A comprehensive yet readable biography of Leonard Arrington, a pioneer in the academic study of Mormonism, and a reflective memoir on the dual pulls of isolation and social duties are the winners of the Evans Biography and Handcart Awards for works published in 2016. The awards are administered by Utah State University’s Mountain West Center for Regional Studies, a program and research area in USU’s College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The 2017 Evans Biography Award was awarded to Gregory A. Prince for his book, *Leonard Arrington and the Writing of Mormon History* (University of Utah Press, 2016).

Pete Fromm is the recipient of the Evans Handcart Award for his memoir, *The Names of the Stars: A Life in the Wilds* (Thomas Dunne Books, 2016).

This year’s awards, announced by Evelyn Funda, director of the Mountain West Center, were open to works of biography, autobiography and memoir, published in 2016 whose authors or subjects are part of what author Wallace Stegner called “Mormon Country,” that region historically influenced by Mormon institutions and social practices. The Evans Biography Award carries a cash prize of $10,000, while the Evans Handcart Award includes a prize of $2,500.

Two juries of distinguished scholars and book experts judged the submissions at both a regional and national level. In selecting the biography of Arrington, jury members noted that Prince “has achieved a seemingly impossible task” in interweaving Arrington’s life story with the story of the ever-changing LDS church history enterprise, resulting in what the jury members said is “a seamless whole.”

“This inviting and readable book is of interest to a wide audience and pays tribute to Leonard Arrington’s conviction that LDS history should be open and forthright,” jurors said.

Prince has published widely in his field of dentistry and pathology. He’s also known, however, for his ground-breaking work in Mormon history. He is a two-time recipient of an Evans Award, having won the Evans Handcart Award for his book, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*, published in 2006. The annual awards have come full circle: Arrington himself won the first-ever Evans Biography Award over 30 years ago for *Brigham Young: American Moses published by Knopf* in 1985.

Fromm’s *The Names of the Stars: A Life in the Wilds* is “a gentle recounting of one man’s coming to terms with the tension between a love of wilderness solitude and the loving embrace of family and friends,” according to jurors’ notes.

Fromm, a Montana resident, is a faculty member at Pacific University Oregon, where he teaches in the Master of Fine Arts in Writing Program. His award-winning book will be reissued in paperback Oct. 31 by Picador.

The Evans Biography Awards are funded by an endowment created in 1983 by the family of David Woolley and Beatrice Cannon Evans. Born in 1894, David was an editor, writer and owner of one of the largest advertising and public relations firms in the western United States. Beatrice was a historian and family genealogist. The award named in their honor celebrates the couple’s legacy of writing and biography.

The winning authors will be recognized this fall at an awards ceremony open to the public. They will discuss their award-winning works followed by a reception and book signing at USU in Logan, Utah.
The jurors for the Evans award also named a finalist for each award:

Finalist, Evans Biography Award: Paul Andrew Hutton for *The Apache Wars: The Hunt for Geronimo, the Apache Kid, and the Captive Boy Who Started the Longest War in American History* (Crown, 2016). The biography details the longest war in American history – between white settlers and Apaches in the desert Southwest from 1861 to 1890 – focusing on Mickey Free, a mixed-blood warrior described in the book as “the only man Geronimo ever feared.”


For more information on the awards and lists of previous winners, see [http://mountainwest.usu.edu](http://mountainwest.usu.edu). Deadline for submissions to the Evans Awards for works of biography, autobiography, or memoir published in 2017, will be mid-February 2018.

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