

Charles Wohlforth
Brief Biography and Curriculum Vitae
2/4/2010

Wohlforth brief biography

Charles Wohlforth is a life-long Alaska resident and prize-winning author of numerous books about Alaska. His work includes writing about science and the environment, politics and history, travel, and as-told-to biography. A popular lecturer, he has spoken all over the United States and overseas. Wohlforth lives with his wife, Barbara, and their four children. They reside in Anchorage during the winter, where they are avid cross-country skiers, and in summer on a remote Kachemak Bay shore reachable only by boat.

Wohlforth, 46, graduated magna cum laude from Princeton University in 1986 before returning to Alaska to work six years as a newspaper reporter, including covering the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill for the *Anchorage Daily News*. He became a full-time freelance writer in 1993, publishing articles in *The New Republic*, *Outside*, *Discover* and other periodicals, and writing three travel books published by Wiley. He also served two 3-year terms on the Anchorage Assembly, and worked as a consultant and speechwriter to U.S. Senator Mark Begich.

In 2004, Farrar, Straus & Giroux published Wohlforth's widely acclaimed non-fiction account of climate change in the Arctic as experienced by the Eskimos and the scientists studying it, titled *The Whale and the Supercomputer*. The book won *The Los Angeles Times* Book Prize for Science and Technology, among numerous other national and regional citations for science, culture, and journalism. His current projects include an upcoming book from Thomas Dunne/St. Martin's Press titled, *The Fate of Nature: Rediscovering Our Ability to Rescue the Earth*.

Books Published and Under Contract

The Fate of Nature: Rediscovering Our Ability to Rescue the Earth (Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin's Press, publication June 2010). Humankind's capacity for restraint examined through the lenses of history, anthropology, science and personal stories.

Vic Fischer memoir (University of Alaska Press, publication unscheduled). Under contract with grant funding from the University of Alaska to assist Fischer, an Alaska constitutional convention delegate, in writing his autobiography.

Alaska Day by Day (Wiley, publication 2010). A new illustrated travel guidebook on Alaska.

Saving for the Future: My Life and the Alaska Permanent Fund (By Dave Rose as told to Charles Wohlforth; Epicenter Press, 2008). Biography of an Alaskan pioneer politician and history of Alaska's enormous oil wealth savings account.

The Whale and the Supercomputer: On the Northern Front of Climate Change (North Point Press/Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2004). Indigenous and scientific perceptions of Arctic climate change. Published in French as **La baleine et le supercalculateur** (Paulsen, 2008).

Frommer's Alaska (Wiley, 1996-2010). Thirteen editions of a leading travel guidebook covering all of Alaska.

Alaska For Dummies (Wiley, 2003-2009). Four editions of travel guidebook covering Alaska.

Frommer's Family Vacations in the National Parks (Wiley, 1999-2004). Three editions of a guidebook covering travel, natural history and culture in 15 national parks and seashores.

Crisis in the Commons: The Alaska Solution (By Walter J. Hickel; Institute for Contemporary Studies, 2002). Assisted former Alaska governor and Secretary of the Interior Walter Hickel in writing philosophical memoir.

Spectacular Alaska (Hugh Lauter Levin Associates, 1998). Text for coffee table photography book.

Work Included in Books or Anthologies

Alaska at 50: Past, Present, and the Next Fifty Years of Statehood, edited by Dr. G. W. Kimura (University of Alaska Press, 2009).

The AMS Weather Book: The Ultimate Guide to America's Weather, by Jack Williams (University of Chicago Press, 2009).

The Last Polar Bear: Facing the Truth of a Warming World, by Steven Kazlowski, et al. (Braided River/The Mountaineers Books, 2008).

The Future of Nature: Writing on a Human Ecology from Orion Magazine, selected and introduced by Barry Lopez (Milkweed Editions, 2007).

Global Climate Change, edited by Paul McCaffrey (H.W. Wilson, 2006).

