

2009 SUMMIT OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

SID MARTY

WRITER, MUSICIAN, CONSERVATIONIST



As a writer of nonfiction and poetry, Sid Marty is one of Alberta's most eloquent chroniclers of the modern west. He has adapted many of his stories . often stark assessments of life in the Rocky Mountains . into engaging songs that he accompanies live with acoustic guitar. A former park warden with a passion for wild mountain places, a popular radio guest, multiple literary award winner, and a vocal advocate for conservation, Marty will be recognized for his contributions with the 2009 Summit of Excellence Award at this year's Banff Mountain Film Festival.

A fourth-generation Albertan who has lived in ranching country in the southwest corner of the province since 1981, Marty began contributing poetry to anthologies in the early 1970s. He was a park warden in Yoho, Jasper, Prince Albert, and Banff national parks from 1966 to 1978, and his experience in the mountains and foothills informs much of his work as a poet, songwriter, and nonfiction writer. His 1978 book of nonfiction, *Men for the Mountains*, was cited by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Association as one of the 50 most influential books in the conservation movement. It follows the life of the warden, much of it led on horseback in the backcountry . a collection of stories filled with humour, tragedy, and natural wonder.

Marty gave the inaugural performance at the first annual Banff Mountain Book Festival in 1994, and his books have won four major prizes at the Festival over the years, including the Grand Prize in 2008 for *Black Grizzly of Whiskey Creek*. The true story of a series of frightening bear attacks in Banff in 1980, *Black Grizzly* was shortlisted for the Governor General's Literary Award in 2008 and in the same year, Marty was presented with Alberta's highest literary honour, the Grant MacEwan Literary Arts Award for his contribution to the literary culture of Alberta.

One of Sid's most valuable contributions has been to bring mountain stories . whether they're the backcountry life of a park warden, or the tragedy of a bear mauling . to a wide and appreciative public,+ says Bernadette McDonald, former vice president, Mountain Culture at The Banff Centre, and a past Summit of Excellence recipient. His interpretations have resonated for that much wider public, perhaps due to his ongoing passion for this mountain landscape.+

Through his songs, books, and advocacy, Marty has also been key to the efforts to conserve wild land in southwestern Alberta, particularly the movement to protect the proposed Andy Russell . Itai sah kóp Park, more than 1,000 square kilometres of land in the Castle Wilderness near Crowsnest Pass.