

Charles Wohlforth
Brief Biography and Curriculum Vitae
10/29/19

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Wohlforth brief biography

Charles Wohlforth is author of more than ten books and numerous articles and columns, a consultant and speechwriter, host of public radio, podcast and TV shows, policy former elected official, and non-profit leader. His books include work about science and the environment, politics and history, travel, and as-told-to biography. His book *The Whale and the Supercomputer: On the Northern Front of Climate Change*, won the L.A. Times Book Prize in 2004. His three-times-weekly column for the *Anchorage Daily News* in 2019 won the western U.S. states' most prestigious journalism award, "Best of the West." He has advised mayors, U.S. Senators, national energy strategists, and many others.

Wohlforth graduated magna cum laude from Princeton University in 1986 before returning to Alaska to work six years as a newspaper reporter. He became a full-time freelance writer in 1993, publishing articles in *The Daily Beast*, *The New Republic*, *Discover* and many other periodicals. He served two 3-year terms on the Anchorage Assembly, for five years writing the city budget for Anchorage. He worked as a policy advisor, strategic planning consultant, and speechwriter for politicians and consulted on energy, transportation and sustainability. As leader of a coalition of rural Alaska schools, he settled two constitutional lawsuits that brought hundreds of millions of dollars of new support to struggling schools and at-risk students.

Education

Princeton University, B.A. degree in English, *magna cum laude*, 1986.

Employment

1989-present: Self-employed, Author and Writer. See list of books above and articles elsewhere in this CV.

2015-2019: Anchorage Daily News, Columnist. Writer of a reported newspaper opinion column published three times a week. The column became Alaska's most popular and won the 2019 "Best of the West" award.

2009-2019: Alaska Public Media, Host of Radio, Podcast and TV shows. Lead and hosted Outdoor Explorer, Hometown Alaska, and One on One. Outdoor Explorer became the most downloaded podcast on Alaska's dominant public media outlet.

2011-2015: Coalition for Education Equity / Citizens for the Educational Advancement of Alaska's Children, Executive Director. Led a coalition for rural schools and indigenous children in Alaska, settling two major constitutional lawsuits that brought major new investments.

2003-2009: Mayor and U.S. Senator Mark Begich, Advisor and Speech Writer. Provided daily policy advice and led strategic planning for Begich as mayor and U.S. Senator.

1993-1999: Anchorage Municipal Assembly, Member. Elected to two three-year terms to represent the downtown area of the city-borough government. Chair of the Budget Committee for five years and responsible for the successful sale of the city's telephone company.

1992-1997: POL: A Journal of Policy and Politics, Founder and Editor. Led a subscription-supported monthly during its five-year run.

1992-1993: Alaska Research Associates, Research Director, Alaska Research Associates. Managed research projects, political campaigns and polling for a political consultancy and market research firm.

1988-1992: Anchorage Daily News, Reporter. Lead field reporter on the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill. Also covered general assignment, breaking news, and investigative projects.

1986-1988: Homer News, Reporter. General assignment reporter for a small-town weekly.

1981-1982: KSKA Public Radio, reporter and production assistant, KSKA public radio.

Books Published

Beyond Earth: Our Path to a New Home in the Planets (By Charles Wohlforth and Amanda Hendrix; Pantheon/Knopf, 2016). Co-written book with a planetary scientist looking at climate change as a motivator for space colonization. Also published in Korean, Chinese and Turkish.

From the Shores of Ship Creek: Stories of Anchorage's First 100 Years (Todd Communications, 2015). Official history of Anchorage for the city's centennial.

To Russia With Love: An Alaskan's Journey (By Vic Fischer with Charles Wohlforth; University of Alaska Press, 2012). Assisted a founder of Alaska in writing his autobiography, a project supported primarily by grants from the University of Alaska.

The Fate of Nature: Rediscovering Our Ability to Rescue the Earth (Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin's Press, 2010). Humankind's capacity for environmental restraint examined through the lenses of history, anthropology, science and personal stories.

Alaska Day by Day (Wiley, 2010). An illustrated travel guidebook on Alaska.

Saving for the Future: My Life and the Alaska Permanent Fund (By Dave Rose as told to Charles Wohlforth; Epicenter Press, 2008). Biography of an Alaskan pioneer politician and history of Alaska's enormous oil wealth savings account.

The Whale and the Supercomputer: On the Northern Front of Climate Change (North Point Press/Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2004). Indigenous and scientific perceptions of Arctic climate change. Published in French as **La baleine et le supercalculateur** (Paulsen, 2008).

Frommer's Alaska (Wiley, 1996-2011). Fourteen editions of a leading travel guidebook

covering all of Alaska.

Alaska For Dummies (Wiley, 2003-2011). Five editions of travel guidebook covering Alaska.

Frommer's Family Vacations in the National Parks (Wiley, 1999-2004). Three editions of a guidebook covering travel, natural history and culture in 15 national parks and seashores.