The Alaska Reader: Voices from the North, edited by Anne Hanley and Carolyn Kremers (Fulcrum, 2005).

National Geographic National Parks: Atlas and Travel Planner (publication cancelled).

Frommer's National Parks of the American West, by Don and Barbara Laine (two editions; IDG Books, 1998, 2000).

Frommer's USA, edited by Bill Godwin (Simon & Schuster, 1998).

Outside Magazine's Guide to Family Vacations, by Frommer's (Simon & Schuster, 1997).

Best Newspaper Writing 1990, edited by Don Fry and Karen Brown (Poynter Institute, 1990).

Season of Dead Water, edited by Helen Frost (Breitenbush, 1990).

Selected Lectures Given

College and University Audiences

Alaska Pacific University, Anchorage, Alaska, 1/19/05.

Cambridge University, Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge, England, 8/28/07

Dartmouth College, Arctic Institute, Hanover, New Hampshire, 5/18/04

Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon, 10/4/04

Princeton University, Environmental Institute, Princeton, New Jersey, 5/14/04

San Francisco State University, Pacific Rim Voices/The Kiriyaama Book Prize, San Francisco, California, 11/3/05
University of Alaska Anchorage, Anchorage, Alaska, 9/15/04 and other dates
University of Alaska Fairbanks, Museum of the North, Fairbanks, Alaska, 4/15/04
University of Alaska, Rural Development Program, Barrow, Alaska, 4/6/06
University of Washington Program on Climate Change, Seattle, Washington, 10/6/04
University of Washington Program on the Environment, Seattle, Washington, 5/5/04
Yale University, Peabody Museum, New Haven, Connecticut, 9/28/04

Conference Audiences (non-specialist)

Alaska Forum on the Environment, keynote, Anchorage, Alaska, 2/7/06
Aspen Institute Forum on the Environment, Aspen, Colorado, 3/28/09
Etonnants Voyageurs, festival international du livre et du film, Saint-Malo, France, 5/10-11/08
Exploratorium/ECHO Consortium, webcast, San Francisco, California 4/6/09
Forum of Young CEOs, Anchorage, Alaska, 5/21/06
FREEZE Project, Alaska Design Forum, Anchorage, Alaska, 1/24/09
National Park Service Beringia Conference, Anchorage, Alaska, 10/21/04
Northwest Public Power Association, Anchorage, Alaska, 5/22/08
USDA Soil Conservation Service, American Indian and Asian Professionals Conference, Anchorage, Alaska 8/17/06
World Wildlife Fund, climate camp, Homer, Alaska, 10/30/06

Non-profit Organization Audiences

Center for Alaska Coastal Studies, Homer, Alaska, 7/16/04
Inupiat Heritage Center, Barrow, Alaska, 5/11/04
New Bedford Whaling Museum, New Bedford, Massachusetts, 9/23/04
Port Townsend Marine Science Center, Port Townsend, Washington, 2/9/08
Sitka Conservation Society, Sitka, Alaska, 5/3/04
St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Anchorage, Alaska, 10/17/04
Unitarian Fellowship, Anchorage, Alaska, 12/9/07
World Affairs Council, Anchorage, Alaska, 9/10/04
World Affairs Council, Juneau, Alaska, 12/21/04

Professional and Scientific Organization Audiences

Alaska Historical Society, annual meeting, Anchorage, Alaska, 10/18/08
Alaska Marine Science Symposium, Anchorage, Alaska, 1/24/06
American Meteorological Association, Annual Meeting keynote, San Diego, California, 1/9/05.
Arctic Research Consortium of the U.S., Annual Meeting keynote, Washington, D.C., 5/13/04
Hatfield Marine Science Center, Newport, Oregon, 10/4/04
Mineral Management Service/BP, Anchorage, Alaska, 6/11/04
Monterey Institute of International Studies, International Environmental Policy Program, Monterey, California, 11/8/05
National Park Service, interpreter training, Kenai Fjords National Park, 4/23/08

