

For Immediate Release

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A New Look for a Cherokee Folktale

Author Nancy Kelly Allen honors her heritage with newest children's picture book

Mt. Pleasant, SC (February 1, 2014) – Inspired by her Cherokee heritage, *First Fire, A Cherokee Folktale* by Nancy Kelly Allen honors her great grandmother in a unique way. Due to release February 10th, this picture book's vibrant art by Sherry Rogers demonstrates the storytelling traditions of the Cherokee culture.

This folktale not only describes how fire was brought to the earth, but it also tells us why certain animals look the way that they do today. The story begins with a strike of lightning causing fire on a small island. All of the animals gathered to elect one of them to bring back the fire. After many unsuccessful attempts, more animals shy away from traveling to the island until the small water spiders volunteers.

Allen chose this particular story to honor her great-grandmother, "A creation story, such as *First Fire*, was my choice for retelling because children are always interested in firsts and how things happen. How did animals get their characteristics? Why are an owl's eyes circled with white rings? The story has a gripping power to hold the reader, and I simply loved it."

As with all Sylvan Dell Publishing books, *First Fire* includes a For Creative Minds section filled with additional Cherokee facts that explores the culture in a variety of ways. The publisher also includes teaching activities, quizzes and information to seamlessly introduce the text into a classroom on the book's web page.

Nancy Kelly Allen is a retired school librarian and the award-winning author of more than 30 picture books. Her inspiration for writing *First Fire* was to honor her Cherokee great-grandmother, Sarah. She hopes that this book will provide younger generations an insight into the mystery and wonder of traditional folktales. Some of her recent and award-winning titles include *On the Banks of the Amazon*, *What Sea Creature Is This?*, and *Trouble in Troublesome Creek*. Nancy lives in Kentucky with her husband and two dogs.

Sherry Rogers spent twelve years as a corporate graphic designer and artist before "leaving it all behind" for the freelance world of illustrating children's books. Through illustrating *The First Fire*, Sherry

remembers her own ancestor, Na Ni, a Cherokee woman from the mountains of North Carolina. Some of Sherry's other Sylvan Dell titles include *The Penguin Lady*, *Ten for Me*, *Hey Diddle Diddle*, *Newton and Me*, *Moose and Magpie*, *Paws, Claws, Hands & Feet*, and *The Deductive Detective*; as well as her award-winning titles: *Sort It Out!*, *Kersplatypus*, *Burro's Tortillas*, and *If You Were a Parrot*. Sherry lives in Northern California with her family and their pets.

For more information, or to schedule an interview with Nancy Kelly Allen or Sherry Rogers please contact Heather Williams at (843) 971-6722 or heatherwilliams@sylvandellpublishing.com.

About Sylvan Dell Publishing

Sylvan Dell is on a mission to improve child literacy with science and math through fictional picture books. Using prose and pictures, children are delighted with stories of their favorite animals, planets, or even place. This leads to the exploration of facts and learning activities in each book's *For Creative Minds* pages. Sylvan Dell carefully designs each book to portray accurately the chosen subject. Vetted by experts in that field, and aligned to common core and state standards, each book is an asset to educational programs. Sylvan Dell has grown to include more than 80 authors and illustrators, and honored to have won more than 70 book awards since its inception in 2005.

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