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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**W. Michael and Kathleen O'Neal Gear
to receive Western Writers of America's
Owen Wister Award**

ENCAMPMENT, Wyo. – The international best-selling writing team of W. Michael and Kathleen O'Neal of Cody, Wyo., will receive the Western Writers of America

(www.westernwriters.org) 2021 Owen Wister Award for Lifetime Contributions to Western Literature.

The Gears, who are best known for their prehistory series of books, will also be inducted into the Western Writers Hall of Fame, housed outside the McCracken Research Library at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody.

"For more than three decades, Kathleen and Michael Gear have been bringing the past to vivid life with their books about the indigenous peoples. Both individually and as a writing team, their work stands out for its focus and readability," said WWA President Chris Enss. "The Wister Award was created for such talent."

Added WWA Executive Director Candy Moulton: "Michael and Kathleen, with their careers in archaeology and as award winning bison ranchers, bring extraordinary understanding and passion to everything they write whether the subject involves the prehistory of America, or the genetics of bison."

The nonprofit guild's highest honor will be presented during WWA's convention June 16-19 in Loveland, Colorado.

The Gears, who make their home in Cody, won a Spur Award for their novel *People of the Raven* (2005) and Michael's novel *This Scorched Earth* was recognized as a Spur finalist in 2019.

Kathleen O'Neal Gear has over two hundred nonfiction publications in the fields of archaeology, history, and bison conservation, and has authored or co-authored 47 international bestsellers. She has received numerous awards, both for her writing and for her work as an

archaeologist. The United States Department of the Interior has twice awarded her a "Special Achievement Award" for outstanding management of America's cultural resources.

Michael has published or is in the process of publishing 20 novels under his own name and authored another 37 with Kathleen. Michael's latest original novel is *The Alpha Enigma*. He will launch a new series *The Wyoming Chronicles* in June with the title *Dissolution*. All of his books deal with aspects of anthropological theory. Their newest jointly written book is *People of the Canyons*.

Since the early 1950s, WWA has honored and promoted all forms of literature about the American West. Previous Owen Wister honorees include Pulitzer Prize winner N. Scott Momaday; historians Eve Ball and Robert M. Utley; and best-selling novelists Rudolfo Anaya, Elmore Leonard, Tony Hillerman and Lucia St. Clair Robson.

The Wister Award is a bronze statue of a buffalo created especially for WWA by artist Robert Duffie.