

MSU Press garners 4 Michigan Notable Book Awards in 2025

Every spring, the Library of Michigan celebrates the wealth of writing that our state inspires through the Michigan Notable Book Awards. With roots reaching back to 1991, the Notable Books program annually recognizes up to 20 books either written by a Michigan resident or about Michigan or the Great Lakes. In 2025, the Michigan State University Press garnered four of these prestigious awards, which specifically look to highlight works that uplift the cultural, historical and literary heritage of our Great Lakes State. Read on to explore more about these award-winning titles and how the work of MSU Press continues to advocate for Michigan voices.

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Neil Romanosky
Dean of MSU Libraries



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS

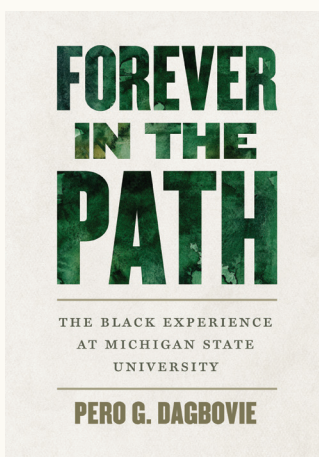
Elevating Michigan storytelling

The Great Lakes State is a creative's wellspring, offering inspiration from our natural beauty to our manufacturing industries. Reference librarian for the Library of Michigan and coordinator of the Michigan Notable Books program Mindy Babarskis spoke to the wide range of artistry that can be drawn from our state, and the significance of university presses in uplifting creative voices. "Our state offers endless opportunities for creative expression," Babarskis said. "Michigan's beautiful landscape and diverse subject matter provide a rich palette for writers. Our program's selection committee receives hundreds of submissions annually that consistently center on Michigan's people, places and stories. Each year brings a fresh and distinct collection of voices, perspectives and topics that make the entries uniquely different from those of past nominations. It is also encouraging that university presses across our state chose to elevate Michigan voices in the books they publish."

MSU Press has been the scholarly publishing arm of the university since 1947, with a mission to be a catalyst for positive intellectual, social and technological change through the publication of research and intellectual inquiry, making significant contributions to scholarship in the arts, humanities, sciences and social sciences. Currently, the Press publishes 20-30 books in an academic year, with title list strengths in regional, African and African American studies, and American Indian studies. This year's Notable Books Award winners include "Forever in the Path: The Black Experience at Michigan State University," by Pero G. Dagbovie; "Dead Moose

on Isle Royale: Off Trail with the Citizen Scientists of the Wolf-Moose Project," by Jeffrey M. Holden; "This Magnetic North: Candid Conversations on a Changing Northern Michigan," by Tim Mulherin; and "Roy Reuther and the UAW: Fighting for Workers and Civil Rights," by Alan Reuther.

The selection of titles included on the Notable Book Awards list, according to MSU Press Director Elizabeth Demers, was particularly reflective of Michigan's natural landscapes, historical legacies and evolving communities. Demers emphasized the significance of the four MSU Press titles honored this year, each of which reflects the Press' commitment to scholarship, storytelling and public engagement. "Pero Dagbovie's meticulous research and insightful writing reveal the history of African American students and faculty at Michigan State — people who were instrumental in creating the university we have today," she said. "Jeffrey Holden takes readers to the wilds of Isle Royale, highlighting not just the work of the Wolf-Moose Project, but the gritty realities of surviving in the smallest and most remote national park. Tim Mulherin asks tough questions about place, environment and people, and how a population boom is irrevocably changing one of Michigan's most beautiful regions. Alan Reuther's personal biography of his father, activist Roy Reuther, is a thoroughly researched account of how one man, working with other people of vision, changed the fate of workers in Michigan, then carried over these values into civil rights and labor work at the national level."

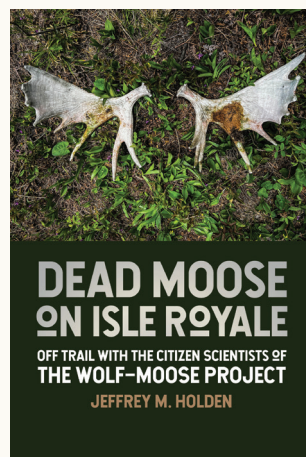


Forever in the Path: The Black Experience at Michigan State University

Pero G. Dagbovie

In "Forever in the Path," Pero G. Dagbovie provides a sweeping overview of the Black experience at America's first agricultural college from the 1890s through the

late twentieth century. It depicts and imagines how his numerous subjects' upbringings and experiences at the institution informed their futures, and how they benefitted from and contributed to MSU's vision, mission and transformative role in the history of higher education.



Dead Moose on Isle Royale: Off Trail with the Citizen Scientists of the Wolf-Moose Project

Jeffrey M. Holden

Every summer, Jeffrey M. Holden leads groups of citizen scientists on week-long expeditions to search for dead moose as part of the world's longest-running predator-prey

study on Michigan's Isle Royale. This book provides a fascinating look into the day-to-day realities of backpacking in the wilderness, while featuring the extraordinary scientific discoveries of the Wolf-Moose Project itself and highlighting the role and rewards for volunteers in this extraordinary endeavor.



Dean of MSU Libraries Neil Romanosky shared his excitement about MSU Press' strong showing on the Notable awards list. "It is a testimony to not only the good work coming out of MSU Press, but the work coming out of Michigan itself," he noted. "I am immensely grateful for Elizabeth's leadership in acquiring books from and working with talented authors such as those included on this year's list, and for the Press' continued commitment to publishing high-quality, noteworthy books."

