

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**T.A. BARRON, INTERNATIONAL BEST-SELLING AUTHOR,  
LAUNCHES EIGHTEENTH BOOK,  
*THE GREAT TREE OF AVALON:  
THE ETERNAL FLAME*  
Book Three in the New York Times Best-Selling Trilogy**

**T.A. Barron**, award-winning best-selling author, outspoken conservationist, education activist and philanthropist is launching his eighteenth book, *The Great Tree of Avalon: The Eternal Flame* (Philomel Books/Penguin Group USA, Oct. 2006), completing his trilogy. Barron, once again, combines an intricate, rich story, complex characters and breath-taking magical worlds with underlying themes of conservationism and environmentalism – themes about which he is most passionate. Barron’s skills as “Bard” and “Common Sense Conservationist” lead his readers on an epic journey that does not end at the last page. Barron’s genius as a writer is his ability to gently guide his readers on a personal inward journey that answers the question, “Am I living in harmony with our world or helping to destroy it?” This powerful inward odyssey, Barron believes, will translate into an outward revitalization of our natural resources for generations to come.

*The Great Tree of Avalon* is a loose continuation of his first epic series, *The Lost Years of Merlin*. Long ago, the great wizard Merlin planted a magical seed that beat like a heart – a seed that would become the mythical world of Avalon. The trilogy’s third volume, *The Eternal Flame*, concludes the journey of Avalon’s three unlikely and courageous heroes, Tamwyn, Elli and Scree. After they witness a magical, yet terrifying vision about the fate of their beloved world, each sets out on a separate quest to save Avalon from the evil of Rhita Gwar and his henchmen. The fate of Avalon – and a thousand other worlds including mortal Earth – rests of the shoulders of these brave, young heroes.

Barron is the award-winning author of the highly acclaimed epic -- and soon to be a major motion picture -- *The Lost Years of Merlin*. In addition, Barron also writes nature books and picture books. He serves on a variety of environmental and education boards, and is the founder of a national award for heroic children. Following a life-changing decision to leave a successful business career to write full-time in 1990, Barron has managed to write eighteen books in seventeen years.

The Great Tree of  
**AVALON**  
SHADOWS ON THE STARS  
by T.A. BARRON

**AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY**

Since returning to Colorado to write full time in 1990, T.A. Barron has published eleven novels, including the best-selling *Lost Years of Merlin* epic, and has completed a new trilogy: *The Great Tree of Avalon*. He has also written two coffee table nature books about Colorado wilderness, one book of essays on the meaning of heroism, and four children's books. Two of his novels have been optioned by motion picture studios. Many of his novels have won awards, such as the Nautilus Award for books that promote a better world, and recognition, such as the American Library Association's "Best Books" designation.

In recent years, Barron has written many articles and op-ed pieces on educational and environmental issues for a wide variety of publications, including *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *Family Circle*, American Library Association's *Book Links*, *High Country News*, *Parents Magazine*, *Voice of Youth Advocates*, and *Environment* magazine.

From 1982 to 1990, Barron served in management positions in a venture capital organization in New York City. These included: president and chief operating officer of The Prospect Group, Inc., a publicly traded investment fund with assets exceeding two billion dollars; and a general partner of Sierra Ventures I, a venture capital partnership. Barron also served as chairman of Swiss Army Brands, Inc., the largest U.S. distributor of Swiss Army knives and watches. Other major investments included: Little Brownie Bakers; the Illinois Central Railroad; Children's Discovery Centers; and Environmental Testing and Certification Corporation, an environmental laboratory and consulting firm based in New Jersey. When Prospect Group successfully completed its investments, Barron decided to change careers and follow his longstanding passion for writing.

After graduating from the public high school near his family's ranch north of Colorado Springs, Colorado, T.A. Barron attended Princeton University, where he received his B.A. in History and Politics in 1974. Barron founded one campus publication, co-founded another, served as class president, and completed the Teacher Certification program. Barron was also voted by his classmates to receive the Class of 1901 Medal for outstanding service to the University, and also won the M. Taylor Pyne Prize, Princeton's highest award to an undergraduate, for his service to the university.

