world because it offered fast money—something the writer desperately needed.

Alson was soon working regularly at a betting parlor and consorting with an odd, Runyonesque cast of characters with names like "Monkey" and "Steak Knife." He was eventually arrested and confined to a jail cell for several days.

Ironically, Alson's scrape with New York's criminal element enabled him to overcome his writer's block. Published in 1996, his *Confession of an Ivy League Bookie* recounts the author's experience working in the betting underworld and his continuing on/off love relationship with the woman in Chicago. As Alson begins to realize that bookmaking is not the bright future he had once envisioned for himself, he also "lets go" of this failed relationship.

Not surprisingly, *Confessions* drew attention when it was released. Paula Friedman, writing in the *New York Times Book Review*, claimed that Alson "shows a knack for revealing character, especially his own." *People* reviewer Pam Lambert praised the work's description of the gambling culture and deemed *Confessions* "a good bet."

Alson told CA: "It is ironic but somehow logical—at least in the funny logic of life—that I finally became a real writer at the exact moment when I had finally given up hope of ever being one. When I went to work as a bookie I found myself in exactly the kind of dark and funny world I could imagine myself reading about. Soon I was itching to tell someone. I began writing instead. Not so that I could *be* a writer, but because I had a story to tell. That was the impulse. To tell, and perhaps discover in the course of telling, how I had come to be in that place."

BIOGRAPHICAL/CRITICAL SOURCES:

PERIODICALS

- Library Journal*, November 15, 1995, p. 82.
New York Times Book Review, March 10, 1996, p. 16.
People Weekly, March 18, 1996, p. 38.
Publishers Weekly, December 11, 1995, p. 61.

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AMATO, Carol A. 1942-

PERSONAL: Born April 18, 1942, in Hamden, CT; daughter of Carl and Flora (Maturo) Ardito; married

Philip P. Amato (a professor), August 20, 1966; children: Maria Amato Coates, Nicole. **Education:** Emerson College, B.A., 1964; Boston University, M.Ed., 1965. **Avocational interests:** Nature photography, writing and reading poetry, outdoor sports including cycling, swimming, cross country skiing, and jogging, bird watching, and nature workshops and programs.

ADDRESSES: Office—c/o Barron's Educational Series, 250 Wireless Blvd., Hauppauge, NY 11788.

CAREER: Language and learning specialist in the Boston, MA, area, 1965—. Volunteer at the New England Aquarium, Massachusetts Audubon at Wellfleet Bay, the Museum of Natural History, Cape Cod, and the Cape Cod Aquarium.

MEMBER: Authors Guild, Authors League of America, National Science Teachers Association, American Speech, Hearing, and Language Association, National Wildlife Federation, Massachusetts Audubon, Massachusetts Marine Educators Association, Arnold Arboretum, Save the Manatee Club, Northeast Hawk Watch Association, Center for Children's Environmental Writing.

AWARDS, HONORS: Award from Roger Tory Peterson Notable Nature Club, 1992; award from Massachusetts Audubon; second prize, Juried Nature Photography Contest, 1994.

WRITINGS:

"YOUNG READERS" SERIES; PUBLISHED BY BARRON'S EDUCATIONAL

- The Truth about Sharks*, 1995.
Captain Jim and the Killer Whales, illustrated by Patrick O'Brien, 1995.
To Be a Wolf, illustrated by Patrick O'Brien and David Wenzel, 1995.
Raising Ursa, 1996.
Adios, Chi Chi: The Adventures of a Tarantula, illustrated by David Wenzel, 1996.
The Bald Eagle: Free Again!, 1996.
Penguins of the Galapagos, 1996.
On the Trail of the Grizzly, illustrated by Patrick O'Brien, 1997.
Chessie's Most Excellent Adventure, in press.

WORK IN PROGRESS: *Bianca*, the story of a piglet who is carried away by a tornado; a book about armadillos; a book about horseshoe crabs.