



MICHAEL R. RITT



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Michael R. Ritt is a Wisconsin author who writes primarily in the Western genre. His short stories have appeared in numerous anthologies, including *Contention: and Other Frontier Stories*, and *The Trading Post: and Other Frontier Stories*, both published by Five Star, and *Rough Country* and *Showdown*, published by High Hill Press. His latest book, *The Sons of Philo Gaines*, is his first novel and was released by Five Star in November 2020.

Ritt was born in Chicago but moved with his family to Wisconsin when he was nine. "My dad was an avid fisherman," says Ritt. "I guess he finally got to the point where he had caught all of the fish in the lakes and rivers in Illinois, so he started going north to Wisconsin every weekend to fish in the Wisconsin River. Eventually, he figured out it would be a lot cheaper if we just moved there."

He graduated high school in Wisconsin and attended Bethel College in St. Paul, Minnesota. Afterward, he moved back to Wisconsin, where he met his wife, Tami. They were married in 1989. "My redheaded sweetheart was a widow with two young boys and a teenage daughter when we married. We became an instant family. Then, a year later, we had a son of our own."

In 2002, they moved to Colorado when Ritt accepted a position with the United States Department of Agriculture. Thirteen years later, his job brought him and Tami to Montana, where they lived in a six-hundred-square-foot cabin in the mountains in the western part of the state.

"A passion for reading turned into a passion for writing while I was in high school," says Ritt. "Since then, I've been writing everything: poems, short stories, essays, shopping lists, you name it." In 2018, his short story, *Father Pedro's Prayer*, won the Peacemaker Finalist award for best Western short fiction from Western Fictioneers. He followed that up in 2019 with another Peacemaker Finalist award for his story, *Aces and Eights*. In 2021, his novel, *The Sons of Philo Gaines*, won two Peacemaker Finalist awards, one for Best Western and the second for Best First Western. It also won the first place Gold Medallion in the Will Rogers Medallion Awards.

In addition to writing, Ritt has served on the board of directors of two nonprofit groups and was elected to the Sauk County (Wisconsin) Board of Supervisors in 1998. He serves as a deacon in his church and is a member of Western Writers of America, Western Fictioneers, and the Wisconsin Writers Association.