



## 2026 marks the twelfth year of One Book One Cozad

The notion of a one book/one city started with an idea by Seattle librarian Nancy Pearl. First initiated in 1998 by the Washington Center for the Book, the Library of Congress reports that such programs are abundant around the world.

Wilson Public Library agrees with the Nebraska Center for the Book's philosophy that "reading great literature provokes us to think about ourselves, our environment and our relationships," and that "talking about great literature with friends, families and neighbors often adds richness and depth to the experience of reading."

We encourage you to read *I Am a Man: Chief Standing Bear's Journey for Justice* by Joe Starita. We have multiple copies available at our library and it is available to read on the Libby app.

Please check our One Book One Cozad tab on our website under Programs & Services at [www.wilsonpubliclibrary.org](http://www.wilsonpubliclibrary.org) or our Facebook Events page at Wilson Public Library for additional programs and events scheduled after this brochure printed in January 2026.

## One Book One Cozad Events in 2026

**Monday, March 9**

10:00am

Open Book Discussion of *I Am a Man: Chief Standing Bear's Journey for Justice* at the Wilson Public Library in Cozad.

The public is welcome and encouraged to attend.

**April**

Date and  
Time TBA

Humanities Nebraska program by Joe Starita: "I Am a Man: Chief Standing Bear's Journey for Justice"

Author Joe Starita will be here to discuss the legal, social and political importance of the landmark 1879 decision in which a judge declared that Ponca Chief Standing Bear was "a person" within the meaning of the law and entitled to the same Constitutional protections as white citizens.

This program is funded by Humanities Nebraska.

**Wednesday, May 27**

10:00am

Open Book Discussion of *I Am a Man: Chief Standing Bear's Journey for Justice* at the Wilson Public Library in Cozad.

The public is welcome and encouraged to attend.

**Thursday, August 6**

5:30pm

Join us in viewing Nebraska Public Media Originals *Standing Bear's Footsteps*.

### OTHER BOOKS TO CONSIDER

*A Warrior of the People: How Susan La Flesche Overcame Racial and Gender Inequality to Become America's First Indian Doctor* by Joe Starita

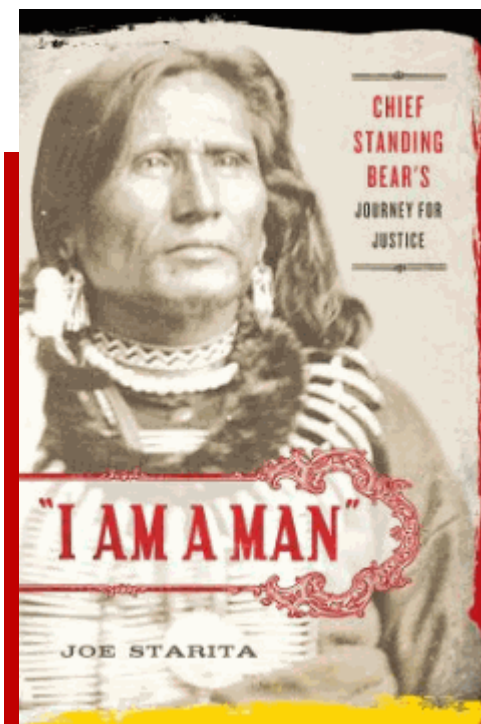
*The Dull Knives of Pine Ridge: A Lakota Odyssey*  
by Joe Starita

*Standing Bear Is a Person: The True Story of a Native American's Quest for Justice*  
by Stephen Dando-Collins

*Standing Bear of the Ponca*  
by Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve

## One Book One Cozad 2026

*I Am a Man:  
Chief Standing  
Bear's Journey  
for Justice*  
by Joe Starita



Cover by St. Martin's Press

## *I Am a Man: Chief Standing Bear's Journey for Justice~* About This Year's Selection:

In January 2026, the Wilson Public Library in Cozad, NE, launches their eleventh One Book One Cozad program with the selection of *I Am a Man: Chief Standing Bear's Journey for Justice* by Joe Starita.

147 years ago in May, Chief Standing Bear of the Ponca Tribe stood before a judge in Omaha to plead his case for his civil rights. He successfully used *habeas corpus*, the only liberty included in the original wording of the Constitution, to gain access to that federal court.

The Ponca Tribe, farmers and churchgoers who sent their children to school, had been rounded up by the United States government and forcibly moved to a reservation in Oklahoma two years earlier. Many lost their lives, including two of Standing Bear's children. His son's dying wish to be buried with his relatives prompted Standing Bear to set off on a 600 mile journey back to Nebraska. Ultimately, he was arrested by General George Crook. Crook, who had orders to send Standing Bear back to Indian Territory, worked behind the scenes to help publicize the case and became an unlikely ally.

**"That hand is not the color of yours, but if I pierce it, I shall feel pain. If you pierce your hands, you also feel pain. The blood that will flow from mine will be of the same color as yours. I am a man. The same God made us both."  
- Chief Standing Bear**

**From publisher marketing:**  
"...Before it ends, *Standing Bear's long journey home also explores fundamental issues of citizenship, constitutional protection, cultural identity, and the nature of democracy—issues that continue to resonate loudly in twenty-first-century America. It is a story that questions whether native sovereignty, tribal-based societies, and cultural survival are compatible with American democracy.*"

Wilson Public Library encourages all local book clubs to thoughtfully consider adding *I Am a Man: Chief Standing Bear's Journey for Justice* by Joe Starita to their selection lists for 2026. Scheduled discussions and events will be held throughout 2026 in a variety of formats for all interested persons beginning in March. A special set of books will be set aside near the library's circulation desk for those wishing to check out the book. Additionally, our website has information regarding events on a special tab, which you can find at [www.wilsonpubliclibrary.org](http://www.wilsonpubliclibrary.org).

## The Author: Joe Starita



Joe Starita was born in Lincoln and recently retired from the College of Journalism and Mass Communications in 2021.

He has two Pulitzer Prize nominations, one for investigative reporting for the *Miami Herald*

and the other for his book, *The Dull Knives of Pine Ridge*. Starita also served as City Editor for the *Lincoln Journal Star*.

In 2012 Starita started the Chief Standing Bear Journey for Justice Scholarship Fund, which awards six to eight scholarships annually to Nebraska Native American high school graduates.

Starita's 2009 book *I Am a Man: Chief Standing Bear's Journey for Justice*, has been the 2011 One Book One Lincoln selection, the 2012 One Book One Nebraska selection, and was selected in 2017 as one of Nebraska's most notable 150 books for Nebraska's 150th anniversary.

He has received several state and national civil rights awards as well. His book about Chief Standing Bear's niece, Susan La Flesche, *A Warrior of the People: How Susan La Flesche Overcame Racial and Gender Inequality to Become America's First Indian Doctor*, was published in 2016.



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