

• Meet the Author •

Doreen Rappaport and Lyndall Callan

Interview conducted by Toni Buzzeo, career media specialist and author (visit www.tonibuzzeo.com).



Photo courtesy of <http://www.ps87library.org/EVERYBODYREADSS2008.html>.



Photo courtesy of <http://www.doreenrappaport.com/>.

Lyndall Callan was born and raised in New York City. While growing up, she discovered she was a natural athlete. She played baseball, tennis, soccer and ping pong. In grade school she collected baseball cards, but gave them all to a fourth-grade boy she liked.

A former actress, Lyndall worked in children's theatre, which she also taught in public school one time. Her play, "Homebound" was published by Samuel French, Inc., in the spectacularly

titled *Off-Off Broadway Festival Plays, 17th Series*.

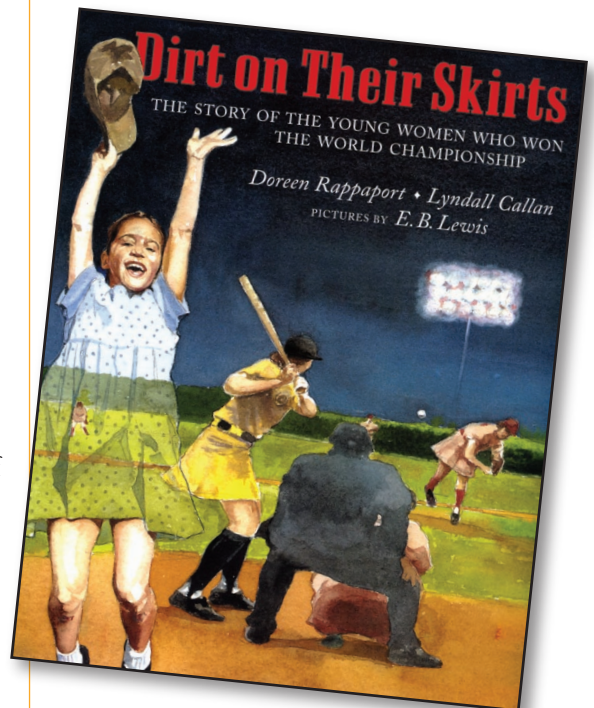
Doreen Rappaport has written numerous award-winning books for children, including *Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, *Victory or Death! Stories of the American Revolution*, *No More! Stories and Songs of Slave Resistance!* In 2007, she won the Washington Post-Children's Book Guild award for lifetime achievement in non-fiction writing for children. Ms. Rappaport visits schools throughout the United States, hoping to inspire confidence in our country's next generation of writers.

The reader can't help but wonder what inspired you to write this historical picture book. Are you lifelong baseball fans? Feminists? Ardent supporters of women's sports?

DR and LC: We became interested in the topic after thinking about the movie, *A League of Their Own*, which taught both of us about women playing baseball. Neither of us knew about this before. Doreen played softball when she was a kid and followed the travails of her favorite team, the Brooklyn Dodgers until her mid-20s; Lyndie loved

playing sports, but didn't follow professional games. Of course as women and feminists, we think it crucial that girls as well as boys learn about the varied roles played by women throughout history. There's still too little written about women athletes.

I suspect that you did a lot of research before deciding which game you'd focus on in your story. What drew you to this game in particular? What fabulous facts did you want to include? What tidbits didn't you get to include that you'd like to share with us?



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DR and LC: We were drawn to finding out what was the “real” championship game portrayed in the movie, *A League of Their Own*. Our investigations led us to September 16, 1946, to the battle between the Racine Bells and the Rockford Peaches. The Baseball Hall of Fame archives in Cooperstown, New York, provided us with a slew of articles about the game and some of these women. We contacted the local Racine and Rockford newspapers of that era and found articles written about the game. And we were privileged to be able to interview Sophie, the “Flash” Kurys, Joanne Winter and Betty Trezza who shared their memories of that day.

Discuss the decisions you had to make on how to tell this fictional story of an historical event. How did you determine who the fictional characters would be? How did their personalities (especially Margaret’s) take shape?

DR and LC: We decided to tell it through the voice of a girl in that era watching the game. She is both an avid fan and an athlete

who dreams of playing professional baseball when she grows up. We gave her a “teasing” brother, which replicates many other brother-sister relationships.

How did the two of you come to write the book together? What was your collaborative process as the manuscript unfolded?

DR and LC: We are stepmother and stepdaughter and were drawn to do the book together. We each took turns writing parts of the book, and then sent it to the other to read and make suggestions. It went back and forth many times.

Whose decision was it to use the photos that line the endpapers of the book? What role do you hope they have in the young readers’ experience of the story?

DR and LC: When the athletes told us that there were baseball cards of them as young players, we just loved the idea of kids being able to see what these women really looked like.

We also want them to see the women today so they agreed to send photographs.

How can readers learn more about you and your books?

DR and LC: They can go on www.doreenrappaport.com to learn about Doreen’s books. Teenagers can read Lyndall’s play, *Homebound*, the story of an older teen coming to terms with her father’s cancer and family fealties.

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Toni Buzzeo, MA, MLIS, is an author as well as a career library media specialist. She is the author of eight picture books, most recently *The Library Doors* (UpstartBooks, 2008) and many professional books and articles. Visit www.tonibuzzeo.com or e-mail Toni at tonibuzzeo@tonibuzzeo.com.