

S I X T H   A N N U A L

# BIOGRAPHERS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

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**Bio**  
BIOGRAPHERS INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

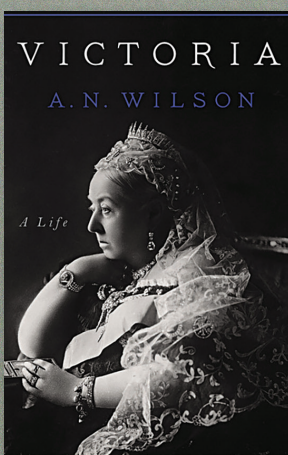
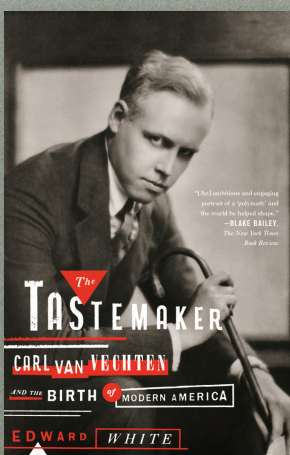
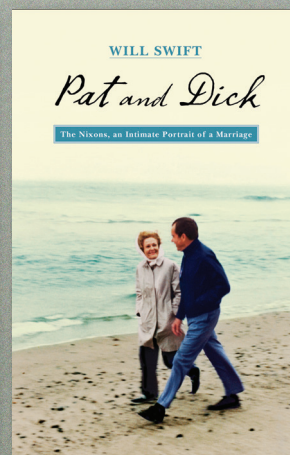
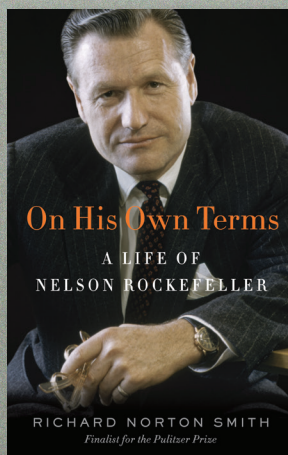
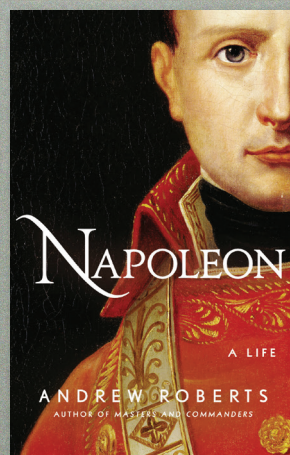
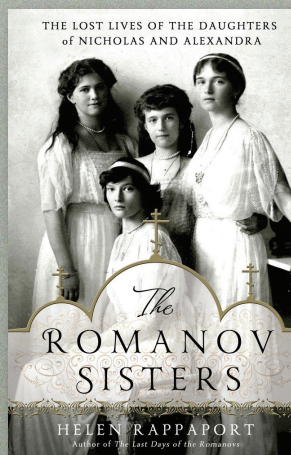
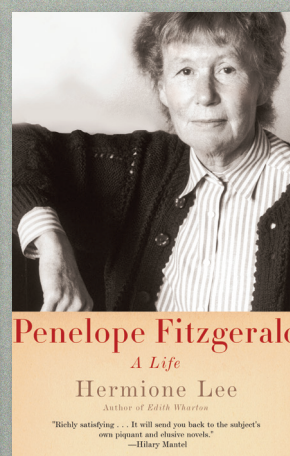
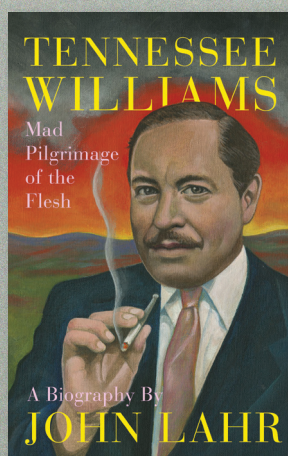
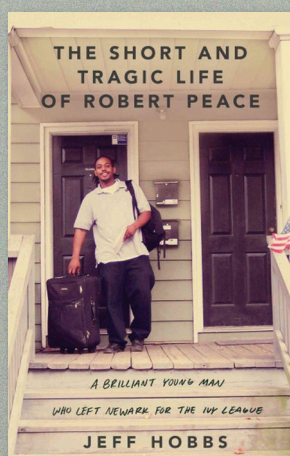
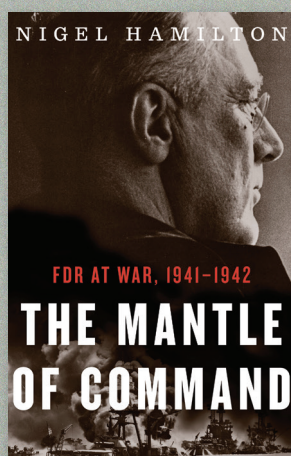
National Press Club  
529 14th Street, NW, Washington, D.C.



