

# Success stalks novelist after grizzly tale wins kudos

By CARMINA BROOKS

Robert C. Wilson, Detroit attorney turned novelist, is on his way over the rainbow to earn a pot of gold. To aspiring authors, Wilson is an incredible dream come true.

His first book, "Crooked Tree," is a suspense-laden, chilling story about supernatural forces and killer bears in northern Michigan. Published in April by G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York (\$10.95), the book's early reviews indicate it will be a winner. Movie rights were sold to producers David Gentile and Sidney Glazier.

At the Birmingham Center for Continuing Education, Wilson was guest speaker in Dr. Charles Lewis' class on "How to Get Published." If he is excited about accomplishing what all writers dream about on the first try, it is hidden beneath a calm courtroom demeanor.

He made publishing sound like a piece of cake as he answered questions modestly. But he worked on and lived with his book for three years, he said.

"I STARTED with two goals — to

write a novel and to have it accepted by a reputable publisher. But never in my most reasonable expectations did I think what has occurred so far would have occurred," Wilson said.

Will success spoil Bobby Wilson? he was asked after class.

"I'm not successful yet. The book came out just a few weeks ago and it has to stand on its own," he responded.

Wilson, 29, an assistant Wayne County prosecutor, said, "I do not see myself as a writer every single day for the rest of my life."

He will request another leave of absence from his job to work on a screenplay for the movie version of the book. If he can't please the producers, they have an option to bring in another writer, he said.

His PERSONAL appearances in the metropolitan area to promote the book have already begun.

Four of the companies, Royal Winnipeg, Laura Dean, Ballet Repertory and the Ohio Ballet, will be making their Music Hall debut. The other four will be appearing in repeat engagements.

Reduced-price season tickets to these attractions are being offered in 12 different combinations ranging from three to eight performances. The savings enjoyed by season ticket buyers results in per performance costs of as little as \$1.56 (in the balcony) for children and a maximum of \$9.50 for the very best week-night adult tickets. In

Twyla Sharp Dancers.

On the modern side are the Laura Dean Dancers and Musicians, the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company, Alvin Ailey's American Dance Theater and the

He is the youngest son of Jean and Andrew Wilson of Detroit.

Writing is a craft the author was exposed to by his father, who heads his own public relations firm, Creative Services in Detroit. His father wrote a book after coming out of World War II that still receives occasional comments, Wilson said.

And while in school, the younger Wilson discovered he had a talent for writing reports and for research.

"Crooked Tree" was written "For Mom and Pop." He has three brothers. Michael is a photographer now working in New York City. John lives in Canton Township. James Axel Wilson carries the Danish family name of the book's main character, Alex Michelson, who, like the author, is a young attorney.

Michael photographed and made slides of the Michigan north country and the author hopes to convince producers to shoot the movie in Michigan. Filming could start as early as this summer, he said, if everything goes well in the pre-production stages.

"Michigan's north country is as much a character in my book as the human characters are," Wilson said.

"CROOKED TREE" began in 1976 when Wilson came out of Wayne State University Law School. He had an idea for a story and researched societies that believed in transmigration of souls to animals.

He found that Ottawa Indians held a belief in transmigration called "bear walking."

"To set the locale in northern Michigan, I chose the only animal capable of the type of terror I was seeking — the black bear. It is a powerful, interesting creature, revered by tribal societies for centuries and perhaps the most intelligent animal in the forest."

"It stands on two legs like a man. When skinned, its proportions are human-like. Out in the wilds, its cub's cry like a human baby. It has human actions like scratching its back against a tree — and it looks comical."

The story takes place in northwestern lower Michigan. A fictional community of "Wabanakis" is given landmarks familiar to lower peninsula communities in Michigan newspapers, a police post, courts and universities have a role in the story. Indian rights and environmentalists versus commer-

cial development are issues threading through the story line.

ABOUT HALF the book was written while the author was holed up in a family cabin near Grayling on Lake Margrethe.

Wilson mailed three chapters from his manuscript to five agents that he had been told might be interested in first-time novelists. The first one sent it back — didn't like it. The second was too busy — had too many clients. The third, Diane Cleaver, had worked as an editor for 16 years and just became an agent for the New York-based Sanford-Greenberg firm. She asked to see the whole manuscript.

