

2016 School-Wide Summer Reading Program Title List

Biography

Black Dog of Fate: A Memoir by Peter Balakian

Peter Balakian writes with the precision of a poet and the lyricism of a privileged suburban child in 1950s & 60s New Jersey. He is shadowed by his relatives' carefully guarded memories of past trauma: the brutal Turkish extermination in 1915 of more than a million Armenians, including most of his maternal grandmother's family. Balakian seamlessly interweaves personal and historical material to depict one young man's reclamation of his heritage and to scathingly indict the political forces that conspired to sweep under the rug the 20th century's first genocide.

Miles: The Autobiography by Miles Davis

Universally acclaimed as a musical genius, Miles Davis was one of the most important and influential musicians in the world. Here, Miles speaks out about his extraordinary life. In this book, he holds nothing back. He speaks frankly and openly about his drug problem and how he overcame it. He condemns the racism he encountered in the music business and in American society generally. And he discusses the women in his life. But above all, Miles talks about music and musicians, including the legends he has played with over the years: Bird, Dizzy, Monk, Trane, Mingus, and many others.

No Easy Day by Mark Owen

Mark Owen is a pseudonym for Matt Bissonnette, a Navy SEAL who took part in the 2011 raid on a compound in Pakistan that resulted in the death of Osama bin Laden. Owen was already a SEAL at the time of the 9/11 attacks; the book begins shortly thereafter, as he is qualifying for the U.S. Naval Special Warfare Development Group (otherwise known as the famed SEAL Team Six), and follows him through various missions, culminating with a detailed account of the planning and execution of the assault on bin Laden's compound. *No Easy Day* doesn't merely tell war stories; it also explores the culture of war and what it means to be a soldier.

The Unforgiving Minute: a soldier's education by Ret. Captain Craig Mullaney

Young Captain Mullaney's admirable, literate autobiography, that of a veteran of combat in Afghanistan, adds much to knowledge of the modern army and makes a valuable contribution to the ongoing debate over what a "warrior" is these days. Mullaney wryly recounts his years at West Point and as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, then writes eloquently of infantry combat and the persistent burden of guilt for not bringing all his men home even as he makes his account a tribute to his fellow warriors. He concludes with sidelights on his teaching post at the U.S. Naval Academy and the moving story of his younger brother's graduation from West Point and subsequent passage into the ranks of the warriors himself. Almost impossible to put down for anyone interested in the modern U.S. Army or in modern warfare in general.

Yes, Chef: a Memoir by Marcus Samuelsson

Even if he had not become one of the world's most celebrated chefs, Samuelsson would be the stuff of legend. Born into poverty in Ethiopia, the orphaned boy and his sister were adopted by a Swedish couple, who provided a nurturing home. Working side-by-side with his grandmother, he learned the best of Swedish cuisine. A stint in cooking school gave him entrée to the continent's best kitchens and the discipline of French technique. Shortly after his arrival in New York, critics recognized his genius, and Swedish cooking became all the rage in Manhattan. Returning to his Ethiopian roots, he discovered that his father was still alive and that he had a family in Africa. He then went on to popularize African cuisine in America with the same passion he had devoted to Swedish food, and he now holds sway at a gastronomic temple in Harlem devoted to the myriad food traditions of Africa.