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John Erickson Receives the Texas Library Association's 2018 Outstanding Services to Libraries Award

AUSTIN – John Erickson, author of the beloved Hank the Cowdog series, received the 2018 Outstanding Services to Libraries Award. Presented by the Texas Library Association (TLA), the award honors an individual who demonstrates outstanding advocacy and support for libraries.

For nearly 35 years, Erickson's books have brought the joy of reading to adults and children around the world and with the 60th and 70th books in the Hank the Cowdog series published in 2017, the enjoyment and learning will continue.

As a fifth generation Texan, Erickson wanted to write about the ranch life he loved. He began with a self-published novel that was popular with local readers, and that has grown into a phenomenon with more than 9 million books sold worldwide. Writing in the oral tradition of cowboys, where every story has a lesson and "kids find something that soothes their spirit", he taps into the fascination readers have with the American West and their universal love of dogs.

Erickson believes a good story should make the reader a better person. Using storytelling techniques learned from his mother, he teaches students to value grammar constructs and the revision process, and the humorous allusions provide excellent exercises for practicing inferencing skills and visualization. The lively characters offer wonderful material for reading and writing lessons, and even the most reluctant readers turn into Hank fans.

He brings Hank the Cowdog to life with visits to hundreds of schools, libraries and home school conventions; has recorded audio versions of all of the books, doing the voices and songs himself; and has donated thousands of books to libraries and schools. Erickson takes time to speak to each student, listing to the hundreds of stories from those wanting to have their well-worn copies of Hank the Cowdog signed.

The award was presented on April 4, during the TLA Annual Conference in Dallas.

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About the Texas Library Association

TLA is the largest state library association in the United States with almost 6,500 members who work in public, school, academic, and special libraries. TLA offers a wide range of services, including advocacy, continuing education, research, and public relations. www.txla.org