Pacific Rim Conference on Literature and Rhetoric, University of Alaska Anchorage, keynote, 2/23/06

U.S. Forest Service, Ketchikan, Alaska, 4/30/04

USDA Soil Conservation Service, Anchorage, Alaska, 9/21/04

Articles Published

Alaska Airlines Magazine: 3/1/96; 9/1/96; 2/1/97; 3/1/97; 2/1/00; 2/1/02; 2/1/04

Alaska Geographic: 4/1/93; 7/1/94; 1/1/96; 1/1/99

Alaska Magazine: 6/1/91; 7/1/91; 11/1/91; 4/1/92; 1/1/93; 7/1/93; 11/1/94; 3/1/95; 8/1/95; 9/1/96; 9/1/97; 2/1/98; 7/1/00; 3/1/02; 4/1/03; 10/1/04; 11/1/07

Alaska On The Move: 5/15/97

Anchorage Daily News, We Alaskans: 8/5/90; 6/16/91; 10/13/91; 4/5/92; 6/20/93; 8/8/93; 5/22/94; 11/6/94; 1/22/95; 11/12/95; 8/18/96; 12/17/96; 1/26/97; 4/20/97; 5/4/97; 10/19/97; 1/16/00;

Anchorage Press: 2/29/96; 5/13/99; 10/25/01; 11/8/01

Capital Eye: 7/1/96

CJR Columbia Journalism Review: 11/1/93; 7/1/94

The Daily Princetonian: 2/28/84; 4/6/84; 4/13/84; 11/9/84; 11/29/84; 12/7/84; 12/14/84; 2/28/85

Discover: 3/1/10

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, Heartland: 10/18/01; 4/11/04

Fame: 8/1/89

Nassau Literary Review: Spring '84

National Wildlife: 6/1/90; 4/1/05

The New Republic: 9/18/89; 11/12/90; 12/3/90

The New Republic online: 8/29/08; 7/23/08

Northwest Airlines World Traveler: 9/1/01

NPS Discovery Today: 9/13/00

Onearth: 3/1/04; 7/1/05

Onearth Online: 10/1/09

Orion: 3/1/04

Outside: 4/1/91; 3/1/92; 4/1/02

Outside Family Vacations: Summer 2001; Summer 2002

Pacific Northwest: 1/1/91; 5/1/91; 7/1/91

Panoscope: 9/1/90

Sunset: 7/1/99

Awards

2009

University of Alaska Anchorage/Alaska Pacific University: Selected as Book of the Year for campus-wide reading and study.

2005

American Meteorological Society: Louis J. Battan Author's Award for outstanding, newly published book on the atmospheric and related sciences.

2004

Los Angeles Times Book Prize: winner, science and technology.

Overseas Press Club of America: citation, best reporting in any medium on international environment issues (Whitman Bassow Award)

Library Journal "Best Books 2004": listed

Alaska Library Association: Outstanding Alaskan of the Year (best Alaska book for 2004)

Kiryama Prize: one of five finalists for a \$15,000 award for nonfiction on Pacific Rim cultures.

2003

Anchorage School District: Award for Excellence for leadership as chairman for two years of School Bonds YES! campaign, which won voter approval of \$264 million in bonds.

2001

Alaska Press Club: Best Reporting on Health or Science, Non-Daily

1999

Anchorage Assembly: Resolution 99-136 "Recognizing the Leadership of Assemblymember Charles P. Wohlforth in the Orderly and Successful Disposal of the Anchorage Telephone Utility"

1997

Government Hill Community Council: Citation "for exceeding even his usual high standards as a public servant in the matter of Municipal Ordinance 96-209," March 3.

1995

Alaska Press Club: Best general news story, second place.

1994

Alaska Press Club:

- Best coverage of the Arts, first place
- Best reporting on the environment, second place.

