

The writer's life

SOMOS Winter Writers Series features Anne Hillerman and Jo-Ann Mapson

By Dory Hulburt

“**L**ike father, like daughter” holds true in Anne Hillerman’s case.

Her father, Tony Hillerman, who died in 2008, wrote 18 mysteries based on the adventures of Joe Leaphorn and Jim Chee of the Navajo Tribal Police, as well as numerous other novels, non-fiction and photography books. Several of his mysteries were made into films.

Anne Hillerman highlights today’s (Jan. 12) SOMOS Winter



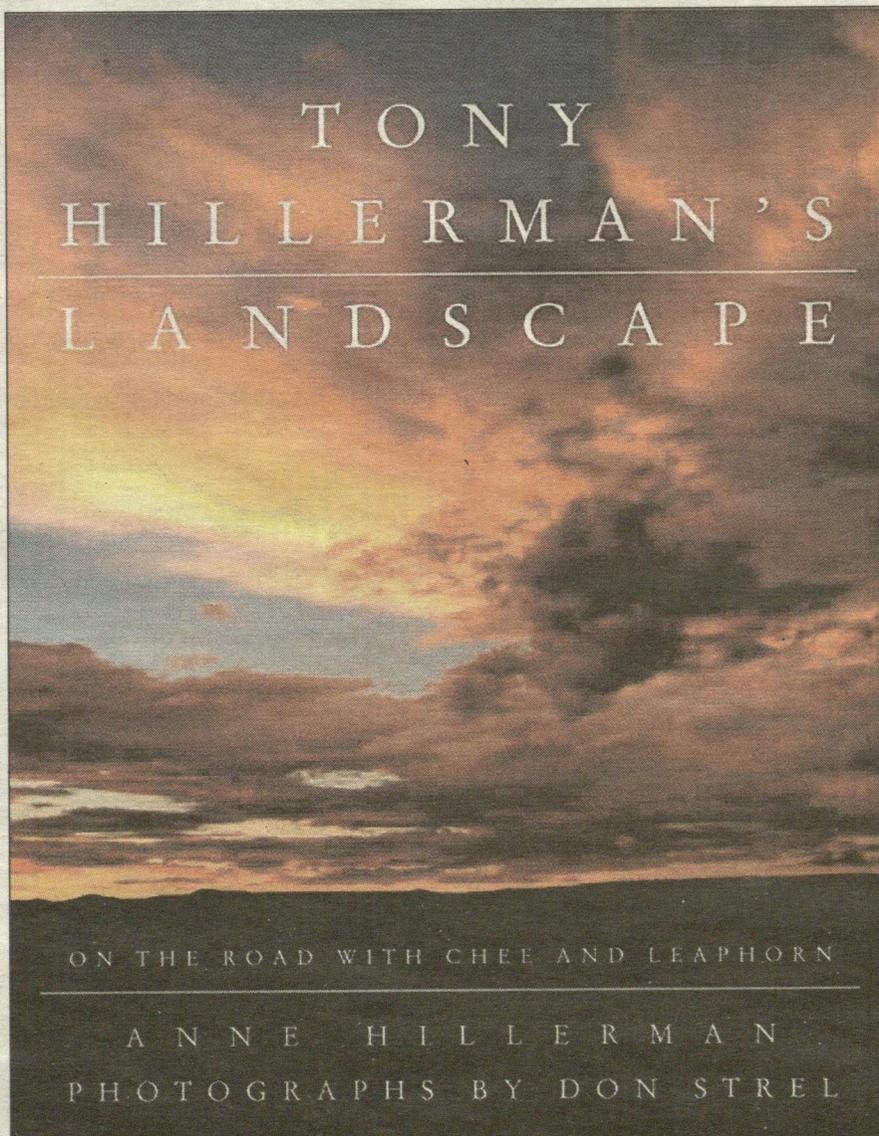
Writers Series event along with novelist Jo-Ann Mapson at 7 p.m. in the Arthur Bell Auditorium of the Harwood Museum at 238 Ledoux St.

Hillerman’s unaffected warmth, humor and accessibility evoke qualities

that beam from her father’s photos on his book covers. “The only lucky thing about me is that I had such a wonderful dad,” she said.

Also like her father, Hillerman worked as a journalist for 20 years, becoming the first woman editorial writer for the *Santa Fe New Mexican* and founding the editorial page of *Journal Santa Fe*, a zoned edition of the *Albuquerque Journal*.

Starting the WORDHARVEST Writers Workshops in Santa Fe encouraged Hillerman to shift from journalism to books. She has written seven, which include “Tony Hillerman’s Landscape: On the Road with Chee and Leaphorn.” Juicy quotes about beautiful landscapes in her father’s mysteries inspired Hillerman and her husband, Don Strel, to visit the loca-



tions, where Strel took abundant, breathtaking photographs which illustrate the book. Hillerman provides synopses of her father’s mysteries and interesting anecdotes about the places, the people, and her father’s career.

