

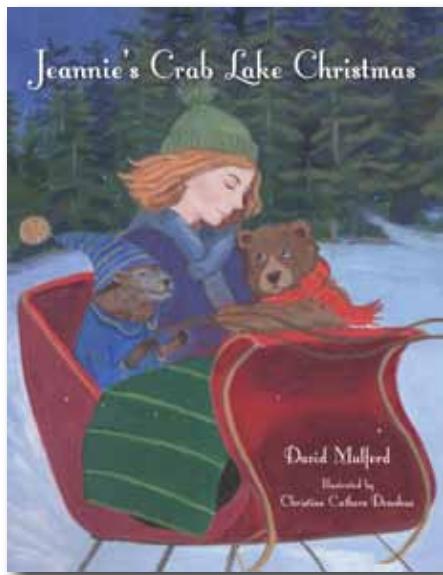
Jeannie's Crab Lake Christmas

by David Mulford



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Heartwarming stories of northern Wisconsin, created by former US Ambassador David Mulford as gifts for his wife, will now be shared with the world in *Jeannie's Crab Lake Christmas*



DALLAS—Arizona-based author and former US Ambassador David Mulford releases the first in his series of imaginative adventures at Crab Lake in his children's book, *Jeannie's Crab Lake Christmas* (Brown Books Kids).

For David and his wife Jeannie, Christmas was never complete without their visits to the beautiful Wisconsin waters of Crab Lake. These trips, as well as David's love and adoration for his wife, provided the inspiration for these whimsical tales. For the last 27 years, David's Christmas gift to Jeannie, no matter where they've been in the world, has been a new story with Crab Lake as the setting.

"The over-arching theme is the wonder of nature, of all living things and of the seasons, both in life and in the wilderness of the lake country in the very north of Wisconsin," says Mulford. "Each year I have been inspired to

find and describe challenges, large and small, that make the human experience miraculous and joyful. Jeannie has always believed in miraculous things, which make the stories very real for her."

Jeannie's Crab Lake Christmas shows an endearing side of this accomplished world traveler, who has had a successful career in international affairs.

"Living in so many places—Oxford, Africa, London, Washington DC, New York, Saudi Arabia, India, and London again—gave me a rich mix of creative ideas and perspectives for writing each year's Christmas gift for Jeannie. Yet the focus every year was on Crab Lake, our retreat to nature and peace."

Beautiful illustrations by Christine Cathers Donohue bring the animals of Crab Lake to life in David Mulford's tale of friendship, family, and fun. This charming tale will inspire young readers to believe "anything is possible."

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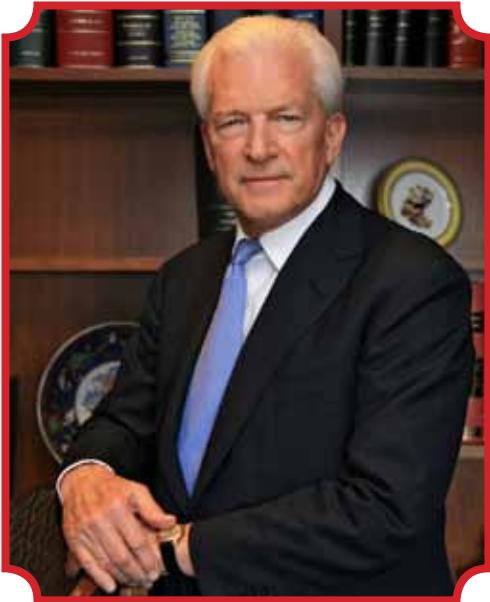
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Jeannie's Crab Lake Christmas

About the Author



For David Mulford and his wife Jeannie, Christmas would not be complete without their visits to the beautiful Wisconsin waters of Crab Lake. These magical journeys provide the inspiration for David's whimsical tales. In addition to writing, David is a former US Ambassador to India. He also has a PhD from Oxford University, serves as a Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Hoover Institute at Stanford University, and has enjoyed a long and notable career in international finance and diplomacy. For the last twenty-seven years, David's Christmas gift to Jeannie, no matter where they are in the world, has been a story of Christmas at Crab Lake. This is the first such tale. When not traveling, David and Jeannie reside in Paradise Valley, Arizona.

About the Illustrator

Christine Cathers Donohue resides in New Jersey with her husband and two children. She has a BFA from the University of the Arts as well as a wealth of experience illustrating greeting cards and producing award-winning fine art paintings. This is Christine's second children's book, which she dedicates to her parents, Frank and Ethel, for supporting a dreamer.

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Author Q&A

Where did the inspiration for Jeannie's Crab Lake Christmas come from?

The inspiration to write a Christmas story every year as a gift to my wife, Jeannie, began 27 years ago and comes from my love and admiration for Jeannie, and her unique kindness and imagination.

We met 38 years ago. It was love at first sight. Jeannie joined my life of living and working around the world. Every year, whether from London, India, Africa, Saudi Arabia, south America, Washington DC or New York, we returned to the log cabin on Molly Point at Crab Lake in Wisconsin. We have many blessings, including our shared love of the forest and lakes and the miracle of changing seasons in a world we share with the woodland creatures, who have resided there for all time.

