

Local author honored with Military Writers award

Donna McAleer recognized for "Porcelain on Steel"

Submitted by the Military Writers Society of America

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Park City resident Donna McAleer has received the Military Writers Society of America (MWSA) Gold Medal for 2010 for her book "Porcelain on Steel: Women of West Point's Long Gray Line." MWSA recognizes its members and their creative works at an Awards Banquet during their annual Conference.

"Among the benefits for Donna and other award nominees will be appearances on various Internet blogs and radio talk shows, features on MWSA's website and in our monthly Dispatches magazine, and interviews on radio and public-access TV during our conference in Pittsburgh," says MWSA President Joyce Faulkner.

McAleer's title took top honors in the category of Non-fiction/Military/Army.

In his review for MSWA, Bob Flournoy wrote, "The United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, admitted, for the first time, in 1976, female cadets. 'Porcelain on Steel' is their story, and the stories of the hundreds of women who have graduated from there since. It is a story of obstacles overcome that is unique in American education.

"In a straightforward manner, the author paints a stark picture of the prejudices encountered by the first women who attended, and how they coped. We are given a glimpse of their courage, and resoluteness. The reader gets to know West Point, what makes it unique, and how it changed, for the better, as a result of a gender integrated corps. We see women who became all that they could be, and much more than they originally aspired to be as a result of

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their army experiences, which began as plebes in that intimidating establishment that has no equal in the vast expanse of colleges across the land.

"The book encapsulates stunning career success stories of many of these women graduates, both in and out of the military, and the reader's heart cannot help but be warmed by the unanimous, graceful, gratitude of these strong ladies for the chance that their West Point education and experience gave them.

"Porcelain on Steel" is a captivating human interest read about a transition time in our military's history that changed the face of the army, forever. Mostly in their own words, the very real personalities of these remarkable ladies are revealed in the pages of this book, and they are quite compelling. It is believable, because it is true, and few women in the history of our country have stories as unique as theirs. Few women have contributed as much to the growth of our nation, none more. I wanted to stand up, and cheer when I finished reading."

A 1987 graduate of West Point, McAleer served as an Army officer. Actively involved in the West Point community, she serves as Class President and is an Admissions Field Representative. Donna was elected to the boards of directors of the West Point Association of Graduates, the West Point Women's Network, and is an advisor to West-Point.org. She is the co-founder of Bugle Notes, an online community for West Point graduates and cadets. She earned a master's degree from the Darden Graduate School of Business Administration, University of Virginia and her professional career includes a variety of roles in public, private and not-for-profit corporations. An outdoor enthusiast with a particular passion for skiing, Donna lives in Park City with Ted, her husband, Carlyn Ann, their daughter and Col. (ret) Thayer, their dog. She teaches skiing at Deer Valley. Previously, Donna served as the Executive Director of the People's Health Clinic, coached girls volleyball at Park City High School, served on several community non-profit boards, and is a member of Park City Leadership Class IX.

All awards recipients will be honored at the MWSA's conference, Sept. 30-Oct. 3 at Pittsburgh's Wyndham University Plaza. The Conference will include a special ceremony at the Dawn's Early Light Flag Retirement Plaza in Pittsburgh's South Park, special interest luncheons around the city, a play featuring the works of MWSA authors at the Kelly-Strayhorn Theater, Oral History Day, Workshops, Book signings, and the awards banquet. Many of the events are open to the public. Joseph Beth's Book seller is the official MWSA Pittsburgh Conference bookstore.

McAleer is among more than 900 authors, poets and artists who comprise Military Writers Society of America. Most MWSA members are active duty military, retirees or military veterans. Others are life-long civilians who've chosen to focus on military and/or historical themes with their writings or art.

Purchase a copy of "Porcelain on Steel" at www.porcelainonsteel.com