

The Children's Literature Association Proudly
Announces the Recipient of The 1986 Phoenix
Award Queenie Peavy.

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The Children's Literature Association Proudly Announces the Recipient of The 1986 Phoenix Award *Queenie Peavy*

Mary Ake, Rebecca Lukens, M. Sarah Smedman, Mark I. West, Alet hea Helbig

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

The Children's Literature Association Proudly Announces the Recipient of The 1986 Phoenix Award Queenie Peavy by Robert Burch (Viking, 1966; Dell Yearling, 1975) The Phoenix Award Citation reads as follows: Georgia schoolgirl Queenie Peavy, 13, proudly sports a chip on her shoulder. Her antisocial escapades in and out of school compound the problems of poverty and a father in prison. Threatened with reform school, acknowledging misplaced filial loyalty, Queenie comes to see that life can be good if she takes responsibility for making it so. Skillfully realized characters, a strong sense of life during the Depression,

judicious use of humor, and a modest, unassuming style create a distinctive and memorable girl's growing-up story. The Phoenix Award is given to the author of a book for children first published twenty years earlier which did not win a major award at the time of its publication but which, from the perspective of time, is deemed worthy of special recognition for its literary quality. The recipient of the Phoenix Award is chosen each year by an elected committee of ChLA members. The members of the 1986 Award Committee are Mary Ake, Littleton, Colorado, Public Schools; Rebecca Lukens, Miami University of Ohio; Sarah Smedman and Mark West, both of the University of North Carolina-Charlotte; and the Chair, Aletha Helbig, Eastern Michigan University. The 1986 award was presented to Mr. Burch at the association's annual conference in Kansas City in May, 1986. At a session during the conference, the committee discussed Burch's books. The committee's remarks follow. Remarks of Mary Ake: Robert Burch is part of Georgia. He was born, raised, and educated in that state and now lives there. His love for the rural Georgia of his youth appears in most of his books for children. Except for some fifteen years away, partly in the U.S. Army, time spent in the Orient, freighting around the world, and about eight years in New York City, Burch has resided in that southern state. While he was living in New York, he took writing courses at Hunter College where he was encouraged by Will Lipkind, his instructor, to become a writer, to consider making writing his career. He accepted the advice, and since several of Burch's books have won awards and honors, writing appears to have been a wise choice of vocation for Mr. Burch. The Georgia Children's Book Award was given to *Skinny* (1969), *Queenie Peavy* (1971), and *Doodle and the GoCart* (1974). *Skinny* was an Honor Book in the Children's Spring Book Festival of the New York Herald Tribune (1964). *Ida Early Comes Over the Mountain* was a Boston Globe-Horn Book Fiction Honor Book (1980). *Queenie Peavy* also won the Jane Addams (1967), the Child Study Association (1966), and The George C. Stone (1974) awards. And now we of the Children's Literature Association have given the second annual Phoenix Award to Robert Burch for this fine realistic novel. Burch's novels are indeed realistic, arising out of his own remembered, lived experiences. The events that take place in them may seem grim, but they nevertheless carry the conviction of truth. They tell about things that could happen to real people, the everyday events of living, the crises of life. Burch has said, "And I cannot imagine a theme in a children's story strong enough to hold anything together that does not, in the final analysis, turn out to be moral, or at least morally sound. Stronger stories in every sense are likely to result when the writer is free to tackle whatever is meaningful to him" ("The New Realism." *Horn Book Magazine* [June, 1971]: 257-264).²³ His first work, *The Traveling Bird* (1959), reminds me of the later Shel Silverstein book, *The Giving Tree*. Or rather the reverse, I suppose. In this case, it is not a tree but a bird—a very special, wise bird that sets out to help a young boy realize his heart's desire. The parakeet is given to the boy, who really wants a puppy. The bird tries to help the child by locating a puppy lost in a storm and guiding...

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