

Curtis Puts Brand of Excellence on High Plains Press

By Candy Moulton

High Plains Press originated on a cattle ranch near Glendo, Wyoming, giving founder and editor Nancy Curtis the perfect combination: “We try to raise a few good cattle and publish a few great books,” she says.

WWA has selected High Plains Press to receive the 2012 Lariat Award. This special award is given to those who have achieved distinction in their support of WWA and the literature of the West.

Previous awards have been presented to the University of Oklahoma Press, *True West* magazine, Tom Doherty/Forge Books, Caxton Press, Dorches-

ter Publishing/Leisure Books and University of New Mexico Press Director Luther Wilson.

Under Curtis’s guidance, High Plains Press has published more than 50 books since its begin-

ning in 1984. The company focuses on the history of Wyoming and the American West, but also publishes one book of poetry a year, under the series title “Poetry of the American West.”

The newest selection in this series is *Married Into It* by Patricia Frolander, who, since publication, has been named poet laureate for the state of Wyoming. That book also won the Western Heritage Wrangler Award this year from the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City. It was High Plains Press’s fifth poetry Wrangler.

Curtis has focused her attention on publishing books about Wyoming history, with a few that cover other subjects of the West. She has said she knew people who were writing

good books, but who were not finding publishers. “Other publishers did not understand the importance of the subject or thought the market was too small,” she has said.

Proving that neither location nor size affects good work, High Plains Press has also garnered several Spur Award finalist honors, a Willa award and several Willa finalist awards from Women Writing the West, and finalists in the Ben Franklin Awards competitions. She has also published several winners for book awards from the Wyoming Historical Society.

Among the authors Curtis has published are Larry K. Brown; Gaydell Collier; Laurie Wagner Buyer; Lori Van Pelt; Diana Kouris; Robert Roripaugh, who is a past Wyoming poet laureate; Tom Lindmier; Mary Alice Gunderson; Peggy Simpson Curry; Charles Levendosky; Chip Carlson; W.C. Jameson; Gladys B. Beery; Linda Hasselstrom; and Jane Candia Coleman.

Curtis received the 2010 Wyoming Governor’s Arts Award for her contribution to writing. She is also the co-editor with Linda Hasselstrom and Gaydell Collier of three collections of writing by plainwomen published by Houghton Mifflin: *Leaning into the Wind*, *Woven on the Wind* and *Crazy Woman Creek*. These books, particularly *Leaning into the Wind*, gave many women their first publishing credits, who have gone on to write more articles, essays and both nonfiction and fiction books.

Curtis was also instrumental in the founding and ongoing successes of both Wyoming Writers and WYOPOets, again encouraging others to write and find ways to see their creative efforts eventually become published.

Candy Moulton is executive director of WWA.



2012 Lariat Award recipient Nancy Curtis of High Plains Press. Courtesy of Nancy Curtis