Following his undergraduate degree, Barron became a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University, where he earned an Honors B.A. in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics. During this experience, Barron began traveling the world and backpacked extensively in Asia, Africa, and the Arctic.

Back in the United States, Barron began work on his J.D. at Harvard Law School and an M.B.A. at Harvard Business School, receiving both degrees in 1982. While attending Harvard, Barron founded the Square Peg Society of Harvard Business School.

Throughout his career as a businessman and author, Barron has served on many national boards, including the Princeton University board of trustees, the Wilderness Society, American Farmland Trust, Alaska Conservation Foundation, the Nature Conservancy state boards in Colorado and Alaska, as well as several local boards. He has also founded a national award for heroic young people, which he named after his mother: the Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes. Each year, the Barron Prize honors extraordinary, public-spirited kids from all backgrounds and descriptions, in the hope that their examples will inspire other young people.

As a trustee of Princeton University, Barron helped to establish the Princeton Environmental Institute, which now includes students in more than 30 departments. He speaks often at conventions of educators and environmentalists, and at universities. Barron recently received the Wilderness Society's highest honor, the Robert Marshall Award, for his conservation work on behalf of American's natural treasures.

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PUBLISHED QUOTES FROM THE AUTHOR

ON PRESIDENT BUSH & HIS ADMINISTRATION:

Fueled by zealous anti-environmentalism and corporate special interests, they have launched what amounts to a sustained and systematic attack on America's public lands. Instead of honoring the public trust that requires protecting these national assets for our children and grandchildren, they have aggressively pushed exploitation by the mining, timber, oil and gas, and snowmobile industries. Well aware of the public outcry that such radical policy changes would provoke, they have pursued this war with stealth and deception.

– And –

Bush's war on our public lands is unwise, unjustified, and unprecedented. It is tantamount to an assault on the national treasury. But defending our public lands does more than protect valuable physical assets: It protects our Homeland Security of the soul.

– Published by Boston Globe

ON HEROES:

Somewhere along the way, we have lost track of the key distinction between celebrity and heroism. In our media-obsessed culture, we spend far more time discussing the latest celebrity scandal than the crucial values and events that shape our society.

– Published by Family Circle

ON CHILDREN:

[Children] are natural explorers, who see the world afresh, and who love being out in nature. They appreciate its beauty, its mystery, and its humor. And in appreciating the wonders of life, they are also growing to appreciate the wonders within themselves.

– Published by Parents Magazine

ON OUR NATURAL RESOURCES:

As a nation, we are what we save. The value of America's public lands cannot be measured in board feet, tons of coal, or sales of all-terrain vehicles. Once wilderness is lost, it is lost forever. And the biggest losers will be generations of Americans yet unborn.

– Published by Boston Globe

ON WRITING:

The key to writing fiction, I believe – the kind of fiction that has the power to touch people's lives, and even change them profoundly – is making it true. Literature that meets this challenge awakens our senses, inspires our emotions, engage our minds, and enlivens our souls. And while this standard clearly applies to imaginary worlds (sometimes called "fantasy," although I prefer other terms), it also applies any form of fiction.

– Published by Voice of Youth Advocates

– And –

It is important, I believe, to write books that are both entertaining and thoughtful – that are great fun to read but also convey an underlying idea. Books that really stand the test of time are built around a compelling idea or question, something that is important about being alive and human. That having been said, I never "preach" to my readers. Rather, I pose questions and moral dilemmas, and show how my own characters deal with them. Then it's up to the reader to come to his or her own conclusions about the moral implications.

– Published by The Alan Review

The Great Tree of  
**AVALON**  
TRILOGY  
by **T.A. BARRON**

**ADVANCE PRAISE**

“This is a brilliant epic tale with memorable and glowing characters — a real gift. T.A. Barron writes about ecology, compassion, feminism and peace with a light touch and a sense of adventure. I smiled, shed tears, and was thoroughly entertained. The story stayed with me, and renewed my hope for humanity.”