Crisis in the Commons: The Alaska Solution (By Walter J. Hickel; Institute for Contemporary Studies, 2002). Assisted former Alaska governor and Secretary of the Interior Walter Hickel in writing philosophical memoir.

Spectacular Alaska (Hugh Lauter Levin Associates, 1998; revised edition, Universe, 2012). Text for coffee table photography book.

Selected consulting assignments

Consulate-General of Japan. Advised on the Alaska business and political landscape. 2019.

Alaska State Library, Archives and Museums. Drafted labels and advised curators on mounting the permanent exhibit for a new \$100 million state history museum. 2015-2016.

National Energy Policy Institute. Reporting to former Governor Tony Knowles, drafted and presented a final report for the institute, including a holistic carbon reduction program that consolidated policy papers by a team of academics. 2013.

U.S. Senator Mark Begich. Developed strategic plan and led leadership discussions on legislative priorities. 2009.

Municipality of Anchorage, Office of the Mayor. Oversaw transportation issues, including passage of the city-state Long-Range Transportation Plan. Strategized electric utility issues, including a merger initiative and power plant construction. 2003-2009.

Work Included in Books or Anthologies

Made of Salmon: Alaska Stories from the Salmon Project, edited by Nancy Lord (University of Alaska Press, 2016)

Alaska at 50: Past, Present, and the Next Fifty Years of Statehood, edited by Dr. G. W. Kimura (University of Alaska Press, 2009).

The AMS Weather Book: The Ultimate Guide to America's Weather, by Jack Williams (University of Chicago Press, 2009).

The Last Polar Bear: Facing the Truth of a Warming World, by Steven Kazlowski, et al. (Braided River/The Mountaineers Books, 2008).

The Future of Nature: Writing on a Human Ecology from Orion Magazine, selected and introduced by Barry Lopez (Milkweed Editions, 2007).

Global Climate Change, edited by Paul McCaffrey (H.W. Wilson, 2006).

The Alaska Reader: Voices from the North, edited by Anne Hanley and Carolyn Kremers (Fulcrum, 2005).

National Geographic National Parks: Atlas and Travel Planner (publication cancelled).

Frommer's National Parks of the American West, by Don and Barbara Laine (two

editions; IDG Books, 1998, 2000).

Frommer's USA, edited by Bill Godwin (Simon & Schuster, 1998).

Outside Magazine's Guide to Family Vacations, by Frommer's (Simon & Schuster, 1997).

Best Newspaper Writing 1990, edited by Don Fry and Karen Brown (Poynter Institute, 1990).

Season of Dead Water, edited by Helen Frost (Breitenbush, 1990).

Freelance Articles Published

Alaska Airlines Magazine, Alaska Dispatch, Alaska Dispatch News, Alaska Geographic, Alaska Magazine, Alaska On The Move, Anchorage Daily News, Anchorage Press, Capital Eye, CJR Columbia Journalism Review, The Daily Beast, The Daily Princetonian, Discover, Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, Fame, First Alaskans, Forum, Global Oneness Project, Los Angeles Times, Nassau Literary Review, National Wildlife, New York Times dotEarth blog, New York Times Ideas blog, The New Republic, The New Republic online, Northwest Airlines World Traveler, NPS Discovery Today, Onearth, Onearth Online, Orion, Orion Online, Outside, Outside Family Vacations, Pacific Northwest, Panoscope, Princeton Alumni Weekly, The Salmon Project, Scientific American online, Scope, Seed online, Sunset.

Selected Lectures Given

Non-profit Organizations

American Museum of Natural History, Hayden Planetarium, New York City Center for Alaska Coastal Studies, Homer, Alaska
Griffith Observatory, Los Angeles
Inupiat Heritage Center, Barrow, Alaska
New Bedford Whaling Museum, New Bedford, Massachusetts
MOTE Aquarium, Sarasota, Florida
Port Townsend Marine Science Center, Port Townsend, Washington
Town Hall Seattle. Seattle, Washington

Colleges and Universities

Cambridge University, Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge, England
Dartmouth College, Arctic Institute, Hanover, New Hampshire
Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon
Princeton University, Environmental Institute, Princeton, New Jersey
San Francisco State University, Pacific Rim Voices/The Kiriya Book Prize, San Francisco, California
University of California Los Angeles, Hammer Museum
University of Washington Program on the Environment, Seattle, Washington
Yale University, Peabody Museum, New Haven, Connecticut

Conferences (non-specialist)

Alaska Forum on the Environment, Anchorage, Alaska
Aspen Institute Forum on the Environment, Aspen, Colorado
Etonnants Voyageurs, festival international du livre et du film, Saint-Malo, France
Exploratorium/ECHO Consortium, San Francisco, California
National Association of State Treasurers, keynote, Anchorage, Alaska
Northwest Public Power Association, Anchorage, Alaska
USDA Forest Service/UAA, climate change conference, Anchorage, Alaska
World Wildlife Fund, climate camp, Homer, Alaska

