

## **Meet the Author and Illustrator of *Adopted by an Owl***

In 2000, **Gijsbert van Frankenhuyzen** and **Robbyn Smith van Frankenhuyzen** collaborated on their first children's book, *Adopted by an Owl*, a true story of a great horned owl they raised and released. But rather than returning to the wild, Jackson the Great Horned Owl chose to spend his entire life with his human family, living free on their 40-acre farm. As wildlife rehabilitators, Gijsbert and Robbyn, with the help of daughters Heather and Kelly, cared for orphaned and injured wildlife for over 20 years. They cared for everything from foxes, fawns, opossums and skunks to raccoons, rabbits, hawks and owls.

**Gijsbert** is a numerous published artist. He has illustrated the four "Great Lakes Regions" series of books, including *The Mammals*, *The Ancient Life*, *The Reptiles and Amphibians*, and *The Insects of the Great Lakes Regions*. You can find his work in *Owls of North America* and *The Best of Wildlife Art and The Island Within Us*. He is also one of five illustrators for *The Birds of Michigan*, a large hardbound volume with text and illustrations. His five different DNR habitat posters (The Wetlands, Dunes, Rivers, Beech-Maple Forest and The Jack Pine) are used throughout the state as a popular tool to educate the public on Michigan's diverse resources. He has painted large murals that can be found in schools, museums, zoos, bookstores, libraries and state and federal parks including exhibits at Fort Mackinac on Mackinac Island and Fort Michilimackinac in Mackinaw City.

In the spring of 1998, Sleeping Bear Press of Ann Arbor, Mi., released his first full color children's book, *The Legend of Sleeping Bear*. The book was later honored as Michigan's Official State Children's Book. And thus began his career as a children's book illustrator.

He is most proud of his Hazel Ridge Farm children's book series on which he collaborated with his wife, Robbyn. These true stories, taken from their years of caring for wild animals, are filled with his beautiful illustrations.

Born in the Netherlands, **Gijsbert van Frankenhuyzen** developed an early interest in studying and observing nature and wildlife. Upon graduating from the Royal Academy of Arts in Arnhem, the Netherlands, he was employed as a commercial artist and photographer. He immigrated to Michigan in 1976 and became the art director for the Michigan Natural Resources Magazine. For seventeen years he was responsible for the photos, paintings and layout of the magazine. He can attribute his familiarity and love of Michigan's natural resources to that job.

**Robbyn** has dedicated much of her life to caring for animals. As a youngster she brought orphaned animals home to mend and when she was an adult, folks delivered them to her doorstep. Her parents encouraged her to make her hobby her career, so with that in mind she attended Michigan State University and became an animal technician.

She met her illustrator husband, Gijsbert van Frankenhuyzen, at the clinic where she worked. They raised two beautiful daughters, Heather and Kelly, and together they shared a mutual love of nature.