—**Isabel Allende, author of *House of Spirits* and *Daughter of Fortune***

“T.A. Barron’s fascination with and appreciation for nature shines through in his rich and inventive tale, *The Great Tree of Avalon*, which takes us on an extraordinary adventure through a damaged but magical world and reminds us of the fragility and wonder of our own natural surroundings.”

—**Robert Redford, actor, director, and conservationist**

“*The Great Tree of Avalon*” opens a door into a mythical, magical world. I was transported and I was enthralled. Barron’s heroic characters came vividly to life as they battled the evil forces threatening their world. I shall not forget them. The story is packed with action and written in riveting prose. And what an appropriate tale for our troubled times, with its message of hope — that wickedness, however mighty, can be vanquished by the true of heart and staunch of spirit.”

—**Jane Goodall, U.N. Messenger for Peace and founder, The Jane Goodall Institute**

“T.A. Barron’s *The Great Tree of Avalon* takes its readers on an extraordinary journey — a vivid story of adventure, chance and fate, and moral exploration. This lively, entrancing tale is truly a parable for us today, as we pursue our own lives, our own search for purpose and understanding.”

—**Robert Coles, M.D., Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Children of Crisis***

“*The Great Tree of Avalon* is a landmark fantasy, built on a scale both epic and intimate. Here the island of Arthurian myth becomes a giant tree, each of its seven roots a richly imagined realm. Whether this world lives or dies depends on three appealing young heroes, whose quests prove that the secrets of nature and love are the strongest magic of all.”

—**William Howarth, author of *Walking with Thoreau***

The Great Tree of  
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SHADOWS ON THE STARS  
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**SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR THE AUTHOR**

Twenty-one books in 17 years is quite an accomplishment. Then your first book was published, did you ever think you would have so much to say?

*The Great Tree of Avalon: Shadows on the Stars* is “book two” in a trilogy. What challenges did you face writing the middle segment in this epic adventure?

All of your novels contain environmental and conservationist messages. What makes these specific issues so important to you?

Your novels have been called complex, thoughtful and extremely creative. How do you manage to create these complex stories with underlying environmental themes that appeal to both adults *and* young readers? Is there a fine line between writing fiction targeted to adults and fiction that appeals to a broader readership?

You are known for being outspoken about the role of government in protecting our natural environment. What do you think our government *should* be doing to preserve our natural resources? What do you think the American people should be doing?

Have you experienced any backlash from speaking your mind about these issues?

You’ve been called “The Common Sense Conservationist.” What does this mean to you?

What are 5 practical ways each of us can help to conserve our lands and clean up our air and water?

You are a strong believer in raising children from an early age to become engaged in politics and our world. When and how do you start that process? How do suggest engaging 18-24 year olds, specifically, to get out and vote?

Your first novel, *The Lost Years of Merlin*, is now in development to be made into a film. How is the film world different than the publishing world? Writing is a solitary creative process and film is a collaborative process. Is it difficult for you to “let go” of your books and place your characters in the hands of someone else?

# The Great Tree of **AVALON**

SHADOWS ON THE STARS

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## LIST OF BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

### The Great Tree of Avalon trilogy:

#### **The Great Tree of Avalon**

Book One: Child of the Dark Prophecy

Hardback: Philomel Books/Penguin Group USA (2004)

#### **The Great Tree of Avalon**

Book Two: Shadows on the Stars

Hardback: Philomel Books/Penguin Group USA (2005)

#### **The Great Tree of Avalon**

Book Three: The Eternal Flame

Hardback: Philomel Books/Penguin Group USA (2006)

### The Lost Years of Merlin epic:

#### **The Lost Years of Merlin (Book I)**

Hardback: Philomel Books/Penguin Group USA (1996)

Paperback: Ace Books/Penguin Group USA (1999)

