The Ohioana Library is pleased to announce the finalists for the 2020 Ohioana Book Awards. First given in 1942, the awards are the second-oldest state literary prizes in the nation and honor outstanding works by Ohio authors and illustrators in five categories: Fiction, Poetry, Juvenile Literature, Middle Grade/Young Adult Literature, and Nonfiction. The sixth category, About Ohio/An Ohioan, may also include books by non-Ohio authors.

Among the literary honors this year’s finalists have previously received are the National Book Award, the Pulitzer Prize, the Coretta Scott King Book Award, the Cleveland Arts Prize, the Edgar Award, and the New York Public Library Young Lions Fiction Award. One author is a finalist for her debut book. Five are past Ohioana Book Award winners, and two received Ohioana’s Walter Rumsey Marvin Grant early in their writing careers.

Beginning June 15, Ohioana will profile all the finalists with the return of “30 Books, 30 Days,” a special feature on our social media in which one finalist is highlighted each day. Later in June, Ohioana will launch its fifth Readers’ Choice Award poll, allowing the public to vote online for their favorite book from the finalists.

Winners will be announced in July, and the 2020 Ohioana Book Awards will be presented at the Ohio Statehouse in Columbus on Thursday, October 15. The finalists are:

**Fiction**
DiFrancesco, Alex. *All City*, Seven Stories Press.

One of my favorite times of every year is when we get to announce the Ohioana Book Award finalists. And even though we’re a little later than normal (due to COVID-19), we’re pleased to introduce our 2020 finalists in this issue’s cover story.

As you can see, it is a stellar list of authors representing every literary genre from novels to picture books, from poetry to history. Several of these authors are among America’s and Ohio’s most celebrated writers, while others are just at the beginning of what promises to be great writing careers. We applaud them all and look forward to sharing more about them and their books in the days and weeks ahead.

Ohioana has several major online events coming up, including our first-ever writing workshop and our third virtual book club. And this week, we’ll take part in an event that happens once every few years: the Columbus Foundation’s Big Give, a 25-hour online giving rally that supports more than 1,100 charities, including Ohioana. I hope you will...
As we turn the corner on another season, we can look back on what has been a most difficult spring. We’re still in the middle of a pandemic, even though there is reason for hope as we slowly begin to reopen. But now on the heels of one crisis has come another—the senseless murder of George Floyd, the latest in a number of horrible tragedies perpetrated against our fellow citizens who are black. Not surprisingly, it has driven many people to the streets in protests, the likes of which we haven’t seen since the 1960s.

Often in times of trouble, we look to our great authors to give voice to what many are feeling. On the day of George Floyd’s memorial service, we posted the words of one of Ohio’s and the world’s greatest authors, Toni Morrison: “I’m not a victim. I refuse to be one. If you can only be tall because somebody is on their knees, then you have a serious problem.”

Recognizing that there is a serious problem is only one step. Doing something about it is much harder, and it’s going to take the efforts of everyone. The words spoken often during the pandemic apply equally to the task before us in overcoming racial injustice: We’re all in this together.

David E. Weaver
Executive Director

consider making a gift to Ohioana during the rally, which kicks off this Wednesday.
Coming Soon

The Big Give 2020
June 10, 10 a.m. – June 11, 11 a.m., online event
Be a vital part of this community-wide, 25-hour online giving rally sponsored by the Columbus Foundation to benefit more than 1,100 charities in Central Ohio, including the Ohioana Library. All gifts made will be amplified by a $1.5-million match pool and credit card fees for all gifts ($20 minimum) will be covered. To make a gift to Ohioana during the rally, click on this link: https://columbusfoundation.org/the-giving-store/nonprofit-directory-listing/OhioanaLibraryAssociation/454

Thurber House: The Humor of James Thurber
June 10, 2020, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m., online event
The 2020 season of Summer Literary Picnics kicks off online as Michael J. Rosen is joined by special guest readers, including Ohioana Director David Weaver, in a virtual celebration of Thurber fables. For information and tickets, visit http://www.thurberhouse.org/literary-picnics/michael-j-rosen

Workshop: Starting, Writing and Completing Your Novel
June 14, 2020, 1:00 – 3:30 p.m., online event
Ohioana presents this virtual workshop with Moriel Rothman-Zecher, Ohioana Award-winning author of Sadness is a White Bird, that will offer both creative inspiration and practical novel writing tools. Cost $50. To register, visit https://www.eventbrite.com/e/starting-writing-and-completing-your-novel-tickets-105844900948

Ohioana Virtual Book Club: Mindy McGinnis
June 25, 2020, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m., online event
Join Ohioana and 2020 Ohioana Book Award finalist Mindy McGinnis for a virtual book discussion of Mindy's newest novel, Be Not Far From Me. Hatchet meets Wild in this harrowing YA survival story about a teenage girl's attempt to endure the impossible, from the Edgar Award-winning author of The Female of The Species. Free. Registration is limited. Sign up with Zoom here: https://tinyurl.com/yc8pvrcd