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CARNEGIE MEDAL ACCEPTANCE SPEECHES

Carnegie Medal Acceptance Remarks by Melissa Reilly Ellard

“Every individual matters. Every individual has a role to play. Every individual makes a difference.”

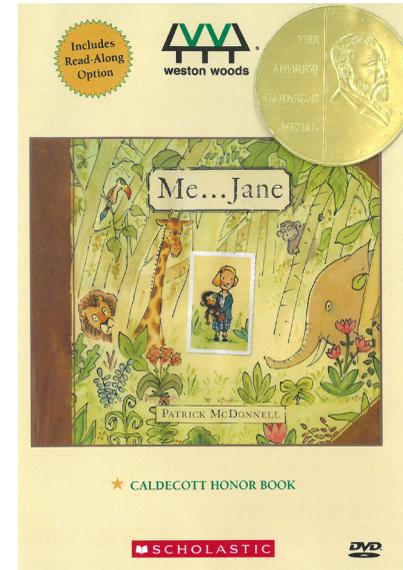
“Together we can make this world a better place for all.”

These two powerful quotes from Jane Goodall are especially true when making a book come to life. If even one person I’m going to talk about today wasn’t involved, this production would have turned out completely differently.

When our Product Acquisition Committee first saw *Me...Jane* in 2011, we knew immediately this was a book we wanted to adapt. The process of bringing this book to life as an animated film took time and the efforts of many people; although we can’t all be here, I speak for the entire team in saying that we’re deeply honored to be accepting this award today.

It all started with Patrick’s attorney, Henry Dunow, and Director of Subsidiary Rights Kristin Dulaney at Little, Brown. Without their diligence and commitment, we would’ve never had a contract. Your roles in helping us to obtain the rights to this film were instrumental. Thank you.

The first step in the process once a title is secured is to have a conversation



with the author and illustrator and establish a relationship. We at Weston Woods feel that it is this relationship that is most crucial to the production process. We always work as closely as possible with the creative forces behind the book to ensure that our adaptation is as faithful to the original book as can be.

In my first conversations with Patrick, he shared with me a story about a recent Shelter Pet project he was involved with. He had worked with an animator whom he had been very impressed with and whom he felt would be the perfect fit for this project, and we couldn’t agree more.

Paul Fierlinger created his first animated film at age 12 while living



Producers **Paul R. Gagne** and **Melissa Reilly Ellard**, Weston Woods Studios, Inc., are the 2015 recipients of the (Andrew) Carnegie Medal for “*Me...Jane*.” They delivered their acceptance remarks at the ALSC Book and Media Awards Program on Monday, June 29, 2015, during the American Library Association Annual Conference.

For more information about the Carnegie Award, visit <http://bit.ly/carnegie-award>.



Weston Woods was founded in 1953 by Morton Schindel with the mission to create audiovisual adaptations of books that truly capture the essence of those titles. That mission continues today. In 1996, Weston Woods became part of Scholastic. Weston Woods, headquartered in Norwalk, Conn., provides materials to more than 50,000 schools and libraries nationwide and has distributors in more than 20 countries worldwide.



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in Czechoslovakia. Fast forward to age 79 and he is still creating amazing animation but now doing it with his wife and partner in Pennsylvania. Thank you, Paul and Sandra, for your role as directors and animators. Your dedication to getting the texture, colors, and movements right in this film is what made it truly come to life.

Additionally, Paul and I are lucky to have Steve Syarto as our sound engineer on the Weston Woods production team. Steve continually creates magical soundtracks that elevate these films to a higher level, so thank you, Steve. And to our Vice President/General Manager and friend, Linda Lee, thank you for your continued guidance and support.

Carnegie Medal Acceptance Remarks by Paul R. Gagne

Good morning. I'd like to join Melissa in thanking Caitlin Jacobson, the members of her wonderful committee, and ALSC for honoring *Me...Jane* with the 2015 Andrew Carnegie Medal. It was truly an honor and a privilege to be trusted with adapting Patrick McDonnell's book about the early childhood of one of my personal heroes as an animated film.

