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Mystery Writers of America Announces Sara Paretsky as 2011 Grand Master And Raven Awards

November 18, 2010 - *New York, NY* – **Sara Paretsky** has been chosen as this year's Grand Master by Mystery Writers of America (MWA). MWA's Grand Master Award represents the pinnacle of achievement in mystery writing and was established to acknowledge important contributions to this genre, as well as a body of work that is both significant and of consistent high quality. Ms. Paretsky will be presented with her award at The Edgar Awards Banquet, which will be held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in New York City on Thursday, April 28, 2011. When told of being named Grand Master, Paretsky said, "I'm so glad to win this. I'm glad to have this for my very own."

Paretsky revolutionized the mystery world in 1982 with her novel *Indemnity*. The book introduced detective V.I. Warshawski, a female private investigator who used her wits and fists, challenging a genre in which women typically played minor or passive roles. Paretsky, who lives in Chicago, has written twelve best-selling Warshawski novels. She has also penned a memoir, two stand-alone novels, a collection of short stories, and has edited four anthologies. In 1986 Paretsky founded Sisters in Crime, an organization that supports women crime writers, earning her MS Magazine's 1987 Woman of the Year Award. The British Crime Writers awarded Paretsky both the Cartier Diamond Dagger for lifetime achievement and the Gold Dagger for best novel of 2004. Her books are currently published in thirty countries.

"The mystery genre took a seven-league stride thanks to Sara Paretsky, whose gutsy and dauntless protagonist showed that women can be tough guys, too," said Larry Light, Executive Vice President of Mystery Writers of America. "Before, in Sara's words, women in mysteries were either vamps or victims. Her heroine, private eye V.I. Warshawski, is whip-smart and two-fisted, capable of slugging back whiskey and wrecking cars, and afire to redress social injustice."

Two exceptional mystery bookstores will be honored with the 2011 Raven Award. Established in 1953, the award recognizes outstanding achievement in the mystery field outside the realm of creative writing. **Once Upon a Crime**, in Minneapolis, MN, and **Centuries & Sleuths** in Chicago, IL, will receive recognition for their contribution to the mystery community. They also will receive their awards at the Edgar Award Banquet in New York City on Thursday, April 28, 2011.

Centuries & Sleuths Bookstore was named one of the Ten Best Bookstores in Chicago by the *Chicago Tribune*. Many customers have tagged the owner, Augie Aleksy, as *the coolest bookseller in Chicago*. "I have always wanted a Raven. The mystery community is such a great place," Aleksy said upon hearing the news.

The store has hosted hundreds of author readings and talks, with both new and established writers. Augie's programs are innovative, including mock trials, debates, and numerous "Meeting of Minds" programs similar to the PBS series. In fact, from the very first days of opening, actors and then authors themselves were encouraged to dress in period costumes to illustrate and dramatize a book. Centuries & Sleuths was nominated for the American Booksellers Association "Bookseller of the Year" award in 2008. The store marks its 20th Anniversary this year.

Once Upon a Crime Mystery Bookstore owners Pat Frovarp and Gary Shulze read, review, promote, and hand-sell mysteries, from small presses and new authors to the biggest best-sellers. Pat was thrilled to hear about the Raven Award, "What a wonderful, wonderful honor!" she said.

Their store is open late to host signings for local and traveling authors, and they host an annual Write of Spring. Every March dozens of Minnesota mystery authors are able to meet hundreds of fans and celebrate the world of mysteries. They are currently taking submissions for a Write of Spring anthology. Pat and Gary are such mystery book enthusiasts that they married at their store on August 1, 2007, five years to the day that they had bought the store from the previous owners. In their wedding photos, Pat held a bouquet of flowers, and Gary held a Maltese Falcon statue. Once Upon a Crime will celebrate 25 years in business in Spring 2012.

Previous Raven winners include Mystery Lovers Bookstore in Oakmont, PA, Kate's Mystery Books in Cambridge, MA, The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., and The Poe House in Baltimore, MD.

Previous Grand Masters include Dorothy Gilman, James Lee Burke, Sue Grafton, Bill Pronzini, Stephen King, Marcia Muller, Dick Francis, Mary Higgins Clark, Donald Westlake, Lawrence Sanders, P.D. James, Ellery Queen, Daphne du Maurier, Alfred Hitchcock, Graham Greene, and Agatha Christie.

The Edgar Awards, or "Edgars," as they are commonly known, are named after MWA's patron saint Edgar Allan Poe and are presented to authors of distinguished work in various categories. Celebrating their 65th anniversary in 2010, MWA 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 authors of fiction and non-fiction books, screen and television writers, as well as publishers, editors, and literary agents. For more information on Mystery Writers of America, please visit the website:

www.mysterywriters.org

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