

A new twist on an old Texas tale

Austin-based author uses fact and fiction to create his debut novel *Not Between Brothers*

By TRAVIS IRBY
Staff writer

Austin-based author D. Marion Wilkinson combines history and personal experience in his debut novel *Not Between Brothers*.

Wilkinson's book is a 660-page epic covering Texas history during the war for Texas' independence against Mexico.

The book's title, *Not Between Brothers*, comes from a speech given by Santa Anna, the president of Mexico during the Texas Revolution.

It involves the adventures of Remy Fuqua, a pioneer who comes to Texas at the behest of Mexico. Remy has to deal with the rumblings of revolution and the rigors of the pioneer life.

He also ends up at odds with a Comanche warrior named Kills White Bear and on the front lines of the battle for Texas' independence.

Not Between Brothers won the Austin Writers League's 1997 Violet Crown Award for best novel, and it

college, and he put his interest in the subject into making the novel.

"I must have read anything and everything on the subject of Texas history and during that time in America," he said.

Wilkinson's devotion to historical accuracy has earned the praise of his peers.

Dr. William J. Scheick, a J.R. Miliken Centennial Literature professor at the University of Texas and a friend of Wilkinson, said the author's attention to detail was excellent.

"As far as I know there is nothing inaccurate on the part of the research," Scheick said.

Schieck said the book does a great job of weaving historical fact and compelling fiction.

"It is a thought-out, well-researched, literate piece of work," Scheick said. "Wilkinson is a great storyteller."

While many of the characters in the book are factual, the book's protagonist Remy Fuqua draws on some of the author's personal experiences.

"Like me, Remy is part French and Scotch-Irish," Wilkinson said. "It is a source of great conflict between within himself and his family."

"These conflicts came at a time when there wasn't a 'white,' Europeans were still culturally separated in this country."

Wilkinson put great pains into creating the character Kills White Bear.

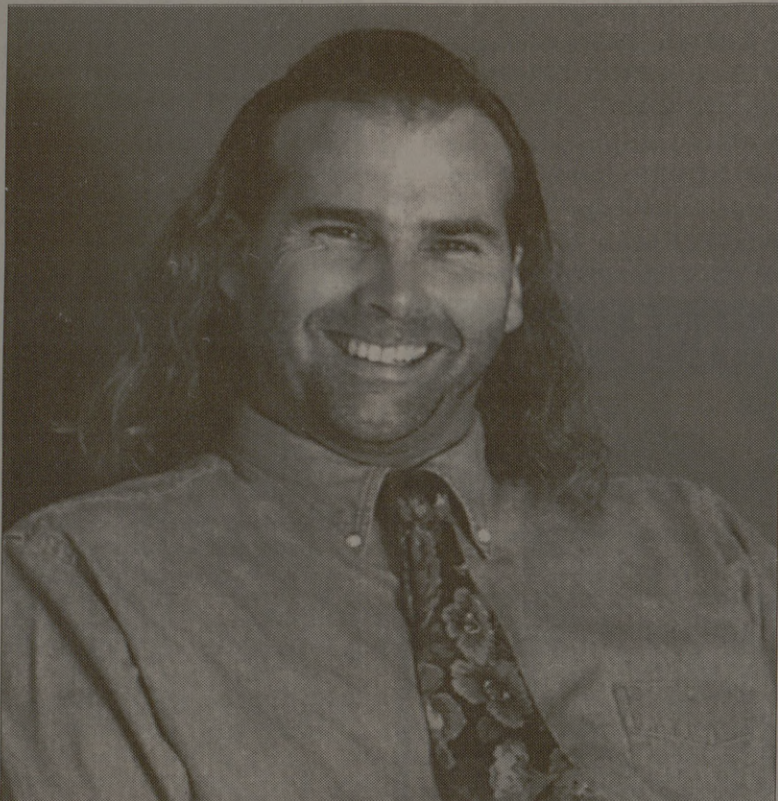
"He is in part based on Crazy Horse," Wilkinson said. "Kills White Bear comes from a middling position in the tribe to become the greatest leader."

Not everyone thought Wilkinson's opus was such.

When he first started marketing *Not Between Brothers* to major publishers, they were not interested because of its factual content.

"Every major publisher said the same thing, 'too much history, take out the facts, keep the story,'" Wilkinson said.

Wilkinson did not want to change his vision of the book. Instead he started shopping it out to some of the



D. Marion Wilkinson

country's smaller publishers.

One of those publishers, Boaz Publishing based in California, decided to publish the book.

Tom Southern, a Boaz publisher, was indifferent when he first received Wilkinson's manuscript.

"Someone gave me this 1,200 page manuscript, and I was content to let it sit there," Southern said. "But one night I couldn't sleep, so I started to read it, and I couldn't stop. It was an engrossing piece of work."

Coming from a smaller publisher, it took a lot of work to get the word out about the book.

Sarah Austin, Community Relations Coordinator for Barnes and Noble in Houston, said she happened to luck into a copy of the book.

"I received a copy, and I thought it was a great book," Austin said. "So

we got Wilkinson in here to do book signing, and it was well received."

Austin said Wilkinson has been in several times since, drawing an ever increasing group of fans.

The book's popularity has grown without major advertising. River Oaks Bookstore in Houston has sold almost 400 copies of the book, beating out authors such as John Grisham and Tom Clancy.

Mike Pugh, Wilkinson's publicist, said the novel has steadily been picking up steam.

"Since the Violet Crown and Silver Spur awards, there has been a lot of interest in the book," Pugh said.

In the end, Wilkinson said he wanted to create something he took pride in.

"I am extremely proud of its accuracy and objectiveness," Wilkinson said. "It doesn't whitewash history."

"I worked on it for three years; it was a labor of love. I would see and talk to the characters. They were part of my life so much."

D. Marion Wilkinson
Author of *Not Between Brothers*

was also an award finalist in the Western Writers of America, Inc.'s Silver Spur award.

Wilkinson said the accolades help justify the effort he put into the novel.

"I worked on it for three years; it was a labor of love," Wilkinson said. "I would see and talk to the characters. They were part of my life so much."

Wilkinson had a history minor in

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