

REPORT OF THE PULITZER FICTION JURY
-1978-

The undersigned unanimously and enthusiastically nominate for the 1978 Pulitzer Prize in Fiction James Alan McPherson's Elbow Room. This is our only nomination.

Comment: With his collection, Elbow Room, Mr. McPherson continues the humane, articulate, and sensitive exploration of the American Black experience begun in his previous collection Hue and Cry, and has now established himself as one of the most skillful and penetrating storytellers in America. He is an American writer who happens to be black and who believes--as his stories so strongly indicate--that American culture has been influenced by blackness in as important a way as by other ethnic contributors, but he refuses to allow anger to come between him and his art.

The twelve stories in his latest volume map out the psychic terrain of Black culture as neither alien nor (spiritually, at least) impoverished, but as a true culture, a version of life which makes possible the discovery of memory, regret, and love. Neither revolutionary nor merely picturesque, his fiction is in the best sense of the word imaginative. His language, his narrative skills, and his characters span a wide range from the most self-consciously cultured to the most folksy and colloquial, but consistently enlivened, at all levels of style and substance, by a firm intelligence and compassion for the things that make us all human beings, and for those aspects of living that fiction, perhaps, can best tell us about.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Manning

Frank McConnell

Carlos Baker, Chairman

December, 1977