1993

Alaska Press Club: best columnist, third place.

1992

Alaska Press Club:

- Best general reporting, first place
- Best general reporting, third place.
- Best breaking story, first place.
- Best reporting on business and economics, first place.

1991

Society of Professional Journalists, US Northwest Region, large dailies:

- Best business reporting, first place.
- Best reporting on criminal justice, honorable mention.

Alaska Press Club:

- Best breaking story, first place.
- Best comprehensive coverage, first place.
- Best lifestyles or personality feature, third place.

1990

C.B. Blethen Award: for Distinguished Deadline Reporting, second place.

Alaska Press Club:

- Best reporting on a political subject, first place.
- Best reporting on health, science, consumer and the environment, first place.
- Best long news feature, third place.

1989

American Society of Newspaper Editors: Award for Distinguished Deadline Writing, first runner-up.

C.B. Blethen Award: for Distinguished Deadline Reporting, first place.

Alaska Press Club:

- Best reporting, non-daily, second place;
- Best comprehensive coverage, non-daily, third place.

1988

Alaska Press Club: Best breaking story, non-daily, first place.

1987

Society of Professional Journalists, Farthest North Chapter:

- Best spot news reporting, third place.
- Best series, third place.

1984

Princeton University: Special Award in Creative Writing by the Dean of the College.

Employment

1989-present: Author and freelance writer. See above.

2003-2009: Freelance consultant and speech writer, Anchorage mayors Mark Begich and Matt Claman.

1993-1999: Member, Anchorage Municipal Assembly. Elected to two three-year terms to represent the downtown area of the city-borough government. Chair of the Budget Committee for five years, handling an operating budget of over \$200 million as well as capital and utility budgets. Chair of the ATU Committee, responsible for the successful sale of the city's \$295 million telephone company.

1992-1997: Editor, POL: A Journal of Policy and Politics. Founded and edited a monthly journal.

1992-1993: Research Director, Alaska Research Associates. Managed research projects, political campaigns and polling for a political consultancy firm.

1988-1992: Reporter, *Anchorage Daily News*. Lead field reporter on the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill. Covered investigative projects, including one that led to the arrest of the subject.

1986-1988: Reporter, *Homer News*. General assignment reporter for a small town weekly.

1982-1986: Student, Princeton University. Majored in English with an emphasis in creative writing.

1981-1982: Reporter and production assistant, KSKA public radio.

Memberships and Volunteerism

American Association for the Advancement of Science, member 2002-present.

American Society of Journalists and Authors, member 1998-2002.

Anchorage Assembly, member and committee chair 1993-1999.

Anchorage Library Foundation, member and committee chair 2007-present.

School Bonds YES!, chair of campaign in passage of \$264 million in bonds 2002-2003.

Chugach Optional School Executive Board, officer 2000-2005, president 2005-2006.

Cook Inlet Historical Society, board member 1999-2000.

Government Hill Community Council, president 1992.

Hillcrest Children's Center Executive Committee, officer 1995-2000.

KSKA Public Radio, Hometown Alaska talk show host, 2009-present.

Municipal Light & Power, member, board of directors, committee chair, 2009-present.

Steller Secondary Alternative, Strategic Planning Committee, chair 2006-2009.

Personal & educational background

Born: New York City, 1963.

Alaska resident: 1966-present.

Graduated: Steller Secondary Alternative, 1981

Married: Barbara, 1985

Graduated: magna cum laude from Princeton University, B.A. degree in English, 1986.

Children born: Robert 1991, Julia 1994, Joseph 1999, Rebecca 2001.

Contact information

Literary Agent: The Nicholas Ellison Agency, 55 Fifth Avenue, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10003; 212-206-5600.

Direct telephone: 907-274-2271 office (Alaska time zone)

Email: wohlforth@gci.net

Web site: www.wohlforth.net; www.fateofnature.com