#### **The Seven Songs of Merlin (Book II)**

Hardback: Philomel Books/Penguin Group USA (1997)

Paperback: Ace Books/Penguin Group USA (2000)

#### **The Fires of Merlin (Book III)**

Hardback: Philomel Books/Penguin Group USA (1998)

Paperback: Ace Books/Penguin Group USA (2000)

#### **The Mirror of Merlin (Book IV)**

Hardback: Philomel Books/Penguin Group USA (1999)

Paperback: Ace Books/Penguin Group USA (2001)

#### **The Wings of Merlin (Book V)**

Hardback: Philomel Books/Penguin Group USA (2000)

Paperback: Ace Books/Penguin Group USA (2002)

### The Heroic Adventures of Kate:

#### **The Ancient One**

Hardback: Philomel Books/Penguin Group USA (1992)

Paperback: Ace Books/Penguin Group USA (2004)

#### **The Merlin Effect**

Hardback: Philomel Books/Penguin Group USA (1994)

Paperback: Ace Books/Penguin Group USA (2004)

#### **Heartlight**

Hardback: Philomel Books/Penguin Group USA (1990)

Paperback: Ace Books/Penguin Group USA (2003)

## **Nature Books:**

### **To Walk In Wilderness**

Hardback: Westcliffe Publishers (1993)

### **Rocky Mountain National Park: A 100 Year Perspective**

Hardback: Westcliffe Publishers (1995)

## **Non-Fiction Books:**

### **The Hero's Trail**

Hardback: Philomel Books/Penguin Group USA (2002)

## **Children's Books:**

### **The Day the Stones Walked**

Hardback: Philomel Books/Penguin Group USA (2006)

### **High as a Hawk**

Hardback: Philomel Books/Penguin Group USA (2004)

### **Tree Girl**

Hardback: Philomel Books/Penguin Group USA (2001)

Paperback: Ace Books/Penguin Group USA (2001)

### **Where is Grandpa?**

Hardback: Philomel Books/Penguin Group USA (2000)

Paperback: Puffin Books/Penguin Group USA (2000)

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**THE GLORIA BARRON PRIZE FOR YOUNG HEROES**

The Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes is an annual award honoring outstanding young leaders, ages 8 to 18, who have made a significant positive difference to people and our planet. Each year, the Barron Prize selects ten winners nationwide. Half of the winners have focused on helping their communities and fellow human beings; half have focused on protecting the health and sustainability of the environment. Since its founding, the Barron Prize has won the support of the National Geographic Society, Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., National Youth Leadership Council, and many other national organizations.

The Barron Prize, founded in 2001 by T.A. Barron, is named after his mother, Gloria Barron, an unsung hero who worked for twenty years to create the "Touch Museum" of natural history at the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind. She instilled in each of her seven children the idea that one individual can make a lasting difference in the lives of others. In 2001, the Barron Prize honored ten young heroes from Colorado. In 2002, the Barron Prize expanded to a national level, with winners representing great diversity from all across the country.

The Barron Prize was founded on the premise that young people need real, heroic role models who have made a meaningful difference in the world. The goal of the Barron Prize is to celebrate such heroic young people – and to inspire others to do their part. As prize founder T.A. Barron explains, "Nothing is more inspiring than stories about heroic people who have truly made a difference to the world. And we need our heroes today more than ever. Not celebrities, but heroes – people whose character can inspire us all. That is the purpose of the Gloria Barron Prize: to share positive examples of heroism with as many young people as possible."

The chosen winners must have demonstrated strong personal initiative as well as positive spirit, courage, intelligence, generosity, and high moral purpose. While outside help may have been obtained, the activity must be largely the winner's own creation. The service activity cannot have been done primarily to complete an assignment for work or school. The Barron Prize places significant emphasis on recognizing young people who help the environment.

Nominations are made by adults who have solid knowledge of the nominee and his or her work, but who are not related to the nominee. This could include teachers, librarians, civic or religious leaders, among others.