# THE 2014 PLUTARCH AWARD

Biographers International Organization is proud to present the Plutarch Award for the best biography of 2014, as chosen by you, the world's only organization of biographers.

Congratulations to the ten nominees for the Best Biography of 2014:



## The 2015 BIO Award Recipient: Taylor Branch

Taylor Branch is best known for his best-selling, magisterial trilogy about Martin Luther King, Jr., the Civil Rights movement, and America in the 1950s and 1960s. In these three volumes, Branch showed, as he wrote in his introduction, that “King’s life is the best and most important metaphor for American history in the watershed postwar years.” His vivid portrait of King’s rise to greatness humanizes the man and allows the reader to understand his era by portraying what it was like to live through it. Branch’s three-volume work has been compared to Carl Sandburg’s *Lincoln* and Robert Caro’s multivolume life of Lyndon Johnson.



For his first volume, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1954–63* (1988), Taylor Branch won the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award. He was also a finalist for the National Book Award. *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years 1963–1965* (1998) and *Canaan’s Edge: America in the King Years 1965–1968* (2006)—winner of the Robert F. Kennedy Book Award, and a National Book Award and National Book Critics Circle Award finalist—completed his monumental fusion of biography and history. Branch is also the author of a novel, *The Empire Blues* (1981), and was the ghostwriter of John Dean’s memoir, *Blind Ambition* (1976). He also is well known for his innovative eight-year oral history project with a sitting president—*The Clinton Tapes: Wrestling History with the President* (2009).

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## Breakfast Plenary Session

### The Art and Craft of Biography: Evan Thomas and Douglas Brinkley in Conversation

8:15–9:15AM LOCATION: BALLROOM



Evan Thomas is the author of eight books, including *The Wise Men* (with Walter Isaacson, 1986), *Robert Kennedy* (2000), *John Paul Jones* (2003), *Sea of Thunder* (2006), *The War Lovers* (2010), and *Ike's Bluff* (2012). He is working on a biography of Richard Nixon for Random House. Thomas was a writer, correspondent, and editor for

thirty-three years at *Time* and *Newsweek*, including ten years (1986–1996) as Washington bureau chief at *Newsweek*, where he was editor at large when he retired in 2010. He wrote more than 100 cover stories and in 1999 won a National Magazine Award for reporting on the Monica Lewinsky scandal. He wrote *Newsweek's* 50,000-word election specials in 1996, 2000, 2004, and 2008. The 2004 election special issue also won a National Magazine Award.

Thomas has appeared on many TV and radio talk shows, including *Meet the Press* and *The Colbert Report*. He has appeared on PBS's *Charlie Rose* more than forty times. He has written dozens of book reviews for *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. Thomas has taught writing and journalism at Harvard, as well as at Princeton, where he was Ferris Professor of Journalism in Residence from 2007 to 2014.



Douglas Brinkley is a professor of history at Rice University, best-selling author, and presidential historian. CNN has described him as “a man who knows more about the presidency than just about any human being alive.” He serves as a contributing editor for *Vanity Fair*, *Audubon*, and *American Heritage*.

A frequent contributor to *The New York Times*, *Foreign Affairs*, *The New Yorker*, and *The Atlantic Monthly*, he is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Century Association, and the Society of American Historians. Brinkley's *Cronkite* was selected as one of *The Washington Post's* best books of 2012. His other award-winning biographies include *Wheels for the World: Henry Ford and the Making of America* and *Rosa Parks: A Life*.

Brinkley is also finishing the third volume of his U.S. environmental history series, tentatively titled *Rightful Heritage: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the American Conservation Movement*. The first two volumes—*The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America* and *The Quiet World: Saving Alaska's Wilderness Kingdom, 1879 to 1960*—were published in 2009 and 2011, respectively. Both were major best sellers. Eight of Brinkley's books have been selected as *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year. Brinkley has taught at the U.S. Naval Academy, Hofstra, Princeton, Tulane, and the University of New Orleans. He lives in Austin and Houston, Texas, with his wife and three children.



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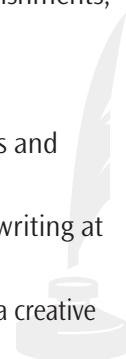
**the mayborn**  
literary nonfiction conference

**July 17–19, 2015**

**Grapevine, TX**

Join top-tier writers from the U.S. and around the globe at this nationally acclaimed annual event where journalists, writers, readers, students, and educators meet to discuss their accomplishments, aspirations and angst.

