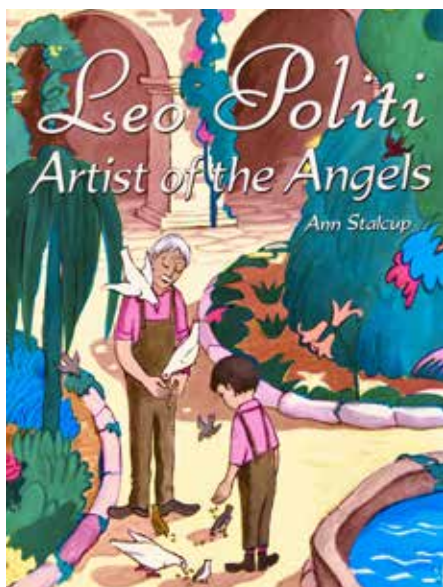


# From the Heart

Local Authors We Love

ARTICLE BY ALICIA DOYLE

With the month of February all about love, we found it fitting to feature three local authors who have captured our hearts through literature.



## Ann Stalcup

An author and elementary school teacher, Ann Stalcup grew up in England and moved to the United States in 1963 when she married her husband who she met on a trip to Greece that summer.

Her published nonfiction work includes award-winning *On the Home Front: Growing Up in Wartime England*, an autobiographical account of her childhood experiences during World War II—the first of 19 published books.

*Leo Politi, Artist of the Angels*—the book Ann is most proud of—is a biography of a Los Angeles artist and author whom she admired for many years.

“Leo was born in Fresno, but when he was 6, his father announced that they were returning to Italy, his homeland, a devastating move for Leo and his sister,” Ann explains.

When he was 21, at the height of the Depression, Leo returned to the U.S. and settled in Los Angeles. On his return journey by freighter, Leo became fascinated with the Latino culture which had influenced him throughout his life.

One day, in his explorations of his new city, he and his wife wandered into Olvera Street. Leo said, “I thought I was in heaven to find this street.” From then on, he visited Olvera Street every day for the rest of his life.

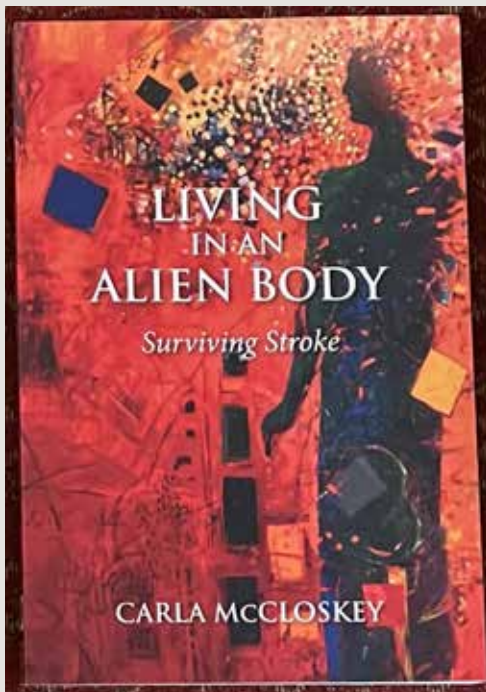
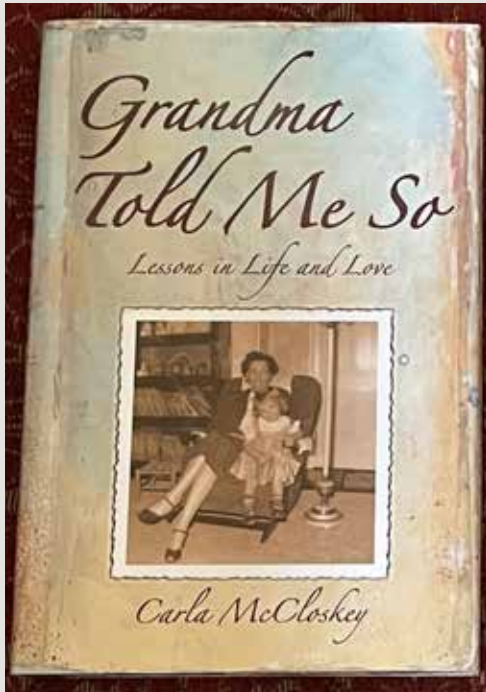
A restaurant gave him a table on the sidewalk and his career was born. He sold sketches of tourists for 10 cents apiece or 25 cents for three, and he sketched the activity going on around him.

“Not one but two prominent New York editors admired his work and book contracts developed from those chance meetings,” Ann says. “Eventually he had 20 published picture children’s books... each of them focusing upon the minority children in the area. He also wrote five books for adults about the parks, festivals and Victorian homes around him that he was sure would disappear along with so much else in the city he had grown to love.”

In 1991, at age 82, Leo’s dream of having a school named after him came true. He died just 5 years later.

“Children motivated Leo in his painting, writing and drawing,” Ann adds. “Although I was one of many Leo addressed as ‘friend,’ his death left a hole in my life. He was a kind man, a gentle man. His talent can neither be forgotten or underestimated.”

For more information about Ann’s books, visit [AnnStalcup.com](http://AnnStalcup.com).



## Carla McCloskey

Before becoming an author, Carla McCloskey was a long-time director and assistant director who began her film career when she was picked as an assistant director by the Producers Association.

“I was one of the first women in this position,” recalls Carla, who has lived in Malibu since 1981 with her husband, Leigh J. McCloskey, an actor, artist and author.

