



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

## Picture This: Jerry Pinkney, Renowned Children's Book Illustrator Feted by Senator Murphy In Honor of Black History Month

TERRENCE MURPHY February 22, 2018

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Yorktown, NY - Not many people know what they want to do with their life by the age of four. Croton-on-Hudson resident Jerry Pinkney started drawing at that age in 1964, and since then has illustrated over 100 titles, opened his own studio, and amassed dozens of awards. In honor of Black History Month, Pinkney's body of work and volunteer efforts on behalf of children with dyslexia were recognized by Senator Terrence Murphy during a ceremony held

at his District Office on February 21.

"Jerry Pinkney is a perfect example of believing in yourself and being completely invested in what you do," said Senator Murphy. "He has taken on numerous challenges in life and succeeded because he knows you have to work to achieve something that matters. He is an inspiration to others and has made a commitment to improving people's lives, particularly children."

Jerry Pinkney said. "I like to say I have had headwinds and tailwinds in my life. I encountered people who said, 'You can't do that' because I was a person of color. However, there were also people along the way who said 'You can do this.' They served to inspire me and helped me become the man I am today. I have been fortunate to be able to take what I enjoy and turn it into a profession. I feel blessed that I can take what I have learned and pass it on to others."



In speaking about the philosophy behind his art, Pinkney commented, "When I am working for children, I aim for clarity with a direct correlation between text and art, but I still illustrate stories not as I imagine a child sees them, but how I see them. My work is my life's vocation, yet it is also the way I get to speak about interests and passions, the immediacy of drawing and my love of painting. What drives my narratives is the search for order, symmetry, beauty, and emotion. I want to lead the viewer into my imagination—a world that exists inside these pictures. I have illustrated over a hundred children's books, and my wish for each one is that all ages will be able to find something that touches them in some way."

As a child, Pinkney had great difficulty with dyslexia in elementary school. However, his love of and talent for drawing was useful in helping his self-esteem. Pinkney worked at a newsstand in junior high school, sketching people as they passed by. There he met cartoonist John Liney, who encouraged him to make a living from drawing.

He concentrated on commercial art at the Muriel Dobbins Vocational School and was granted a full scholarship to the Philadelphia Museum College of Art, (now University of the Arts) where he met his wife, Gloria. He founded Kaleidoscope Studios, and soon after opened the Jerry Pinkney Studio, focusing on illustrating children's books.

Pinkney has always had an interest in diversity and many of his children's books celebrate multicultural and African-American themes. His art can be found in permanent collections at the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, the Delaware Art Museum, the Brandywine River Art Museum, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, and the National Museum of Wildlife Art, as well as in private collections.

His works have also been featured in The New York Times, American Artist Magazine, The Horn Book Magazine, the CBS "Sunday Morning Show," and on PBS's "Reading Rainbow. He has illustrated for the U.S. Postal Service, National Parks Service, National Geographic Magazine, Harry Chapin Run Against Hunger, and NASA Art Collection of the John F. Kennedy Space Center.

Pinkney has received numerous awards, including five Caldecott Honors, five Coretta Scott King Awards, four New York Times Best Illustrated Awards (most recently in 2006 for Little Red Hen), a Boston Globe-Horn Book Award, and a Caldecott Medal for U.S. picture book illustration for *The Lion & the Mouse*, a wordless version of Aesop's fable.

Pinkney was elected into the Society of Illustrators Hall of Fame in 2011. He received the Coretta Scott King - Virginia Hamilton Award for lifetime achievement in 2016.