



T. A. BARRON

BIOGRAPHY

“In everything I do,” says T. A. Barron, “I’m a storyteller. As a dad, a writer, a conservationist—in all these ways, I tell stories. Why? Because there is no more powerful—or more exciting—way to convey an idea than through a story.”

T. A. Barron grew up in Colorado ranch country and traveled widely as a Rhodes Scholar. Though he’d long dreamed of becoming a writer, his first novel was overwhelmingly rejected by publishers. He joined a successful business in New York and eventually became president – but he just couldn’t stop dreaming of becoming an author. So in 1990, he surprised his business partners and resigned. He moved back to Colorado to pursue his dream to be a writer, outdoorsman, and conservationist.

Today, T. A. Barron is the award-winning author of more than 30 highly acclaimed books, many of which are international bestsellers. He has won the **de Grummond Medallion** for “lifetime contribution to the field of children’s and young adult literature” and many other awards.

His books include *The Merlin Saga* (now being developed into a feature film by Disney), *The Great Tree of Avalon* (a *New York Times* bestselling series), *The Ancient One* (the tale of a brave girl and a magical tree), and *The Hero’s Trail* (nonfiction stories of courageous kids).

In 2000, he founded the Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes, a national award that honors outstanding young people who help their communities or the environment. Each year, the award honors 25 inspiring, public-spirited kids from diverse backgrounds. Also, he produced a documentary film, *Dream Big*, profiling seven winners of the Barron Prize.

When not writing or speaking, T. A. Barron serves on many boards including Princeton University, where he helped to create the Princeton Environmental Institute, and The Wilderness Society, which recently honored him with its highest award for conservation work. T. A. Barron also loves hiking, camping, and skiing in Colorado with his family.

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T. A. Barron Facts

What is your favorite ice cream flavor? Häagen-Dazs coffee ... or Colorado snow topped with maple syrup.

What does T. A. Barron stand for? Take your pick ... it's either The Author or Thomas Archibald.

What is your birthday and place of birth? My birthday is March 26, and I was born in Boston, MA.

Where did you spend your childhood? My childhood was spent in two wonderful but very different places: first, in New England on a hilltop with lots of apple trees, Native American lore, and views of Mount Monadnock; and second, in Colorado on a ranch with ponderosa pines, a mile-long driveway where we rode horses, and great views of Pike's Peak.

What schools did you attend? Air Academy Junior High and High School near Colorado Springs, Colorado; Princeton University; Oxford University (as a Rhodes Scholar); and Harvard University.

Where do you live? On a small farm in Colorado.

Where do you write? In the attic of our home.

Do you have any kids? We have 5 terrific kids (3 boys and 2 girls), all now in their twenties.

Do you have pets? We have 2 dogs, both golden retrievers...and 3 goats named Lily, Merrie, and Pippin.

What was your most favorite summer job? Organizing outdoor skills training at Camp Alexander, a Boy Scout camp near Lake George, Colorado.

And least favorite summer job? Cleaning out the basement of the old Alamo Hotel in Colorado Springs.

What is your favorite book that you have written? I can't answer that question! It's just the same as if you asked me which of my five kids is my favorite. I really don't have a favorite. They are all different, all special in some way. And I love them all.

What are your favorite books by other authors? Impossible to name them all, but here are just a few: Novels by E. B. White, J. R. R. Tolkien, Madeleine L'Engle, T. H. White, Boris Pasternak, and Isabel Allende. Nature books by Aldo Leopold, John Muir, Henry David Thoreau, Loren Eiseley and Rachel Carson. Biographies of Abraham Lincoln (my favorite is by Carl Sandburg), Anne Frank, Albert Einstein, Helen Keller, Eleanor Roosevelt, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Wilma Rudolph, Mohandas Gandhi, Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce tribe, Thomas Edison, Winston Churchill, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Poetry by Keats, Shelley, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Robert Frost, Emily Dickinson, Ogden Nash, and Mary Oliver. And finally—children's picture books by Barbara Cooney, Barbara Berger, and Ted Lewin.

Who influenced you? My mother, Gloria Barron, who inspired the prize that I founded for heroic young people; my father, Arch Barron, who inspired the picture book *Where Is Grandpa?*; my high school librarian, Lucile Wilson, who believed in me right from the start; my dear friend and constant inspiration, Madeleine L'Engle, who urged me to try to become a writer; and a man I have only read books about, but whose humility, humor, compassion, and wisdom have always inspired me: Abraham Lincoln.

Which charitable groups do you help? Conservation groups (such as The Wilderness Society, The Nature Conservancy, Alaska Conservation Foundation, and American Farmland Trust); Education groups (such as Princeton University, the Denver Children's Museum, and the Gloria Barron Touchable Nature Museum at the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind).

What is your favorite color? Any combination of green and blue, especially turquoise.

What is your favorite sport? Hiking, backpacking, cross country skiing, and romping outdoors with my kids.