



2019 Reading Recommendations by Members of Alpha Sigma Chapter, Kitsap DKG

1. ***Just Mercy*** by Bryan Stevenson
The true story of one man's fight for justice for wrongly convicted African American men in the South, and then children in prison. Soon to be in theaters. Winner of Carnegie Medal for Excellence, NAACP Image Award for Nonfiction, Books for a Better Life Award. Finalist for Los Angeles Times Book Prize, and the Kirkus Prize. An American Library Association Notable Book. This book received several mentions and has been recommended for our May book discussion.
2. ***The Underground Railroad*** by Colson Whitehead
The book follows the life of Cora, a young slave on a cotton plantation in Georgia and Charleston, as she escapes on the Underground Railroad. In Colson Whitehead's ingenious conception, the Underground Railroad is no mere metaphor: engineers and conductors operate a secret network of actual tracks and tunnels beneath the Southern soil. *The Underground Railroad* is both the gripping tale of one woman's will to escape the horrors of bondage—and a powerful meditation on the history we all share. Winner: Pulitzer Prize, National Book Award, Andrew Carnegie medal of Excellence in Fiction. Longlisted for the Man Booker Prize.
3. ***Where the Crawdads Sing*** by Delia Owens
The heart-wrenching story of a girl raising herself in the marshes of the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Powerful in its description of the natural world and character development. Plus a mystery! "The favorite book of the year in one of my book clubs. Reminds me of an adult Jean Craighead George novel, only better." Recommended by several members.

4. ***Sarah's Key*** by Tatiana de Rosnay
Two main parallel plots are followed in the book: the first is that of ten year old Sarah Starsynski, a Jewish girl born in Paris, who is arrested with her parents during the Vel' d' Hiv Roundup. Before they go, Sarah hides her brother in a cupboard, thinking the family will be back in a few hours. The second plot follows Julia Jarmond, an American journalist living in Paris, who is asked to write an article in honor of the 60th anniversary of the round-up. Well-paced book that maintains a tension as the stories unfold.

5. ***Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*** by Benjamin Alire Sáenz
Young adult book, winner of Printz Honor Book prize. This book is a “tender, honest exploration of identity,” friendship and family. Aristotle is an angry teen with a brother in prison; Dante is a know-it-all who has an unusual way of looking at the world. The boys seem to have nothing in common, but as they start spending time together

6. ***Good Neighbor: The Life and Work of Fred Rogers*** by Maxwell King
The definitive biography of Fred Rogers, an enormously influential figure in the history of television. A champion of compassion, equality, and kindness, fiercely devoted to children and taking their questions about the world seriously. Based on original interviews, oral histories and archival documents.

7. ***Before We Were Yours*** by Lisa Wingate
In 1939, twelve-year old Rill Foss and her four younger siblings live a magical life aboard a Mississippi River shanty boat. When their father must rush their mother to the hospital, Rill is left in charge until strangers arrive and remove them to a Tennessee Children's Home Society Orphanage, where they are at the mercy of the facility's cruel director. Years later, wealthy and privileged federal prosecutor Avery Stafford has a chance encounter that leaves her with questions about her family's long-hidden history. This historical novel is based on the real Tennessee adoption agency's scandal.

8. ***The Moment of Lift: How Empowering Women Changes the World*** by Melinda Gates
After years working with women around the world, Melinda Gates relates inspiring stories of some of the women she has met, summarizes that data, and presents compelling argument for an equal society where women are valued and recognized. Through her stories, she makes it increasingly clear that “if you want to lift society up, you need to stop keeping women down.”

9. ***Lake Chelan: the Greatest Lake in the World*** by John Fahey
A light-hearted but informative local read. The author looks at lakes throughout the world with a special focus on Lake Chelan. He explores its complex drainage system, from the cozy towns and vineyards to the glaciated peaks, and all the diverse microclimates in between in a spirited and endearing exploration of lake-living nostalgia.

10. ***Leadership: In Turbulent Times*** by Doris Kearns Goodwin

One of the most highly recognized historians of the day, Doris Kearns Goodwin, draws on the lives of four presidents – Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson – to show how they recognized leadership qualities in themselves from their early entry into public life, their growth through the turbulence that they encountered while in office, and the lessons they discovered about leadership, ambition, and the exercise of power.

11. ***When Breath Becomes Air*** by Paul Kalanithi

On the verge of completing his training as a neurosurgeon, Paul Kalanithi was diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer. This memoir chronicles his life (and dying) with self-knowledge, compassion, bravery, and a clear, honest and edifying look at the meaning of life and “life worth living.” A great discussion book for family and friends.

12. ***Rules of Civility: a Novel*** by Amor Towles

The author of *A Gentleman in Moscow* turns to New York in the post-Depression years to tell the story of twenty-five year old Katey Kontent who suddenly finds herself in the middle of upper echelon society with little to rely on but her wit and cool nerves. Full of rich characters and insight into “high society.”