Uplifting MSU perspectives

While all the titles on the list are intrinsically aligned with the university through their publication by MSU Press, two of the authors have more direct campus origins. One of these authors is Pero G. Dagbovie. Along with his role as Vice Provost for Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, Dagbovie is a University Distinguished Professor of History and Dean of the Graduate School. The product of over 10 years of research, his 682-page exploration of the Black community at MSU in "Forever in the Path" highlights the experiences of students, faculty and staff from the late 19th through the late 20th century. It is also the first book to provide a comprehensive overview of the Black experience at MSU during this prolific time frame, while also paying homage to extensive research efforts performed by legacies like Dr. Ruth Simms Hamilton to document the Black student experience at MSU.

Author Jeffrey M. Holden on Isle Royale.
Courtesy of MSU College of Arts & Letters.



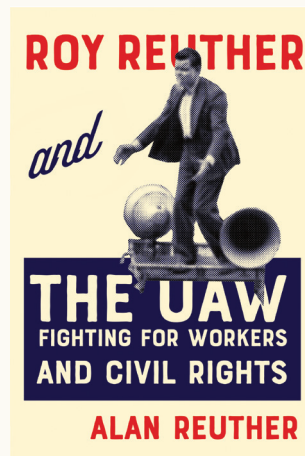
This Magnetic North: Candid Conversations on a Changing Northern Michigan

Tim Mulherin

Natural landscapes are undergoing profound human and climatological change as people pick up their lives and move to bucolic locations.

This book explores the impact

of this phenomenon in northwest lower Michigan's Grand Traverse region through field observations and interviews, providing insight into how one of the most popular vacation destinations in the country is attempting to balance environmental preservation with an influx of people.



Roy Reuther and the UAW: Fighting for Workers and Civil Rights

Alan Reuther

As the brother of famed labor leader Walter Reuther, Roy Reuther was a key figure in the historic Flint sit-down strike that gave birth to the United Auto Workers (UAW). He became the political

director of the UAW and

was deeply involved in struggles to pass civil rights legislation. This biography explores his passion for increasing voter participation and his vow to help downtrodden farmworkers.

The MSU Libraries celebrated the release of Dagbovie's book in February 2025 with an author talk followed by a reception. In his event opening remarks, Dean Romanosky praised the book's accessibility alongside its depth. "Whether you're an undergraduate looking to connect with the past or a researcher hoping to inform the way forward, Dr. Dagbovie provides necessary perspectives to help ground our understanding of campus life, from the time the first African American student was recorded on campus through historic periods like the mid- to late-1960s and the Clifton R. Wharton presidency," Romanosky said.

Dagbovie expressed pride at being included on the Library of Michigan's Notable Books list and gratitude toward MSU Press for their work in publishing his latest book. "I am deeply honored that 'Forever in the Path' was named to the 2026 Michigan Notable Books list," he said. "Many thanks to the outstanding team at the Michigan State University Press for their first-rate support. It was an absolute pleasure working with them. Their collaborative spirit and attention to detail were remarkable! I'm looking forward to working with them again."

The author of "Dead Moose on Isle Royale" can also trace his tracks back to campus. Jeffrey M. Holden is an alumnus of MSU, receiving his BA in English ('83) as well as an MBA in Marketing ('87) from the university. His book is an account of his time spent working on the Wolf-Moose Project in Michigan's Isle Royale, where he's visited every summer since 2002 to learn about predator-prey relationships through his participation in the project as a volunteer citizen scientist. In 2023, Holden became president of the Wolf-Moose Foundation, which supports the Wolf-Moose Project through fundraising efforts. Holden recently attended the 2026 Quiet Adventures Symposium at MSU's Farm Bureau Pavilion as both the foundation president and an award-winning author, where he presented on "Dead Moose — The Citizen-Scientists



MSU Press Director Elizabeth Demers, author Pero G. Dagbovie, and Dean of Libraries Neil Romanosky at a book talk held at MSU Libraries in February 2025.

of the Wolf-Moose Project." MSU Press Marketing & Sales Manager Nicole Utter, who attended the symposium, said the presentation left the audience captivated.

"People were enthusiastic to hear about the Wolf-Moose Project and listen to Jeffrey's trail stories, which was evident by the attention symposium guests held for his presentation,"

Utter noted. "So many people seem to be fascinated by his important work as a citizen scientist on Isle Royale, including the numerous attendees who stopped by to simply chat and find out how the project is going."

Ahead of the symposium, Holden reflected on his time at MSU and how it contributed to his journey toward a Notable Book Award. "I loved my time as a student at MSU," Holden recounted. "I didn't know then exactly what I wanted to do, and so I wandered through classes and several majors, learning, being inquisitive and being open to new experiences and areas for exploration. While I didn't really figure out a career quickly, I did learn that I love to learn. This curiosity and desire to learn has served me well in life. And the wandering, curiosity and being open to new experiences certainly describes hiking off trail on Isle Royale looking for, but not knowing when or where, you'll find dead moose. As with many things in life, it isn't the destination so much as the wandering around that is enjoyable."

Congratulations to our MSU Press authors on their outstanding achievement! For information about these award-winning and more titles from MSU Press, please visit their website at msupress.org, or check out the QR code. 🍀

