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Mom's Choice Awards® Gives Gold to "Tasunka" from State Historical Society

PIERRE, S.D.—"Tasunka: A Lakota Horse Legend" has won the Gold Award for Children's Picture Books from Mom's Choice Awards® (MCA). Written and illustrated by Donald F. Montileaux, the book was published earlier this year by the South Dakota State Historical Society.

"Tasunka" is a story of adventure, discovery, loss and renewal, set to beautiful ledger-style illustrations that illuminate the story of the horse and its importance to the plains people. Readers journey with a young warrior as he tracks a strange new creature across the plains. Far from home, he discovers beasts that run as swift as the wind and shimmer with many colors. The young Lakota warrior captures and tames them, and his people grow rich and powerful. Then the Great Spirit, who gave the gift of the horse, takes it away.

Montileaux uses traditional storytelling methods to impart wisdom to new generations, and through the Lakota translation by Agnes Gay, "Tasunka" preserves an important piece of Lakota culture. "Tasunka" is dedicated to Alex White Plume, who first told the legend to Montileaux.

"Montileaux has created a beautiful, compelling children's book," said Nancy Tystad Koupal, director of the South Dakota Historical Society Press. "A Gold Award from Mom's Choice reinforces our opinion that it is of utmost importance to make quality stories available that share Lakota culture and language."

MCA evaluates products from around the world created for children and families. Judges come from a variety of backgrounds and appraise a book's quality, educational value, originality and appeal.

Montileaux also illustrated the multi-award-winning book "Tatanka and the Lakota People: A Creation Story" and "The Enchanted Buffalo." His ledger-based artwork can be found in private and public collections across the country. Other children's books from the South Dakota Historical Society Press that have won a Gold Award from MCA include "The Discontented Gopher," "Dance in a Buffalo Skull," "The Raccoon and the Bee Tree" and "The Jumping-Off Place."

"Tasunka: A Lakota Horse Legend" is available for \$19.95 plus shipping and tax from most bookstores or ordered directly from the South Dakota State Historical Society Press. Visit www.sdshspress.com, call (605) 773-6009 or email orders@sdshspress.com.

Pronunciation Guide: Ta-SHUN-ka

The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Tourism. The Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism, the South Dakota Arts Council and the State Historical Society. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen. The State Historical Society, an Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, is headquartered at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. The center houses the society's world-class museum, the archives, and the historic preservation, publishing and administrative/development offices. Call (605) 773-3458 or visit www.history.sd.gov for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.