What does Jeannie think of the book? Does she find it accurate with her experiences there?

Jeannie treasures all 27 stories, because they were written especially for her and she understands what a unique gift they have been and to appreciate. They tell of Christmas, that blessed time when families come together to celebrate hope and to appreciate the beautiful world God has created. It is here at Crab Lake that Jeannie discovers that all her bird and animal friends can talk in mid-winter. As Pudgey Bear, the young cub, reveals in this first story, all the animals and birds "can talk, just like you, but only in winter. We can't talk in summer, even to tell you that we can't talk in summer".

Each year there is a new adventure, drawn from that years' events, often arising from far away but always carrying the message that there is only one world for people and animals to share.



When and how did you start going to Crab Lake?

In the early 1950s, I passed through Crab Lake on canoe trips and, several times, camped on one of its many small islands. Crab Lake was the most beautiful lake, a good place to spend a restful day on a long canoe trip. There were only a few, well-hidden cabins on the lake in those days, so I saw Crab Lake as remote and full of adventure. In 1961, my mother and stepfather bought a point of land on Crab Lake and built a cabin and small guest house. For the next sixteen years, I took my vacations there, always returning from wherever I was in the world. Later, Mother bought another beautiful point of land further down the lake, now named Molly Point (we named it after her), where, in 1979, the three Mulford brothers built a cabin. We have gone back there every summer and most winters since.

Jeannie's Crab Lake Christmas



How have your experiences living abroad and serving as an Ambassador affected your writing?

Living in so many places—Oxford, Africa, London, Washington DC, New York, Saudi Arabia, India and London again—gave me a rich mix of creative ideas and perspectives for writing each year's Christmas gift for Jeannie. Yet the focus every year was on Crab Lake, our retreat to nature and peace.

What childhood books have influenced you the most?

Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, Diary of a Real Boy, and Wind in the Willows.

How would you describe your creative process?

During each year, I am always on the lookout for events or experiences that might form the basis for a story theme that would capture, in writing, that memory for Jeannie. Then I have needed to find the time and moments of peace to write. Often, this has been on long-distance airline flights or in foreign hotel rooms. Each story must remain a secret surprise for Jeannie until Christmas morning.

Tell us about your idea for the next book in this series.

The next 26 stories have already been written. Of course, there will be more stories to come, because I could not bear to disappoint Jeannie, and they are a joy for me to write.

What would you say the over-arching theme is in Jeannie's Crab Lake Christmas?

The over-arching theme is the wonder of nature, of all living things and of the seasons, both in life and in the wilderness of the lake country in the very north of Wisconsin. Each year, I have been inspired to find and describe challenges, large and small, that make the human experience miraculous and joyful. Jeannie has always believed in miraculous things, which make the stories very real for her.

What message would you like readers to remember?

That anything is possible and that, in the woods and lakes where the birds and animals live, it is their world, too, not just ours.

Jeannie's Crab Lake Christmas

Excerpts from the book...

As the moon set on the other side of the frozen lake, the snowy owl warned of the end of the night. The sleigh was pulled into the clearing, and Jeannie stood in the sleigh, surrounded by her many friends. "Thank you so very much," she said. "Thank you for the best, the most special night of my life."



Then the sleigh turned into the woods at the big boulder that marked the summer walking trail, and soon they were deep in the woods, passing the vast swamp and rising up the hills. Jeannie noticed that all around her – on the blankets and tucked into the blankets and behind her on the seat – were animals of all kinds, and dozens running along in the snow.



In a short time, smoke was seen curling from the stone chimney, and Christmas lights appeared in the windows. Outside, the woods were fairly bursting with creatures large and small, all watching the cottage and waiting for midnight.

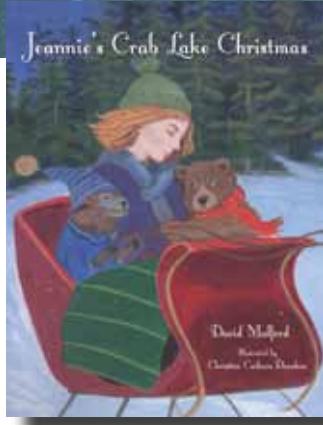
"We are the honey bears,
and we need honey!"

They raised their paws high in the air and danced in a circle around Jeannie, singing their song.



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SUMMARY

All the animals in the forest are abuzz. Jeannie, the kindest and most beautiful lady they know, is coming to Crab Lake for Christmas! The animals love to watch Jeannie from a distance when she visits in the summer, but they have never had a chance to talk to her before now—for, as everyone knows, animals can only talk in the winter. This time, however, they can finally say a proper hello. So come to Crab Lake for Christmas, and spend the evening with Jeannie and her forest friends: bear cub Pudgey and his family, kindly Mr. Woodchuck, distinguished Bellknap Beaver, and the deer, the wolves, the cardinals, and more! Beautiful illustrations by Christine Cathers Donohue bring them all to life in David Mulford's charming tale of friendship, family, and fun.