

## Castle McLaughlin, Longstanding Defender of the Nokota® Horse to Receive Prestigious Western Heritage Award on April 18th



Castle McLaughlin's *A Lakota War Book from the Little Bighorn: The Pictographic "Autobiography of Half Moon"* (<http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780981885865>) has been chosen as this year's winner of The Western Heritage Award for Outstanding Nonfiction Book.

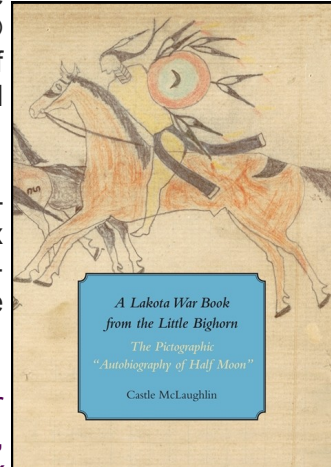
Presented by the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum ([www.nationalcowboymuseum.org](http://www.nationalcowboymuseum.org)), the Western Heritage Awards were established in 1961 "to honor and encourage the legacy of those whose works in literature, music, film and television reflect the sig-

nificant stories of the American West."

Dr McLaughlin is the associate curator of North American ethnography at Harvard's Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. She is also Executive Vice President of the Nokota Horse Conservancy® ([www.nokotahorse.org](http://www.nokotahorse.org)), formed in 1999 to protect the bloodlines of the horses descended from those surrendered by Sitting Bull and other Lakota chiefs at Fort Buford, ND, in 1881.

*A Lakota War Book from the Little Bighorn* revolves around a nineteenth century ledger book of pictographic drawings by Lakota Sioux Warriors found in 1876 in a funerary tipi on the Little Bighorn battlefield after Custer's defeat. Many of the drawings feature the Native American Warriors astride their horses, the unique Nokota® breed.

By being recognized for her superb research and writing, Dr McLaughlin joins Western history giants Robert Utley (*Geronimo*, 2013), Paul Hedren (*After Custer: Loss and Transformation in Sioux Country*, 2013), Eliot West (*The Last Indian War*, 2010) and many others.



Dr McLaughlin has deep roots in North Dakota. In 1986, McLaughlin, then a National Park Service employee, was commissioned by the Park Service to research the horses trapped when the Theodore Roosevelt National Park was fenced in the 1950s.

McLaughlin spent three years researching the horses. Her study included an extensive review of historical records and documents, along with oral interviews of area ranchers and Native Americans.

McLaughlin established that the horses had direct connections to animals ridden by some Native American Sioux, including the Hunkpapa chiefs in the Battle of Little Big Horn. "They are a unique reflection of the cultural history of western North Dakota," says McLaughlin.

For many years, she and the Nokota Horse Conservancy® have tirelessly campaigned, defended, and preserved the horses whose bloodlines are a living connection with North Dakota's colorful past. Castle is presently the Executive Vice President on the Nokota Horse Conservancy®.

The Western Heritage Award will be presented at a gala dinner ceremony in Oklahoma City on April 18<sup>th</sup>. To read more about it: <http://nationalcowboymuseum.org/awards-halls-of-fame/western-heritage-awards/>

~ Katherine Turpin