I'd like to add my thanks to all of the individuals Melissa mentioned in her remarks, and to continue her theme by sharing a little more about some of the other people who played a vital role in this production.

As is the case with almost all of our productions, one of the very first creative decisions was choosing the right voice to narrate the story. Patrick McDonnell's text is spare and

On a personal note I would like to also thank the people who helped play a role in my life; my husband, who is here with me today, and makes my world a better place. And to my parents, without whom I would not be here today; let alone be the person I am. I am grateful for them every day.

And finally a special thanks to Caitlin Jacobson and the 2015 Carnegie Medal/Notable Children's Videos Committee for giving us this special honor. Winning a prestigious honor such as this one only inspires us all to go on and do more.

At Weston Woods we believe it is our role to instill a love of reading in children. That is the mission behind

poetic, and we wanted a reader who could be simultaneously intimate and expressive in bringing young Jane's story to life. And we wanted a young, British woman's voice. Melissa suggested Katherine Kellgren, and there was really never any other choice. We first met Katy after the very first year of the Odyssey award and honors; her amazing narration of L.A. Meyer's "Bloody Jack" series has resulted in several Odyssey honors, and put her squarely on our casting radar. She's one of the best voices working in the audiobook world, and has done a number of films for us, so we knew we were in good hands.

I've often said that the right narrator gives a film its heart, and the composer provides the soul. In the case of *Me...Jane*, we went outside our usual stable of musical talent when our director, Paul Fierlinger, introduced us to Shay Lynch, a young composer he had worked with on some other projects. We normally wait until the animation

every one of our adaptations. However, it is you, as librarians, who play the most critical role, as you are the ones who share our passion for these stories and bring our films into the lives of children every day.

It is with books like this one that we can show kids that they can take a passion and turn it into a career. A book as powerful as *Me...Jane* can ignite a spark in a child, motivating them to "open a world of possible." Thank you, Patrick McDonnell, for creating this beautiful tribute to an amazing and inspirational woman.

for a film is finished before starting the scoring process, but Paul likes to develop the musical approach in tandem with the visual portion of the film, so he worked very closely with Shay in creating a score that's such an integral part of the animation that it's hard to imagine one without the other.

After recording a book at our studio in Danbury, Connecticut recently, one of our narrators commented that she couldn't believe how much fun the session was. We half-jokingly admitted that there were days when we can't believe we're actually being PAID to do what we do. And, like any job, there are days where we complain that we're not being paid enough. But joking aside, I think I speak for myself, Melissa, and the rest of our team in saying that we honestly love what we do. It amazes me that after thirty-seven years, there are still days that surpass anything we've previously experienced in our professional careers. A perfect case in point is the day in April of 2014 that



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we convened with a video crew in a hotel room in New York City to film the interview with Patrick McDonnell and Dr. Jane Goodall that appears as a bonus on the *Me...Jane* DVD. The presence in that room of this gentle, soft-spoken, 80-year-old woman whose life's work has had such a profound impact on our understanding of the delicate balance of life on our planet was both humbling and an inspiration. It is our

hope that children who encounter the young Jane Goodall through Patrick's book and this film will be inspired to do something to care for our planet as that delicate balance becomes more and more critical.

On the subject of loving our jobs, I think a big part of that is the family atmosphere we're lucky to be working in, and I'd like to thank our coworkers

at Weston Woods, who make it a pleasure to come to work every day, and our larger Scholastic family. I'd also like to join Melissa in thanking our Vice President, Linda Lee, for her guidance and support. And last but not least, thank you to my wife, Lynn, and our daughters, Melanie and Brianna, for their tender loving care.

Thank you!

2015 ANDREW CARNEGIE MEDAL/NOTABLE CHILDREN'S VIDEOS COMMITTEE

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For more information about the Carnegie Award, visit <http://bit.ly/carnegie-award>.