Professional and Scientific Meetings

Alaska Historical Society, annual meeting, keynote
Alaska Marine Science Symposium, Anchorage, Alaska
American Meteorological Association, Annual Meeting keynote, San Diego, California
Arctic Research Consortium of the U.S., Annual Meeting keynote, Washington, D.C.
Association of Architecture Organizations, Anchorage, Alaska
Hatfield Marine Science Center, Newport, Oregon
Monterey Institute of International Studies, International Environmental Policy Program, Monterey, California
National Park Service, interpreter training, Kenai Fjords National Park
Pacific Rim Conference on Literature and Rhetoric, University of Alaska Anchorage, keynote

Awards

2019

Best of the West (the most prestigious journalism award for western U.S. newspapers, including Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wyoming): First place, general interest column

2018

Alaska Press Club

- Public Service Award, honorable mention, all media
- Suzan Nightingale Award for Best Columnist, second place, large print

2017

Alaska Press Club: Large print

- Suzan Nightingale Award for Best Columnist, large print
- Best series: second place

2016

Alaska Press Club: Suzan Nightingale Award for Best Columnist, large print

2015

Alaska Press Club: All radio and TV

- Best talk show: third place
- Best public affairs show: second place

2014

Alaska Press Club: All radio and TV

- Best talk show: first place
- Best public affairs show: first place

2013

Alaska Historical Society: Contributions to Alaska History Award, shared with Victor Fischer

2009

University of Alaska Anchorage/Alaska Pacific University: Selected as Book of the Year for campus-wide reading and study.

2005

American Meteorological Society: Louis J. Battan Author's Award for outstanding, newly published book on the atmospheric and related sciences.

2004

Los Angeles Times Book Prize: winner, science and technology.

Overseas Press Club of America: citation, best reporting in any medium on international environment issues (Whitman Bassow Award)

Library Journal "Best Books 2004": listed

Alaska Library Association: Outstanding Alaskana of the Year (best Alaska book for 2004)

Kiriyama Prize: one of five finalists for a \$15,000 award for nonfiction on Pacific Rim cultures.

2003

Anchorage School District: Award for Excellence for leadership as chairman for two years of School Bonds YES! campaign, which won voter approval of \$264 million in bonds.

2001

Alaska Press Club: Best Reporting on Health or Science, Non-Daily

1999

Anchorage Assembly: Resolution 99-136 “Recognizing the Leadership of Assemblymember Charles P. Wohlforth in the Orderly and Successful Disposal of the Anchorage Telephone Utility”

1997

Government Hill Community Council: Citation “for exceeding even his usual high standards as a public servant in the matter of Municipal Ordinance 96-209,” March 3.

1995

Alaska Press Club: Best general news story, second place.

1994

Alaska Press Club:

- Best coverage of the Arts, first place
- Best reporting on the environment, second place.

1993

Alaska Press Club: best columnist, third place.

1992

Alaska Press Club:

- Best general reporting, first place
- Best general reporting, third place.
- Best breaking story, first place.
- Best reporting on business and economics, first place.

1991

Society of Professional Journalists, US Northwest Region, large dailies:

- Best business reporting, first place.
- Best reporting on criminal justice, honorable mention.

Alaska Press Club:

- Best breaking story, first place.
- Best comprehensive coverage, first place.
- Best lifestyles or personality feature, third place.

1990

C.B. Blethen Award: for Distinguished Deadline Reporting, second place.

Alaska Press Club:

- Best reporting on a political subject, first place.
- Best reporting on health, science, consumer and the environment, first place.
- Best long news feature, third place.

1989

American Society of Newspaper Editors: Award for Distinguished Deadline Writing, first runner-up.

C.B. Blethen Award: for Distinguished Deadline Reporting, first place.

Alaska Press Club:

- Best reporting, non-daily, second place;
- Best comprehensive coverage, non-daily, third place.

1988

Alaska Press Club: Best breaking story, non-daily, first place.

1987

Society of Professional Journalists, Farthest North Chapter:

- Best spot news reporting, third place.
- Best series, third place.

1984

Princeton University: Special Award in Creative Writing by the Dean of the College.

Memberships and Volunteerism

School Bonds YES!, chair of campaign in passage of \$171 million in bonds 2010-2014; also \$264 million in bonds 2002-2003.

Anchorage Library Foundation, member and committee chair 2007-2012.

Municipal Light & Power, member, board of directors, committee chair, 2009-2011.

Chugach Optional School Executive Board, officer 2000-2011, president 2005-2006.

American Association for the Advancement of Science, member 2002-2010.

Steller Secondary Alternative, Strategic Planning Committee, chair 2006-2009.

American Society of Journalists and Authors, member 1998-2002.

Cook Inlet Historical Society, board member 1999-2000.

Hillcrest Children's Center Executive Committee, officer 1995-2000.

Anchorage Assembly, member and committee chair 1993-1999.

Government Hill Community Council, president 1992.