



A native of Southern California, Gina Capaldi is a second-generation Italian American who grew up in a world firmly rooted in conventional traditions. She has both written and illustrated books ranging from educational books for the classroom, to nonfiction and trade picture books, including *A Boy Named Beckoning: The True Story of Dr. Carlos Montezuma-Native American Hero*, Lerner Publishing Group. This book has been named:

- * 2009 Skipping Stones Honor Award winner
- * Nominated as '*finalist*' in the Western Writers of America 2009 Spur Awards competition for the Juvenile Nonfiction Category
- * 2009 Carter G. Woodson Honor Book Award from the National Council for the Social Studies and has been named an Exceptional Social Studies Title for Intermediate Grades.
- * Nominated as '*finalist*' in the Juvenile Nonfiction category of their '*Best Book*' of the Year Award for Forward Magazine.
- * *Orbis Book of the Year '09*
- * *Starred Reviews* from School Library Journal, Booklist, Junior Library Guild, and Rutgers University
- * '*Book of the Month*' from Rutgers University
- * Named '*Best New Book for Classroom*' from Book Links
- * Nominated for '*Book of the Year*', Arizona Library Association

Digging through old archives while researching for a book about American Indians, Gina came across the letter which Dr. Carlos Montezuma wrote to Professor Holmes of the Smithsonian Institution in 1907. It took her breath away because it revealed the personal strength of a dynamic man who had maintained his dignity and excelled against all odds.

The quest to tell Montezuma's story became a passion. Gina uncovered a wealth of information about the man and his people. To tell his story she interviewed historians and met with Tribal leaders, while always focusing on the integrity and accuracy of Montezuma's own words.

Gina attended Malibu's Pepperdine University, Art Center & College of Design in Pasadena, California, and Pitzer College in Claremont, California where she received the Ernst and June Hahn Scholarship for Educational Achievement. She is also a certified fine arts appraiser with credits in film editing and video graphics. She freelances as an illustrator, product developer and designer for an international manufacturing company. Gina is an avid traveler with a fascination for historic manuscripts, ancient artifacts and art glass. Her enthusiasm for cultures, history and tradition show in her work.