Carla was later the assistant director on many films, including “The Goodbye Girl,” “California Suite,” “Death Becomes Her,” “Point of No Return,” “Point Break,” “The ‘Burbs,” “The Color of Night,” “Hook” and “Jurassic Park.”

She worked with directors Steven Spielberg, Joe Dante, Robert Zemeckis, Richard Rush, John Badham, Herbert Ross and Cher. She also worked on the television series “Amazing Stories,” “Babylon 5,” “Ally McBeal,” “Gilmore Girls” and “The Closer.”

Carla wrote her first book, *Grandma Told Me So—Lessons in Life and Love*, to help others find and keep the best possible relationships in their lives. Carla writes with the wisdom and simplicity that she learned during her early life in Lodi, Wisconsin, a picture-perfect small Midwestern town.

“At my grandmother’s side, I developed the life tools to balance rich personal relationships and family with a demanding life in Hollywood as a director and assistant director to many of today’s most notable actors and filmmakers,” says Carla, adding that she and her husband “have shared the many facets of a life in Hollywood while never forgetting to live a life in love.”

Carla wrote her second book, *Living in an Alien Body—Surviving Stroke*, from her own personal experience to help others navigate the life-altering trauma of stroke.

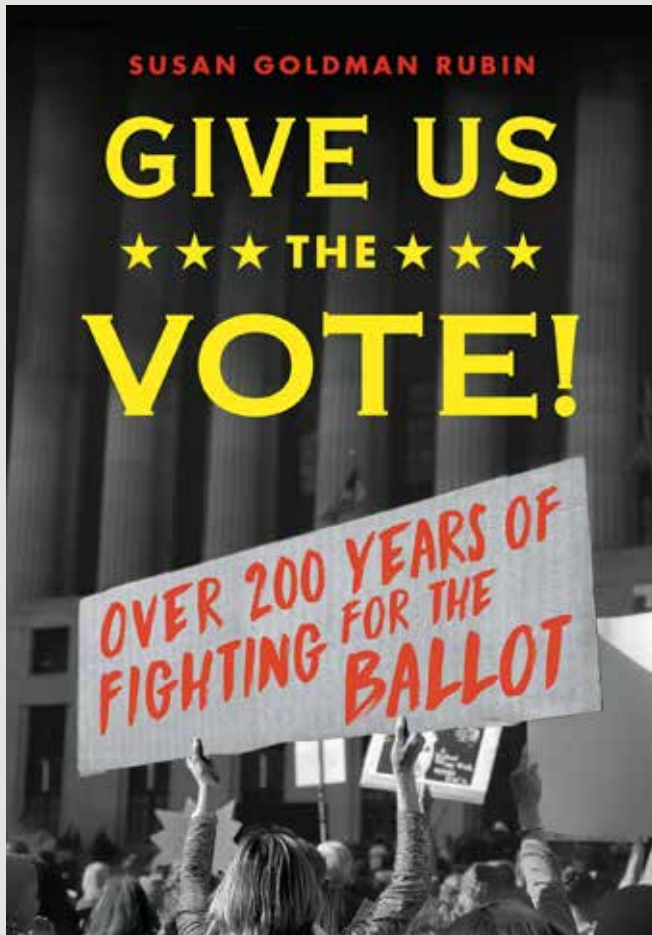
“This book will transform the way you think about stroke,” emphasizes Carla, whose goal with the book is “to navigate a stroke for you or a loved one—and hopefully prevent stroke.”

Ultimately, “it may even help you or a loved one survive it—not as a helpless victim, but as an unexpected journeyer into strange and foreign lands.”

For more information about Carla’s books, contact [carlamccloskey@aol.com](mailto:carlamccloskey@aol.com).



## Susan Rubin



As an award-winning nonfiction author, Susan Goldman Rubin has written a number of children's books on themes of social justice, as well as biographies of figures in the arts.

"My latest picture book is *Madame Alexander: The Creator of the Iconic American Doll*," Susan says of her inspiring picture book biography illustrated by Sarah Dvojack about the artist and businesswoman whose love for dolls and bringing joy to others began at a young age and only continued to grow.

One of Susan's many books geared for young adults also includes *Give Us the Vote: Over 200 Years of Fighting for the Ballot*.

"The project began with a suggestion from my editor at Holiday House that we publish a history of voting rights in time for the November 2020 election," recalls Susan, who wanted to reach young people who might soon be voting and inspire them to protect and use their precious right.

"So we opened with the Children's Crusade in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963, and their protest for the right to vote," Susan explains. "Then I went back to 1787 and the delegates who decided who could vote in America."

Writing this book involved extensive photo research.

"Since I began my work as an illustrator, I wanted to include vintage photos, posters and cartoons that would bring events to life," Susan remembers. "Just as I was about to send my picture files to my editor, we faced a fire scare in Malibu and were evacuated."

Desperate to save the images she had downloaded, Susan sought help from her son, who told her to grab the hard drive.

"A few days later, we learned that our house had been spared," says Susan, who had lost her first house in the wildfire of 1993 and knew the sorrow that many friends experienced.

"By the weekend, I was able to attend a conference in Houston to receive an award for my book, *The Quilts of Gee's Bed*," she recalls. "When I saw my *Give Us the Vote* editor, we hugged each other, giddy with joy that our pictures were safe and we could publish on time. Such is the drama of writing children's books in Malibu."

*For more information about Susan's books, visit [SusanGoldmanRubin.com](http://SusanGoldmanRubin.com).*