



Contact: Margery Flax –212-888-8171
Danielides Communications – Becky Lewis – 212-319-7566

Mystery Writers of America names
James Lee Burke and Sue Grafton
recipients of the 2009 Grand Master Award

November 20, 2008 – New York, NY: Mystery Writers of America (MWA) has announced that the organization will name **James Lee Burke** and **Sue Grafton** its 2009 Grand Masters in honor of the Bicentennial of Edgar Allan Poe's birth next year. Not since 1978 has the organization presented dual Grand Masters.

MWA's Grand Master Award represents the pinnacle of achievement in the mystery genre and was established to acknowledge important contributions to the genre, as well as significant output of consistently high-quality material. The awards will be presented at the 63rd Annual Edgar® Awards banquet on Thursday April 30, 2009 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in New York City.

According to MWA executive vice president Harry Hunsicker, the Edgar Awards -- or "Edgars," as they are commonly known -- are named after Edgar Allan Poe, whose 200th birthday will be marked next year. "One of the great pleasures of my tenure at the helm of MWA has been informing two of the most talented writers on the planet that they have been selected as Grand Master. As a long-time fan of both, I cannot think of two more deserving individuals."

"News of my being named MWA Grand Master, along with James Lee Burke, caught me totally off-guard," said Sue Grafton, "but I'm delighted to be tapped and pleased to share the honor with a writer I so admire. I look forward to the ceremony which will surely be a blow-out affair in that it celebrates Edgar Allan Poe as well as the mystery genre."

Says James Lee Burke: "It is a great honor to receive the Grand Master award from the Mystery Writers of America. It's an enormous compliment to my work and to me, and I feel extremely grateful and humbled by the MWA's generosity of spirit. The award will always remain as one of the greatest tributes my work could receive. Thank you for all the support the MWA has given my work over the many years."

James Lee Burke has written more than 25 novels, including 17 in his “Dave Robicheaux” series, and his short stories have appeared in countless publications. . His novel *The Lost Get-Back Boogie* was rejected 111 times over the course of nine years, and upon publication was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. Burke has been the recipient of the Breadloaf and Guggenheim Fellowship, and two of his titles, *Heaven’s Prisoners* and *Two for Texas* have been made into motion pictures. He has won the Edgar® award twice in the category of “Best Novel”, placing him in a rare group of multiple winners.

Sue Grafton's Kinsey Millhone series is internationally known and has been published in 28 countries and in 26 languages. Her novels “*B* Is for Burglar” and “*C* Is for Corpse” won the first two Anthony Awards ever awarded by Bouchercon, the World Mystery Convention. In addition to a third Anthony, Grafton has won three Shamus Awards from the Private Eye Writers of America, as well as that organization's Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2008, Grafton was awarded the Cartier Dagger by the British Crime Writers’ Association, honoring lifetime achievement in the field.

Previous MWA Grand Masters include Bill Pronzini, Stephen King, Ira Levin, Mary Higgins Clark, Donald Westlake, Lawrence Sanders, P.D. James, Ellery Queen, Daphne du Maurier, Alfred Hitchcock, Graham Greene, and Agatha Christie.

####

Mystery Writers of America is the premier organization for mystery writers, professionals allied to the crime writing field, aspiring crime writers, and those who are devoted to the genre. The organization encompasses almost 3,000 members in three categories of membership that include publishers, editors, literary agents, and screen and television writers, as well as authors of fiction and non-fiction books. For more information on Mystery Writers of America, please visit the website: www.mysterywriters.org

#

*The EDGAR (and logo) are Registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
by the Mystery Writers of America, Inc.*