

OKLAHOMA **CENTER FOR THE BOOK**

Oklahoma Department of Libraries • 200 NE 18th Street • Oklahoma City, OK 73105

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Books By Oklahoma Authors to be Showcased at 2024 National Book Festival in Washington D.C.

Two Oklahoma authors will receive national recognition as their works are featured in the prestigious Great Reads from Great Places initiative at the 2024 National Book Festival in Washington, D.C., on Saturday, August 24.

The Oklahoma Center for the Book proudly announces that *This Indian Kid: A Native American Memoir* by Eddie Chuculate and *Otis W. Leader: The Ideal American Doughboy* by Sarah Elizabeth Sawyer have been chosen to represent the state. Chuculate's memoir, a powerful reflection on identity and heritage, was a finalist in both the Young Adult and Non-Fiction categories at the 2024 Oklahoma Book Awards and will be the young adult selection. Meanwhile, Sawyer's compelling biography of an American war hero, which won the Non-Fiction and Design awards at the 2024 Oklahoma Book Awards, will stand as Oklahoma's adult book choice.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to highlight Oklahoma authors as well as books about our great state," said Oklahoma Center for the Book Executive Director Connie Armstrong. "The theme of this year's festival is 'Books Build Us Up,' and people from all over the country and beyond will gather to celebrate reading, literacy, authors, and the book community."

The Great Reads from Great Places program features books and authors representing the literary heritage of all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and Northern Marianas. For more than 20 years, this program has highlighted children or young adult titles selected by each of the state and territorial Centers for the Book. In 2022, adult titles were added.

When asked about their books being included in the program Chuculate noted, “It’s humbling. You write and release a book, and except for a first few months it floats out there like a helium balloon. You wonder, ‘Is anyone listening?’ An acknowledgment like this is a booster shot of verification, especially on a national scale. It means a lot. I couldn’t be happier.”

Sawyer stated, “*Otis W. Leader: The Ideal American Doughboy* took an army of dedicated souls to produce, and I believe we did Otis proud. Thank you to Chickasaw Press, the Oklahoma Book Awards, and the National Book Festival for giving Otis and his story well-deserved recognition in the 21st century. I believe everyone who reads his story will come away feeling as though Otis were their hero and their friend, as I do.”

The 2024 National Book Festival will be held in-person on Saturday, August 24, at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C. A selection of programs will be livestreamed, and videos of all programs will be available shortly after the event.

Further information about the 2024 Oklahoma Book Award winners can be found at:

[Oklahoma.gov/libraries/book-awards](https://oklahoma.gov/libraries/book-awards)

More information about the festival and this year’s programming is at: [LOC.gov/bookfest](https://loc.gov/bookfest)

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About the Books and Authors

This Indian Kid: A Native American Memoir

Growing up impoverished, shuttled between different households, and attending fourteen schools in nine years, Eddie Chuculate seemed bound to follow a certain path in life. Despite the hurdles he faced, however, Eddie's upbringing was rich with love and bountiful gifts from his Creek and Cherokee heritage—deep rooted traditions he embraced even as he learned to live within the culture of white, small-town America that dominated his migratory childhood. In gorgeously spare and unflinching prose, Chuculate recalls his childhood and adolescence—the beautiful aspects, like his deep connection to the land and nature in his home state of Oklahoma and his loving relationship with his grandparents.

Chuculate is a native of Muskogee, Oklahoma, and currently resides in Minneapolis, Minnesota. His first book of fiction, Cheyenne Madonna, was published in July 2012.

Otis W. Leader: The Ideal American Doughboy

Otis W. Leader, a thirty-five-year-old widower of Chickasaw, Choctaw, Cherokee, and Irish descent, joined the United States Army where he was accused of being a German spy. Sawyer contends Leader enlisted to redeem his reputation and protect his country. During his time at war, he completed daring acts of heroism that earned him such honors as the Croix de Guerre, two Silver Stars, a Congressional Gold Medal, and a Purple Heart. Moreover, he was selected among a crowd of soldiers to represent the “Ideal American Doughboy.”

Sarah Elizabeth Sawyer is a story archeologist, who digs up shards of past lives, hopes, and truths, and pieces them together for readers today. She is the author of Anumpa Warrior: Choctaw Code Talkers of World War I. She lives in Canton, Texas.

About the Oklahoma Center for the Book

Located in the Oklahoma Department of Libraries, the Oklahoma Center for the Book (OCB) is a state affiliate of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. The OCB's mission is to promote Oklahoma authors, books about our state, and reading for pleasure by all age groups.

About the Oklahoma Department of Libraries

The Oklahoma Department of Libraries is the official State Library of Oklahoma. It serves the information and records management needs of state government, assists with public library development, coordinates library and information technology projects for the state, and serves the general public through its specialized collections. Oklahoma.gov/libraries