- \$15,000 in cash awards
- Opportunities to meet with publishers and literary agents
- Inspiration for practicing the craft of writing at the highest possible level
- Mayborn Biography Fellowship provides a creative residency in Santa Fe, NM.



## Panels and Speakers

### ISSUES & TOPICS

#### The Rewards & Challenges of Writing Lives of Color

9:30–10:45AM LOCATION: ZENGER

In the United States and beyond, men and women of color have led compelling lives. Yet many of those life stories are barely visible to a broader audience. The biographers will talk about the joys and challenges of researching and rescuing from the shadows people as varied as the Harlem Renaissance writer Zora Neale Hurston, Cuban revolutionary leader José Martí, and baseball great Leroy “Satchel” Paige. Panelists will offer advice to writers who are currently tackling—or intend to—the lives of people of color.

#### Moderator

**Sonja D. Williams** is the author of a forthcoming biography about pioneering broadcast dramatist and writer Richard Durham. *Word Warrior: Richard Durham, Radio, and Freedom* will be published by the University of Illinois Press in fall 2015. Williams has served as a journalist and media trainer in Africa, the Caribbean, and throughout the United States, and her radio documentaries have won numerous prestigious awards, including three consecutive George Foster Peabody Awards for Significant and Meritorious Achievement and a DuPont-Columbia University Journalism Award. She is an associate professor in the Howard University Department of Media, Journalism and Film in Washington, D.C.

#### Panelists

**Valerie Boyd** is author of the award-winning *Wrapped in Rainbows: The Life of Zora Neale Hurston*. She is currently curating and editing the journals of Alice Walker. Simon & Schuster/37 Ink will publish *Gathering Blossoms Under Fire: The Journals of Alice Walker* in 2017. Formerly arts editor at *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Boyd has written about the intersection of race, arts, and culture for such publications as *The Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Paste*, *Ms.*, *Essence*, and *Atlanta Magazine*. She is a journalism professor at the University of Georgia, where she directs a new low-residency M.F.A. program in narrative nonfiction.

**Alfred J. López** is the author of the newly released *José Martí: A Revolutionary Life*, the first major biography about the founding hero of Cuban independence in over half a century and the first ever in English. López, who has written three previous books, traces Martí's life from his Cuban childhood to his first exile and life in Spain, Mexico City, and Guatemala, through his mature revolutionary period in New York City and mythologized death on a Cuban battlefield. Born in New York City to Cuban parents and raised in Miami, López is professor of English and comparative literature at Purdue University.

**Donald Spivey** is the author of seven books, including the biography *If You Were Only White: The Life of Leroy “Satchel” Paige*. Born and raised in Chicago, Spivey is keenly interested in late nineteenth- and twentieth-century America, specializing in African-American history, sport, labor, music, and education. He has lectured throughout the country and been a frequent commentator on radio, television, and in the print media. A professor of history at the University of Miami, Spivey was the Cooper Fellow at the College of Arts and Science and recipient of a distinguished community service award from Miami's Ronald McDonald House.

### THE TEAM

#### The Agent Panel

9:30–10:45 LOCATION: HOLEMAN

You asked for it: Agents, agents, agents. Literally. Three top agents in a freewheeling, unscripted, uncensored discussion of who they are and what they do. Everything you ever wanted to know about agents but were afraid to ask. Your agent is the first and most important member of your publishing team. Find out how to get an agent, how to keep one, and what you can (and can't) expect from your agent.

#### Moderator

**William Souder** is the author of *Under a Wild Sky: John James Audubon and the Making of The Birds of America*, which was a finalist for the 2005 Pulitzer Prize in biography. More recently, he wrote *On a Farther Shore: The Life and Legacy of Rachel Carson*, a *New York Times* Notable Book of 2012, also named by *Kirkus Reviews* as one of the 25 Best Nonfiction Books of 2012, and by *Booklist* as one of the Top 10 biographies of the year. He is currently at work on a biography of John Steinbeck. Souder is a board member of BIO.

#### Panelists

**Katherine Flynn** joined the Kneerim, Williams & Bloom Agency in 2008. She previously worked at the Sanford Greenburger Agency, taught literature and composition, edited history textbooks, worked in a bookstore, and pursued her B.A. in history from Johns Hopkins and Ph.D. in history from Brown. Flynn represents history, biography, politics, current affairs, science, business, pop culture, psychology, sociology, and narrative nonfiction. For fiction, she represents both literary and commercial. That said, she is open to anything that is well written and contains a fresh story.