13. ***The Widows of Malabar Hill*** by Sujata Massey

Atmospheric historical mystery set in 1920's India. Perveen Mistry, Bombay's only female lawyer, is investigating the suspicious will of three Muslim widows living in full purdah when the case becomes murderous. Fun read, especially if you like historical fiction and mysteries.

14. ***Why Dual Language Schooling*** by Wayne P. Thomas and Virginia P. Collier

Drs. Thomas and Collier share knowledge and research-based strategies for why dual language education makes sense. Research shows that students in dual language programs surpass other students in achievement, but it takes from five to seven years to obtain these results. This is the fourth book in a series by the authors on dual language schools for a transformed world.

15. ***Becoming*** by Michelle Obama

(especially the audio version read by Michelle Obama and the *Guided Journal* which allows the reader to discover their own story). This is a rich and in-depth look at the events and people who shaped Michelle Obama and allowed her to become the outstanding First Lady we came to admire. Received several mentions.

16. ***Blowout: Corrupted Democracy, Rogue State Russia, and the Richest, Most Destructive Industry on Earth*** by Rachel Maddow

Relating seemingly unrelated events, Maddow untangles a thread that connects a series of corrupt and bizarre occurrences to the unimaginably lucrative and corrupt oil and gas industry that have led to, among other things, the hacking of the 2016 U.S. election. Fascinating and told with Maddow's thoroughness and black humor.

17. ***The Power of One*** by Bruce Courtenay

Following the life of an English-speaking South African boy named Peekay from 1939 to 1951, through first person narrative, the reader shares the feelings and thoughts of a boy tormented in boarding school, befriended by a Zulu medicine man who teaches him the power of one," a chance encounter with Hoppie Groenwald, a welterweight boxing champion who teaches him the phrase "first with your head, then with your heart," and a German botanist who instills in Peekay a love for music, literature and science. The book has been translated into 18 languages and made into a movie.

18. ***A Higher Call: An Incredible True Story of Combat and Chivalry in the War-Torn Skies of World War II*** by Adam Makos and Larry Alexander

A badly damaged American bomber struggles to stay aloft over wartime Germany, half the crew wounded or dead. Suddenly a Messerschmitt fighter pulls up on the bomber's tail, piloted by German ace Franz Stigler. What happened next became a top secret for forty years until declassified and told by investigative reporter Makos, who found and interviewed the two pilots.

19. ***The Great Alone*** by Kristin Hannah

A story of resilience and survival, post-traumatic stress syndrome and abuse, and the power of communities and families taking care of each other and loving beyond all hope set in Alaska's Kenai Peninsula wilderness in the 1970's and 80's. Vivid descriptions of Alaska's beauty and dangers.

20. ***The Overstory*** by Richard Powers

This Pulitzer Prize winning novel weaves the separate stories of nine characters dating from the mid-1800's to the present, across generations and diverse locations, all having in common special relationships with trees. Eventually the characters meet and become eco-warriors in the Pacific Northwest. Along the way, Powers give amazing details about dozens of trees, including that they communicate and care for each other. (See Peter Wohlleben's *The Hidden Life of Trees* for the non-fiction counterpart.) The story is at once depressing about mankind's fate and hopeful.

21. ***The Fracture Zone***

by Simon Winchester

Published in 1999, this journalistic report on the Balkans does a great service in helping to explain the tragedy of century's old conflict in that zone from Slovenia to Macedonia: Christian, Orthodox, Muslim all with historical claims and disputes. At times neighborly and at other times brutal in their revenge. Understanding the destruction of Kosovo and Sarajevo will never be easy, but much more so having read this book.

22. ***Maid: Hard Work, Low Pay, and a Mother's Will to Survive*** by Stephanie Land

"*Evicted* meets *Nickle and Dimed* in Stephanie Land's memoir about working as a maid. A beautiful and gritty exploration of poverty in America." This book will exhaust you to read how hard this poor mother had to work to live. But it is also a positive affirming book about the human spirit. Highly recommended as a companion read to *Evicted*, the KRL "one book, one community" book for this year.

23. ***The Radium Girls: the Dark Story of America's Shining Women*** by Kate Moore

This stunning book tells the story of those young women who painted radium on clock faces – radium, a new substance that seemed a miracle cure for ailments and aided the war effort by illuminating watches. When they fell ill, the girls were discounted, vilified, and ignored until the corporate world could no longer.

24. ***Pieces of Her***

by Karen Slaughter

Andrea's quiet life is turned upside down when she meets her mom for lunch at the mall, only to have her mother confront and take down a vicious murderer who attacks them. Who is/was her mother? What secrets is she hiding? The audio book is great!

25. ***Neither Wolf nor Dog: On Forgotten Roads with an Indian Elder*** by Kent Nerburn

Requested by a Native elder to write his memoir, white author Kent Nerburn is drawn deep into the world of Plains Indian life as he travels the back roads of Indian Country, meets family members and friends from young to old, and listens, really listens to the stories of an Indian Elder and the meaning behind those stories. An enlightening piece for understanding Native culture and all its contradictions.