

THE ASK PROGRAM
University of Michigan-Dearborn
Raymond P. Kettel



The ASK program (Authors Specialists and Knowledge) occurs each semester as part of an undergraduate Literature for Children and Youth class. The participants include university students, as well as later elementary through high school students depending on the selected literature work. The purpose of the program is to take readers beyond the confines of a novel, relating the information from their reading in a personal way to their own immediate situation. For as part of the process, readers draw on their own writers' voice, as they journal through their reading.

Interviews are conducted with authors of children's books and with "specialists" whose occupations, interests and experiences bring credibility or a better understanding to a particular literature selection. The interview focus from these books has been on such social issues as ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, homelessness in America, the Vietnam War, media responsibility, racial prejudice and animal rights. In addition to these social issues, through interviewing authors, readers are able to explore such evaluative literary aspects as the development of character, plot, setting, theme and writing style. The following children's books have been selected in past interviews: *The Devil's Arithmetic*, *Charlie Pippin*, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham- 1963*, *Monkey Island*, *Nothing but the Truth*, *Maniac Magee*, *Wringer*, *Circle of Gold*, *Adem's Cross*, *Julie of the Wolves*, *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*, *Hiroshima*, *Petey*, *Homeless Bird* and *Daniel's Story*. Through the interviewing steps of the ASK program, students develop questions to be asked of either the selected author or specialist. The interviews are held on the university campus or at one of the metropolitan area schools or county teacher centers referred to as Intermediate School Districts (ISD's). Three ASK programs with Newbery authors were presented at the Michigan Reading Association's conference in March of 2000.

Many of the interviews have been conducted using distance learning technology, connecting authors and specialists brought to campus with sites in the metropolitan area. In some instances, university students who have been trained in the program, visit selected schools and work with teachers and their students preparing them for planned interviews. For additional information, please contact Raymond P. Kettel, Associate Professor of Education University of Michigan-Dearborn.



Dr. Raymond P. Kettel is associate professor emeritus of education at the University of Michigan-Dearborn where he taught children's literature and courses in reading and language arts for more than 25 years. In addition, he was the director of the ASK program and the Mardigian Library's historic Quigley Collection.

After completing courses in Asian studies at the University of Hawaii, he served in the Philippines as a Peace Corps volunteer and later for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Kettel has taught on both the elementary

and secondary levels. He received his doctorate from Wayne State University in 1981 and has served as a reading teacher, demonstration teacher and was supervisor of Language Education for the Detroit Public Schools. He has served on a variety of committees for both the International Reading Association and the Michigan Reading Association where he was elected to the Board of Directors. In 1993, he received the Distinguished Teaching Award from the University of Michigan-Dearborn, and in 1995, was named most inspirational faculty member by the students of the Association of Educators. In 2005, he received the Michigan Reading Association's "Teacher Educator Award," and later in that year he was named "Faculty Member of the Year" by the University of Michigan-Dearborn's Alumni Society. Kettel's publications in children's literature, storytelling and reading have appeared in such journals as "The Reading Teacher, English Journal, Storytelling World, Voices from the Middle" and the American Library Association's "Book Links." He is the creator and senior author of the *CLUE ME IN* literature program which encourages students to read some of the best in children's books and a program consultant for the Sadlier "Word Study" reading program. He has a delightful wife, Joan, two sons with equally delightful wives and three precious granddaughters. Since his retirement from the University, he is involved in a variety of volunteer activities at his parish, Shore Pointe Nursing Center, The Men of the Sacred Hearts and the Divine Mercy Center.