

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Monuments Men Foundation receives National Humanities Medal

WASHINGTON, D.C. (November 16, 2007) —



(President George W. Bush with (from left to right) Robert M. Edsel, and Monuments Men James Reeds, Seymour Pomrenze, Harry Ettlinger, and Horace Apgar)

The Monuments Men Foundation for the Preservation of Art was one of ten recipients of the National Humanities Medal this year, an honor that was presented by President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush yesterday at a ceremony held in the East Room of the White House.

Robert Edsel, author of *Rescuing da Vinci* and President of the Monuments Men Foundation for the Preservation of Art stated, “This is an extraordinary honor for the Monuments Men Foundation. It underscores the importance of our work to recognize the contribution and preserve the legacy of these remarkable men and women who saved so much of our cultural heritage

during World War II.” Mr. Edsel accepted the medal on behalf of the Foundation and was accompanied by four of the twelve living “Monuments Men.”

The Monuments Men Foundation was created to raise public awareness of the 345 or so men and women from thirteen nations, many of whom were museum directors, curators, and educators, who protected monuments and other cultural treasures from the destruction of World War II. By 1945, these heroes of civilization tracked, located and later returned more than 5 million artistic and cultural items stolen by Hitler and the Nazis. The Foundation intends for their rich legacy to serve as a beacon for the preservation of such treasures in future armed conflict and to finish the task of locating and returning some of the hundreds of thousands of stolen and missing works of art and documents to the victims of the greatest theft in history.

The National Humanities Medal is the highest honor given for excellence in the Humanities field. Inaugurated in 1997, the award honors individuals and groups whose work has deepened the nation’s understanding of the humanities, broadened citizens’ engagement with the humanities, or helped preserve and expand Americans’ access to important resources in the humanities. 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. Last year’s foundation recipient was the Hoover Institute.

“The winners of the humanities have also made great and lasting contributions to our society. These men and women have shaped our understanding of the past, chronicled stories of tyranny overcome by liberty, and helped preserve our cultural treasures for future generations” President Bush stated during his introduction of the recipients at yesterday’s ceremony.

The Monuments Men Foundation for the Preservation of Art is joined by the following 2007 National Humanities Award recipients:

- Dr. Stephen H. Balch, scholar, Princeton, N.J.
- Russell Freedman, author, New York.
- Victor Davis Hanson, military historian and author, Fresno, Calif.
- Roger Hertog, philanthropist, New York.
- Cynthia Ozick, author, New Rochelle, N.Y.
- Richard Pipes, author and historian, Cambridge, Mass.
- Pauline L. Schultz, curator and author, Hixson, Tenn.
- Henry Leonard Snyder, scholar, Kensington, Calif.
- Ruth R. Wisse, scholar, Cambridge, Mass.

For more information about The Monuments Men Foundation for the Preservation of Art, please visit www.monumentsmenfoundation.org.

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