

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

President Bush Awards 2008 National Humanities Medals Recipients honored for outstanding cultural contributions

Leading Lincoln scholars, a radio show host, and a museum dedicated to honoring an icon of American art among this year's honorees.

WASHINGTON (November 17, 2008)—Today, President George W. Bush awarded the prestigious National Humanities Medals for 2008 during a ceremony held in the White House East Room. Nine distinguished Americans, one museum, and a philanthropic foundation were honored for their exemplary contributions to the humanities. In recognition of their scholarship, literary works, philanthropy, and preservation efforts, the President presented National Humanities Medals to **Gabor S. Boritt**, scholar and Civil War historian; **Richard Brookhiser**, biographer and historian; **Harold Holzer**, scholar and Civil War historian; **Myron Magnet**, journalist and author; **Albert Marrin**, children's book author; **Milton J. Rosenberg**, radio show host and scholar; **Thomas A. Saunders III and Jordan Horner Saunders**, philanthropists; **Robert H. Smith**, philanthropist; **John Templeton Foundation**; and **Norman Rockwell Museum**. Prior to the ceremony, the medalists and their families and friends attended a reception held in their honor.

The National Humanities Medal, first awarded in 1989 as the Charles Frankel Prize, honors individuals or groups whose work has deepened the nation's understanding of the humanities, broadened our citizens' engagement with the humanities, or helped preserve and expand Americans' access to important resources in the humanities.

The Humanities Medal is the most prestigious award in the humanities. Over the last decade, including this year's recipients, the National Humanities Medal has been awarded to only 107 individuals and 9 organizations. Among those recognized during this time period are Bernard Lewis, Judith "Miss Manners" Martin, Madeleine L'Engle, Harvey Mansfield, and John Updike.

Medal recipients do not compete for this award but are specially selected by the President for their life-long achievements in their diverse areas of expertise. Citations for the nine individuals and two organizations receiving the National Humanities Medal for 2008 can be found below. A detailed profile of each of the 2008 medalists is available [online](#).

[**Gabor S. Boritt**](#), scholar and Civil War historian, is being recognized "for a distinguished career of scholarship on Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War era. His life's work and his life's story stand as testaments to our Nation's precious legacy of liberty."

[**Richard Brookhiser**](#), biographer and historian, is being recognized "for helping reintroduce Americans to the personalities, eccentricities, and noble ideals of our Founding Fathers. His works of biography

and history have rendered vivid and accessible portraits of the early days of the Republic.”

Harold Holzer, scholar and Civil War historian, is being recognized “for engaging scholarship on that crucible of our history, the American Civil War. His work has brought new understanding of the many facets of Abraham Lincoln and his era through the study of image, word, and deed.”

Myron Magnet, journalist and author, is being recognized “for scholarship and visionary influence in renewing our national culture of compassion. He has combined literary and cultural history with a profound understanding of contemporary urban life to examine new ways of relieving poverty and renewing civic institutions.”

Albert Marrin, children’s book author, is being recognized “for opening young minds to the glorious pageant of history. His books have made the lessons of the past come alive with rich detail and energy for a new generation.”

Milton J. Rosenberg, radio show host and scholar, is being recognized “for bringing the world of ideas to millions of listeners. Combining a scholar’s understanding and a teacher’s openness, he has made a home in radio for elevated conversation and profound thought.”

Thomas A. Saunders III and Jordan Horner Saunders, philanthropists, are being recognized “for their wise leadership and philanthropy on behalf of higher education, the study of art, and greater understanding of American history. They have enriched our culture and ensured a lasting legacy for future generations.”

Robert H. Smith, philanthropist, is being recognized “for his profoundly wise stewardship and generous support of our nation’s premiere institutions of historical, artistic, and cultural heritage. He has been a farsighted benefactor and a civic leader for all seasons.”

John Templeton Foundation is being recognized “for opening new frontiers in the pursuit of answers to mankind’s oldest questions. The Templeton Foundation has been the catalyst of groundbreaking work in scientific, religious, and philosophical exploration of the deepest concerns of the humanities and the human race.”

Norman Rockwell Museum is being recognized “for studying and honoring the life, work, and ideals of an icon of American art. The museum has been the careful curator of the archives, illustrations, and benevolent spirit Norman Rockwell bequeathed to the Nation.”

*Created in 1965 as an independent federal agency, the **National Endowment for the Humanities** supports learning in history, literature, philosophy, and other areas of the humanities. NEH grants enrich classroom learning, create and preserve knowledge, and bring ideas to life through public television, radio, new technologies, museum exhibitions, and programs in libraries and other community places. Additional information about the National Endowment for the Humanities and its grant programs is available on the Internet at www.neh.gov.*

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