

To the MWA Board of Directors:

As a 42-year member of Mystery Writers of America and as a past president of MWA, this is a difficult letter for me to write. But it would be more difficult for me to stay silent about your decision to withdraw Linda Fairstein's Grand Master award.

You say in your press release that the Board was unaware of Ms. Fairstein's role in the Central Park Five controversy. I find it hard to believe that no one on the Board was aware of this so-called controversy. It was national news at the time, and a quick internet search as you were researching Linda Fairstein's bio for this award would have all of this. I suspect that the Board, or individual members of the Board, were aware of Ms. Fairstein's involvement in this case, but like most fair-minded people they understood that Ms. Fairstein as chief of the sex crimes unit of the Manhattan District Attorney's Office had acted professionally and responsibly and without prejudice or malice. To suggest otherwise, as Attica Locke, Steph Cha and others have, is to suggest that it was Ms. Fairstein who committed a crime, and if I was Ms. Fairstein – whose reputation and career have been harmed – I'd be calling my lawyer.

Basically, the Board caved to political correctness and to revisionist history which the P.C. crowd is so good at.

You also say in your press release, "...MWA cannot move forward with an award that lacks the support of such a large percentage of our members."

In fact, the Board has no idea of how most MWA members feel about this issue. The Board simply panicked in the face of race-tainted accusations from a few perpetually outraged members of the fringe, who while attacking Ms. Fairstein also took the opportunity to attack our organization. Your decision, therefore, to withdraw the award was not only cowardly; it was a tacit admission that what Ms. Locke, Ms. Cha and others have said about MWA was correct. Do you see what you've done?

I've been honored to be a member of MWA, and doubly honored to have been president, but alas, I've never been honored with an award. But if, in future, I was being considered for an honor, I would have to decline in light of your actions in this so-called controversy. Also, I would not want the volunteer Thought Police to dig too deeply into my personal and professional past lest they come up with something that does not meet their very progressive and inclusive standards of today. Martin Cruz Smith and others who are to be honored at the 2019 Edgar Awards should reconsider their acceptance or at least use the opportunity to voice support of Ms. Fairstein and non-support of the Board. Also, those of our members who intended to be at the Edgars should think about staying home. As I will this year.

Sincerely,
Nelson DeMille