

Father and Son Author-Illustrator Team Win Top Prize in National Book Award

International human rights father-son team Patrick and Ernesto Atkinson win national gold medal

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International author and human rights activist Patrick Atkinson has been awarded the prestigious 2019 National Gold Medal by the Independent Book Publisher Association (IBPA), it was recently announced.

Atkinson won for his 2018 book *The Powerful You!* The awards, now in their 23rd year, recognize independent authors worldwide and attempt to showcase the best from among the nearly one million books published each year.

A panel of publishing-industry experts judge nominated books on the quality of content, originality, design and production. Known within the publishing industry as IPPY Awards, it has evolved into a much sought-after contest to win.

Atkinson's *The Powerful You!*, published by Beavers Pond Press, is an empowering book that emphasizes self-responsibility for children, teenagers, and young adults. The book helps youth recognize when things go wrong so they can correct them and keep moving forward in life, and how to survive challenging times.

The Powerful You! was colorfully illustrated by his son, Ernesto Atkinson, a Guatemala native resident and Licensed Professional Counselor and Art Therapist helping victims of trauma in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Patrick Atkinson said he was grateful to see his book, *The Powerful You!*, selected to receive the 2019 National Gold Medal from the Independent Book Publisher Association because the book emphasizes "the power that people have to determine how they will live their life."

"Each year I give presentations across our hemisphere

to empower our children and teenagers to take charge of their lives," Atkinson said. "This is their life, their world. The *Powerful You!* lays that out in a very straight-forward fashion. It's the perfect graduation or moving out gift for teenagers and young adults."

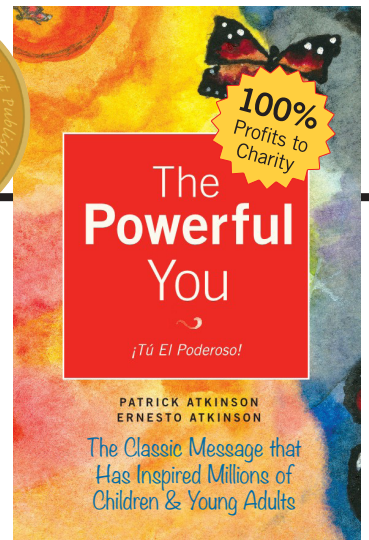
The Independent Book Publisher Association will present gold medals to both Atkinsons at an awards dinner in New York City later this month.



International author and human rights activist Patrick Atkinson in Guatemala

Author Patrick Atkinson was raised in Bismarck, North Dakota, and attended Minnesota State University – Moorhead. After graduation, Atkinson turned down lucrative corporate job offers to work with runaways, prostitutes, and gang members in New York City's Hell's Kitchen district.

Two years later, Atkinson moved to Central America where he began a twenty-five-year international career in war-zone reconciliation and post-war reconstruction. He is the recipient of numerous human rights awards



(including the Guatemalan Congressional Medal) and is the subject of the biography *The Dream Maker* by investigative reporter Monica Hannan.

Atkinson is the founder and international executive director of The Atkinson Center (www.AtkinsonCenter.org), which includes the Institute for Trafficked, Exploited & Missing Persons (www.ITEMP.org) and the nondenominational GOD'S CHILD Project (www.GodsChild.org) orphan-care program. He is a prolific international author and his 2012 book, *A Message for My Child*, was a three-time National Christian Choice Award winner, and subsequently translated into 11 languages.



Professional artist and Licensed Family Therapist Ernesto Atkinson illustrated The Powerful You!

Atkinson is currently collaborating on his eighth book, a teenage survival guide titled *And We Are... Kids*, with Minneapolis-based youth advocate

Jordan Ericksen. His son Ernesto Atkinson will also be the illustrator for this book.

The Powerful You! award-winning illustrator Ernesto Atkinson was born and raised in Antigua, Guatemala.

Even as a young boy, the younger Atkinson expressed a great interest in art, and over the years his artistic influences grew with tremendous passion as he traveled the world and explored the human experience through art.

Atkinson graduated from North Dakota State University with a degree in visual arts before returning to Guatemala where he worked in anti-human trafficking interdiction efforts. He then earned his Masters in Art Therapy from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and is both a professional artist and a practicing Licensed Professional Counselor and Art Therapist at Integration Healing (www.Integration-Healing.com) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Atkinson has been called "an artist who truly sees art as an active agent of social change"; his work represents a contemporary movement which observes his experience with everyday life. He is currently writing his first full-length book, entitled *Integration Art*, which will be marketed to counselors, art therapists, and psychologists.

The Powerful You! can be purchased from booksellers everywhere and found online at www.GodsChild.org/shop. All profits from the sale of *The Powerful You!* are used to provide academic scholarships for homeless youth through The God's Child Project.

For more information on The Independent Booksellers Association, please visit: www.independentpublisher.com

For more information about the 2019 Independent Bookseller IPPY awards, please contact: www.IPPYAwards.com

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