"On the first meeting with my editor and agent in New York, I was ap-

prehensive. I heard horror stories about rewrite demands. She (the editor and publisher) walked in, plopped my manuscript down in front of me and said, 'Here it is. However you write it is how it will be printed. I gave up writing with writers a long time ago.'"

"She turned and started talking to my agent who was a friend of hers about something else," Wilson recalled. What is his next book going to be about? He has an idea for a political novel, a science fiction story and another northern Michigan book, he said, but hasn't decided which one he will work on first.

Judging from the carefully plotted success of his first novel, Wilson comes off as a fellow who knows exactly what he wants to do next.

## Music Hall announces coming season

The eight dance companies engaged for next season at Music Hall Center comprise a well-balanced season. For the first time, Music Hall will offer a miniseries of classically oriented companies as well as one composed of modern troupes.

In the classical vein are the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, the Ballet Repertory Company, The Feld Ballet and the Ohio Ballet.

On the modern side are the Laura Dean Dancers and Musicians, the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company, Alvin Ailey's American Dance Theater and the

European fountains and statuary are interspersed with unusual plantings, sculptured shrubs, flowering trees and fountains.

The gardens are a part of the estate of Cranbrook founders George and Ellen Scripps Booth. They are maintained by Cranbrook House and Gardens Auxiliary.

Admission is \$1.50 for adults and 50 cents for students and seniors. Entrance is at 380 Lone Pine, Bloomfield Hills. Free parking is across Lone Pine in the park and rolling hills.

adition, there are special discount season tickets for students and senior citizens.

IN THE SEVEN YEARS since its initial 1973-74 season, Music Hall has presented more than 40 different touring dance companies. Many originated from New York's cultural complex, but others traveled from home bases in California, Pennsylvania, Poland, Israel, France and Tahiti.

Luminaries in the history of dance such as Martha Graham, Alvin Ailey, Agnes DeMille and Paul Taylor have

brought companies to the Music Hall, and relative newcomers such as Pilobolus and Mummenschaus were discovered by Music Hall audiences before they rose to their current status in the performing arts world.

To obtain a free 1980-81 Music Hall Dance brochure, call the season ticket office, 963-9643, between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, or write to that office at Music Hall, 350 Madison Avenue, Detroit, 48226. Single tickets to these dance attractions will not be available until Oct. 13.

## Gardens open daily

Cranbrook's 40 acres of gardens will be open to the public Memorial Day through Labor Day, 1-5 p.m. daily. Cranbrook Institute of Science and Cranbrook Academy of Art will be closed on Memorial Day.

Visitors will see the formal gardens bursting with color as well as casual wildflower areas. Also open is an Oriental garden complete with miniature rock island plus rose, English and herb gardens. There are ponds, a formal sunken garden, cascades, a Greek amphitheater, a lake and rolling hills.

European fountains and statuary are interspersed with unusual plantings, sculptured shrubs, flowering trees and fountains.

The gardens are a part of the estate of Cranbrook founders George and Ellen Scripps Booth. They are maintained by Cranbrook House and Gardens Auxiliary.

Admission is \$1.50 for adults and 50 cents for students and seniors. Entrance is at 380 Lone Pine, Bloomfield Hills. Free parking is across Lone Pine in the park and rolling hills.

## Center plans farmers market

The Farmington Community Center is planning a farmers market from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturdays from Aug. 2 through Oct. 25 on its grounds at 24705 Farmington Road north of 10 Mile.

Growers who sell such items as locally grown fruits, vegetables, herbs, honey products, eggs, flowers, plants, nursery stock, homemade baked goods,

arts and crafts are eligible for the market.

Space will be rented to growers for a seasonal fee of \$60, a monthly rate ranging from \$26 to \$32 or a daily fee of \$7.

For further information call the center's director, Betty Palne at 477-8404.

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## Honor group adds member

Margaret Ann Einhaus of Farmington has been inducted into the Elmhurst College chapter of Phi Kappa

Phi a national scholastic honor society. Ms. Einhaus is a senior at the college in Elmhurst, Ill.

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