



Gerald McDermott

Gerald McDermott began his career at the age of four when his parents enrolled him in art classes at the Detroit Institute of Arts. He continued studying the visual arts under the guidance of the remarkable teachers at Detroit's Cass Technical High School, chief among them Leonard P. Johnson, and assembled a senior portfolio that garnered him a National Scholastic Art Competition Scholarship to New York's Pratt Institute.

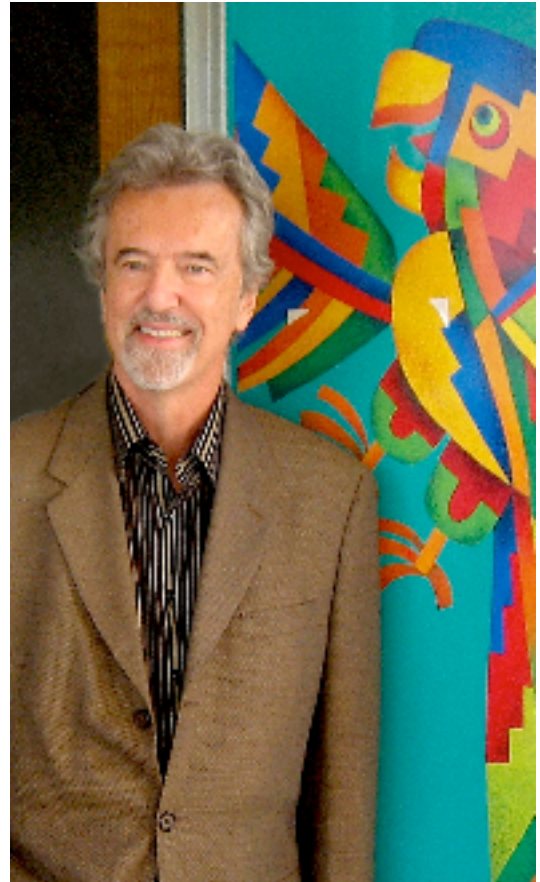
During his junior year at Pratt, McDermott was hired at New York's Channel 13 (PBS) as their first graphic designer and created their beloved "owl" logo. After graduation in 1964, he began producing and directing a series of animated short films on folklore in consultation with mythologist Joseph Campbell. These films included *Anansi the Spider*, which won a Silver Lion for Children's Short Film at the Venice International Film Festival, and many other awards. In the early '70s, he began to adapt these films into picture books. His book version of *Anansi the Spider* was awarded a Caldecott Honor by the American Library Association and, in 1975, McDermott's *Arrow to the Sun* won the prestigious Caldecott Medal, which assured his works a place in the canon of American children's literature.

While all this was unfolding, McDermott was married and lived for several years in the South of France. He returned to the states and maintained a studio in rural Connecticut through the '80s before a move west in 1990; to the water's edge in Marina del Rey, California.

Once west, McDermott spent considerable time in New Mexico, and began several art programs for the children of the Native American pueblos, an involvement portrayed in the Emmy Award-winning PBS documentary, *Colores; An Artist's Journey* (1996).

Since the mid-90s, research for his books has taken McDermott to Ireland, Iceland, Chile, France and Japan. In 2007, his book, *Raven*, a Caldecott Honor Book, was transformed into a stage production at the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis. McDermott designed the costumes for this production and began an involvement in the theater, with several new productions currently in development. Additionally, he was invited to give an ongoing series of seminars on mythology at the London International School of Performing Arts.

In October of 2008, *SOAR INTO STORY*, a fully-interactive exhibit based on McDermott's books, *Raven* and *Coyote*, opened for a two-year run at the Children's Museum of Tacoma, which will be followed by a two-year installation of *Zomo the Rabbit* and *Jabuti the Tortoise*. His twentieth picture book, *Pig-Boy; A Trickster Tale from Hawai'i*, was published in April, 2009.



Currently, an exhibition of 60 original illustrations from McDermott's books, *Myth & Magic*, is on national tour (www.nccil.org). In Japan, original art from *Arrow to the Sun* is now on display in the exhibit, "Million-Seller Children's Books," at the Chihiro Museum in Tokyo. In Seoul, South Korea, a number of his works are included in a major exhibit, and *Musicians of the Sun*, his tenth title to be published in Korean, is about to be released.

McDermott will return to France in September and October of 2009 to prepare for a one-man show at a gallery of spiritual and metaphysical art in the Place Beaubourg in Paris. Then he'll travel to New York in November for the premiere of an original oratorio based on *Musicians of the Sun* - commissioned by the Classic Choral Society, with music by Steve Margoshes, composer of *Fame*, and narrated by Samuel E. Wright, who originated the role of Mustafa in *The Lion King* on Broadway.

McDermott's current publishing project is an illustrated, four-volume collection of *Joseph Campbell's Favorite Tales: In His Own Words*.