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2015 National Medal of Arts and the National
Humanities Medal, 09/22/2016 [3 copies]

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THE PRESIDENT AND MRS. OBAMA

welcome you to

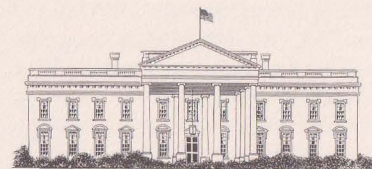
THE WHITE HOUSE

*in recognition of
the recipients of the 2015*

NATIONAL MEDAL OF ARTS

AND THE

NATIONAL HUMANITIES MEDAL



Thursday, September 22, 2016

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

The National Endowment for the Arts was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the Federal Government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$5 billion to support artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities. The NEA extends its work through partnerships with State arts agencies, local leaders, other Federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Created in 1965 as an independent Federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities supports research and learning in history, literature, philosophy, and other areas of the humanities by funding selected, peer-reviewed proposals from around the Nation. The Endowment brings high-quality historical and cultural experiences to large and diverse audiences in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and five territories.



THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES

The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) was founded in 1982 by Executive Order to advise the White House on cultural policy. The First Lady serves as Honorary Chair of the Committee, which is composed of both private and public members. Private members appointed by the President include prominent artists, philanthropists, entrepreneurs and State public officials who have demonstrated a commitment to the arts and humanities. Public members represent the heads of all the Federal agencies and institutions with a role in culture, including the heads of the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities, the Librarian of Congress, the Secretary of the Smithsonian, and United States Secretaries of Education, State and Treasury. The PCAH works on issues in education, cultural diplomacy, and the creative economy. Arts education has always been a focus of the Committee, and it has a history of issuing important policy reports and catalyzing Federal programs in arts education over the past 30 years.

PROGRAM

Remarks by
THE PRESIDENT

Presentation of Medals



Reception to follow

NATIONAL MEDAL OF ARTS RECIPIENTS

MEL BROOKS

for a lifetime of making the world laugh. As a writer, director, actor, and musician, he pioneered the art of musical comedy, and his hilarious, thought-provoking work on film and in theater have earned him the rare distinction of winning Oscar, Emmy, Tony, and Grammy awards.

SANDRA CISNEROS

for enriching the American narrative. Through her novels, short stories, and poetry, she explores issues of race, class, and gender through the lives of ordinary people straddling multiple cultures. As an educator, she has deepened our understanding of American identity.

EUGENE O'NEILL THEATER CENTER

for its unwavering support of American theater. For over 50 years, the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center has nurtured award-winning playwrights, directors, and actors, enriched the craft of stage production, and delighted audiences with exceptional programs.

MORGAN FREEMAN

for his outstanding work as an actor, director, and narrator. His iconic stage and screen performances have brought to life characters from the whole spectrum of the human experience, moving audiences around the world, and influencing countless young artists.

PHILIP GLASS

for his groundbreaking contributions to music and composition. One of the most prolific, inventive, and influential artists of our time, he has expanded musical possibility with his operas, symphonies, film scores, and wide-ranging collaborations.

BERRY GORDY

for helping to create a trailblazing new sound in American music. As a record producer and songwriter, he helped build Motown, launching the music careers of countless legendary artists. His unique sound helped shape our Nation's story.

SANTIAGO JIMÉNEZ, JR.

for expanding the horizon of American music. He has helped spread traditional conjunto music, blending the sounds and cultures of south Texas and Mexico. His lively melodies performed on the two-button accordion have captivated audiences around the world.

MOISÉS KAUFMAN

for his powerful contributions to American theater. His work sensitively probes questions of culture and sexuality. His award-winning Tectonic Theater Project continues to move audiences with its bold portrayals of contemporary social issues.

RALPH LEMON

for his contribution to dance and the visual arts. As a self-proclaimed conceptualist, he uses dance as a source of physical communication, and his complex works withstand examination from all angles, revealing intimate truths about human nature and offering broader insights into the American experience.

AUDRA MCDONALD

for lighting up Broadway as one of its brightest stars. An unforgettable performer, she has won six Tony awards. In musicals, concerts, operas, and the recording studio, her rich, soulful voice continues to take her audiences to new heights.

LUIS VALDEZ

for bringing Chicano culture to American drama. As a playwright, actor, writer, and director, he illuminates the human spirit in the face of social injustice through award-winning stage, film, and television productions.

JACK WHITTEN

for remaking the American canvas. As an abstract artist, he uses "casting," acrylic paints, and compounds to create new surfaces and textures, challenging our perceptions of shape and color. His powerful works of art put the American story in a new light.

NATIONAL HUMANITIES MEDAL RECIPIENTS

RUDOLFO ANAYA

for his pioneering stories of the American southwest. His works of fiction and poetry celebrate the Chicano experience and reveal universal truths about the human condition—and as an educator, he has spread a love of literature to new generations.

JOSÉ ANDRÉS

for cultivating our palates and shaping our culture. He has introduced new and vibrant ingredients to our Nation, whether through his innovative techniques in the kitchen, his work on clean cooking technology and access to education, or the inspiration he provides to new Americans.

RON CHERNOW

for bringing our Nation's story to life. Through his examination of America's successful giants and titans, he also invites his readers to discover their failures and foibles, uncovering enduring lessons that inform our modern era.

LOUISE GLÜCK

for giving lyrical expression to our inner conflicts. Her use of verse connects us to the myths of the ancients, the magic of the natural world, and the essence of who we are.

TERRY GROSS

for her artful probing of the human experience. Her patient, persistent questioning in thousands of interviews over four decades has pushed public figures to reveal personal motivations behind extraordinary lives—revealing simple truths that affirm our common humanity.

WYNTON MARSALIS

for celebrating the traditions of jazz music from New Orleans to Lincoln Center and beyond. As a virtuoso trumpet player, composer, and educator, he has brought jazz to a wider audience and inspired music lovers to embrace America's quintessential sound.

JAMES MCBRIDE

for humanizing the complexities of discussing race in America. Through writings about his own uniquely American story, and his works of fiction informed by our shared history, his moving stories of love display the character of the American family.

LOUIS MENAND

for prose and essays that invite us to think in new ways about the forces shaping our society. His influential works of intellectual and cultural history probe the power of ideas from one era to the next as they ripple across politics and culture.

ELAINE PAGELS

for her exploration of faith and its traditions. Through her study of ancient manuscripts and other scholarly work, she has generated new interest and dialogue about our contemporary search for knowledge and meaning.

PRISON UNIVERSITY PROJECT

for transforming the lives of currently incarcerated people through higher education. Its programs offer opportunity and inspiration to their students, providing an example for others to emulate.

ABRAHAM VERGHESE

for reminding us that the patient is the center of the medical enterprise. His range of proficiency embodies the diversity of the humanities; from his efforts to emphasize empathy in medicine, to his imaginative renderings of the human drama.

ISABEL WILKERSON

for championing the stories of an unsung history. Her masterful combination of intimate human narratives with broader societal trends allows us to measure the epic migration of a people by its vast impact on our Nation and on each individual life.

