



Dr. Robert Wack

Great Readers, Great Leaders

We are delighted to feature book recommendations from Dr. Robert Wack.

Dr. Wack's Bio

Dr. Robert Wack is President of the Westminster Common Council and has served on the Council for 11 years. He is currently spearheading the Open Access Citywide Fiber Network initiative. The Common Council approved \$6.3 million in FY 15 to construct the first phase, with the ultimate goal of connecting every home and business in Westminster to Carroll County's fiber optic backbone. To hear more about this innovative community owned network model, listen to Dr. Wack's interview on the Community Broadband Bits Podcast, Episode 100, from the Institute for Local Self Reliance: <http://www.muninetworks.org/content/story-behind-westminsters-pending-open-access-fiber-network-community-broadband-bits-podcast>.

Dr. Wack serves as the Director of Pediatric Services at Frederick Memorial Healthcare Systems, where he founded and developed the Pediatric Hospitalist Program for inpatient and acute outpatient care and implemented an innovative tele-health partnership with Children's Hospital in Washington, DC. Previously, he was Director of Pediatric Services at Carroll Hospital Center for 12 years. During that time, he was instrumental in developing Access Carroll, a free health clinic for low income and uninsured residents. Dr. Wack served on the Board of Directors of Access Carroll for ten years. He is a founding Board member of the Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County, Inc.

Dr. Wack was born in Washington, DC. He is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame, where he completed the Great Books Program and simultaneously received a degree in Biology. After graduation, he worked as a technical writer for a law firm until deciding to enroll in medical school. He received his MD from Georgetown University Medical School and then served in the US Army Medical Corps, assigned to Germany and Hawaii. Following active duty, Dr. Wack accepted a job in Carroll County. He and his wife Lisa have three children.

A renaissance man, Dr. Wack developed an interest in military history while serving in the Army Medical Corps, but science fiction remains his first love. He always liked to write and has written numerous short stories and articles. He wrote his first novel following 9/11, which he says, "was not good, but a great learning experience." The idea for his second novel, *Time Bomber*, came to him when he was browsing books at the Westminster Branch Library and picked up a copy of *How to Build a Time Machine*, by Paul Davies. The book introduced him to the time travel work of Willem Jacob van Stockum, a mathematics professor at the University of Maryland and a pilot who was killed in WWII. A story started to gel in Dr. Wack's mind. What if van Stockum had lived and further developed his thinking on time travel? In researching the book, Dr. Wack turned to University of Maryland archivist Ann Turkos, who was a great help in providing information on van Stockum's work. He also met friends and family of Dr. van Stockum, which led to the connection to his publisher, Boissevain Books, a New York-based independent book publisher founded by the Estate of Hilda van Stockum, a noted author and illustrator of more than thirty books for children and the sister of Dr. Willem Jacob van Stockum.

Dr. Wack is currently working on his next book, which will explore autism and genetic engineering.

Dr. Wack's Reads

[Dune by Frank Herbert](#)

Considered a science fiction epic and triumph of the imagination. Set on the desert planet Arrakis, which is the only source of the most valuable substance in the universe. *Dune* is the story of the boy Paul Atreides, who avenges a traitorous plot against his noble family for control of the planet. A stunning blend of adventure and mysticism, environmentalism and politics, *Dune* won the Hugo Award in 1966 and the Nebula Award. Herbert wrote five sequels.

[A Confederacy of Dunces by John Kennedy Toole](#)

This American comic masterpiece, set in New Orleans in the 1960s and filled with memorable and zany characters, earned the author a posthumous Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1981 and is now considered a major work of modern literature of the Southern United States.

[The Sparrow by Mary Doria Russell](#)

A small group of people is sent to explore a newly discovered planet and to contact a totally unknown species. This first novel won the Arthur C. Clarke Award, James Tiptree, Jr. Award, and the British Science Fiction Association Award. The title refers to Matthew 10:29-31, which relates that not even a sparrow falls to the earth without God's knowing of it.

[Rum Punch by Elmore Leonard](#)

A flight attendant is on the run from her vicious gun-running sometime employer who sees her as a troublesome loose end. *Rum Punch* affirms Leonard's right to the title of America's finest crime fiction writer. This thriller served as the basis for the film *Jackie Brown* by director Quentin Tarantino.

[No Country for Old Men by Cormac McCarthy](#)

1980 southwest Texas, Llewelyn Moss, hunting near the Rio Grande, stumbles across several dead men, a supply of heroin and \$2.4 million in cash. The novel is a gripping man-on-the-run sequence relayed in terse, masterful prose as Moss, who takes the money, tries to evade the drug cartel's hit man, a psychopathic murderer armed with a cattle gun. A terrifying page-turner set and meditation on the battle between good and evil and the roles choice and chance play in life.

[American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson by Joseph Ellis](#)

Ellis portrays Jefferson as is a Professor of History at Mount Holyoke. His portrayal of Jefferson won the National Book Award. Ellis states in his biography of Jefferson, "My approach is selective... to focus on the values and convictions that reveal themselves in these specific historical contexts."

[Public Opinion by Walter Lippmann](#)

Amazon.com notes, "Written by one of the most influential men of his time and one of the greatest journalists in history, this seminal work of political science presents an incisive examination of democratic theory, the role of citizens in a democracy, and the impact of the media in shaping thoughts and actions." Lippmann was the founding editor of the *New Republic*, and a recipient of the Pulitzer Prize and the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

[Childhood's End by Arthur C. Clarke](#)

Written in 1953, it covers the peaceful alien invasion of Earth by Overlords, whose arrival ends all war, helps form a world government, and turns the planet into a near-utopia. Decades later, the Overlords show themselves, and their impact on human culture leads to a final utopic Golden Age, but at the cost of humanity's identity and eventually the planet itself.