The couple was refused access to Zuni Pueblo, where they had hoped to photograph locations in “Dance Hall of the Dead.” They consulted with a Zuni friend, who encouraged them to let it go for awhile. A year later, he suggested that they put in their request again. The new Zuni governor granted access, explaining that when he had been away at college, a chance

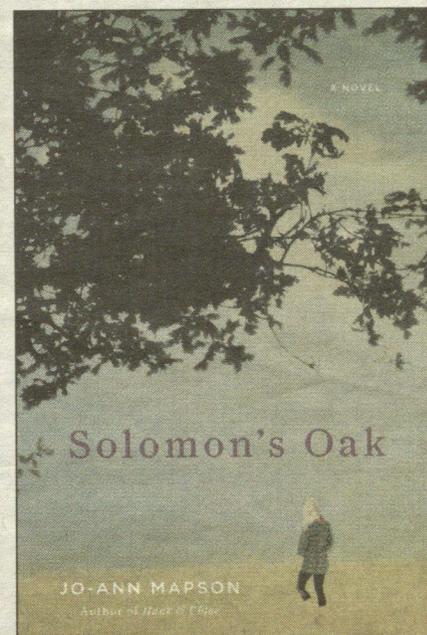
glimpse of Zuni war gods on the cover of “Dance Hall of the Dead” had empowered him to finish school when he had been on the verge of quitting.

“They were so kind,” Hillerman said. “Dad was pulling a few strings for us.”

Strel also took photographs for Hillerman’s latest book, “Gardens of Santa Fe.”

Also a Santa Fe resident, Jo-Ann Mapson has 11 novels to her credit and has been writing since childhood.

She had an active imagination and was often sick as a child, frequently staying inside and watch-



ing soap operas. This seeded her with a sense of ongoing stories beyond the superficial, she said. She was further nourished in writing by her aunt, a writer and larger-than-life character who sent Mapson books and took her traveling.

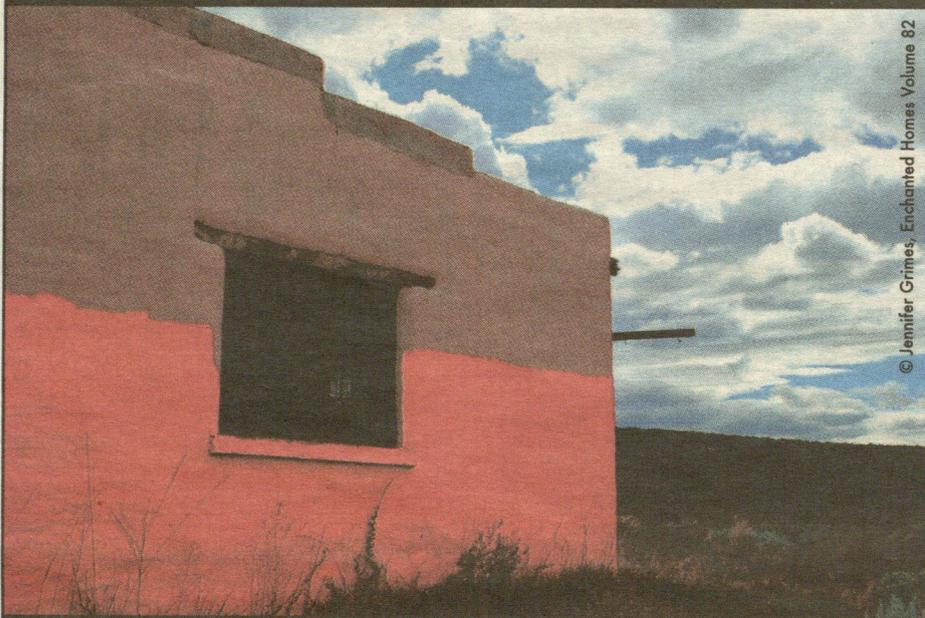
Frustrated by her inability to get published, Mapson pursued a master’s degree in creative writing at Vermont College’s low-residency program. It was a grueling period during which she worked part-time and her husband held down multiple jobs while they raised their 10-year-old (now adult) son. After graduation, Mapson got fired from her secretarial job and resigned herself to teaching. Three weeks later, her agent sold “Hank & Chloe,” which she’d written as her thesis project.

“From the depths of despair — now I had a rewrite and a manuscript due in a year!” she said.

She has been buffeted by the vagaries of the publishing business. She left Harper Collins for Simon & Schuster, and thought her publishing career was over when they dropped her nine books later. She

SOMOS continues on Page 22

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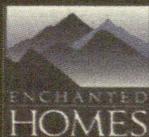
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Courtesy Don Strel

Father and daughter authors Tony Hillerman and Anne Hillerman



Courtesy photo

Novelist Jo-Ann Mapson

SOMOS *continued from Page 21*

moved to New Mexico and wrote her latest novel, "Solomon's Oak," which was picked up by Bloomsbury Publishers.

According to Mapson, she would continue to write even if she wasn't published. "I feel like I write for myself and my girlfriends," she said.

She will read tonight from her new

manuscript, "Finding Casey," a partner book to "Solomon's Oak" which will be published in October 2012.

Admission is \$8, \$6 for SOMOS members, seniors and Harwood Alliance members, and free for students. Tickets are available at the door.

For more information, contact SOMOS at (575) 758-0081, email somos@somostaos.org, or visit www.somostaos.org.