**Gail Ross**, president of the Ross Yoon Agency, represents important commercial nonfiction in a variety of areas and counts top biographers, doctors, CEOs, prize-winning journalists, and historians among her clients. In the last year alone, a half-dozen of her books have been *New York Times* best sellers. Ross is also a partner in the law firm of Trister, Ross, Schadler & Gold, PLLC, where she focuses on the legal aspects of publishing and media law. She writes and

lectures frequently on publishing issues and is the author of *The Writer's Lawyer* (Times Books, 1989).

**Raphael Sagalyn** is a literary agent based in Washington, D.C., who represents leading journalists, historians, thought leaders, business thinkers, and novelists. In the fields of history and biography, among the authors he represents are Richard Norton Smith, David Maraniss, Michael Dobbs, Rick Atkinson, Jeff Shesol, Steve Vogel, Susan Glasser, and Peter Baker. Two years ago, The Sagalyn Agency joined forces with the global talent agency ICM Partners and is now ICM/Sagalyn.

#### ISSUES & TOPICS

### The Doctor Is In: Diagnosing Your Subject's Medical Condition

9:30–10:45AM LOCATION: LISAGOR

How do we write about illness? How do we understand the language of disease and the diagnoses of earlier eras, which may be understood very differently today? How can advances in modern-day medicine help us make sense of medical conditions and practices of the past? In this wide-ranging conversation, from neurasthenia to obsessive compulsive disorder, panelists discuss the challenges of writing about their subjects' health.

#### Moderator

**Robin Rausch** is the author of *A Partnership in Art: The MacDowells and Their Legacy*, a MacDowell Colony history written on commission for the commemorative book *A Place for the Arts: The MacDowell Colony, 1907-2007*. A senior music specialist at the Library of Congress, she is currently at work on a biography of the colony's founder, Marian MacDowell.

#### Panelists

**Lawrence K. Altman, M.D.**, a clinical professor of medicine at New York University, has written more than 4,000 columns on the health of world leaders for *The New York Times*. His pioneering medical journalism has included coverage of Senator Thomas Eagleton's hospitalizations for depression and a series of stories on the medical health of President Ronald Reagan, whom he interviewed during the 1980 campaign. A fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine and a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, he is currently a senior scholar at the Wilson Center.

**Joshua Kendall**, an award-winning freelance journalist, is the author of two biographies of celebrated wordsmiths—*The Man Who Made Lists: Love, Death, Madness and the Creation of Roget's Thesaurus* (Putnam, 2008) and *The Forgotten Founding Father: Noah Webster's Obsession and the Creation of an American Culture* (Putnam, 2011), which were both *New York Times Book Review* Editors' Choice selections. His most recent biography is *America's Obsessives: The Compulsive Energy Which Built a Nation* (Grand Central, 2013). Kendall is currently working on *First Dads: Fatherhood, the Presidency and*

*the Arc of American History*, which will be published by Grand Central in 2016.

**Heath Hardage Lee** is a biographer and freelance writer with a museum background. She has worked for the Levine Museum of the New South, Stratford Hall, Menokin Plantation, and Salisbury House & Gardens. Lee has written on Southern history for numerous magazines, newspapers, and blogs. Potomac Books, a division of the University of Nebraska Press, published her biography of Varina Anne "Winnie" Davis, *Winnie Davis: Daughter of the Lost Cause*, in 2014. She is currently working on a group biography of Vietnam POW and MIA wives. Lee is also editorial assistant at *The Virginia Magazine of Biography and History*.

#### ISSUES & TOPICS

### First Ladies: Writing the Lives of the Wives

9:30–10:45AM LOCATION: BLOOMBERG

We will explore the problems of writing about first ladies and other women known mostly as the spouses of famous men. Faced with an abundance of sources, how do we select and keep the focus on our female subjects? When our book involves both presidential studies and women's studies, how can we accommodate both? What names should we use to avoid demeaning the woman, as in "Lincoln and Mary"? Most ticklish perhaps is the question of how to deal with previous biographers who have misunderstood or underestimated the woman's role.

#### Moderator

**Betty Boyd Caroli** is the author of *First Ladies*, published by Oxford University Press in 1987 and now in its fourth edition as *First Ladies: From Martha Washington to Michelle Obama*. A slightly different version of *First Ladies* was published by Literary Guild and BookSpan, also in four editions, for book club members. Caroli's other books include *Inside the White House* (1992 and 1999), *America's First Ladies* (1996), and *The Roosevelt Women* (1998). Her current book, *Lady Bird and Lyndon: The Hidden Story of a Marriage That Made a President*, will be available this fall from Simon & Schuster.

#### Panelists


**Myra Gutin** earned a Ph.D. in communication from the University of Michigan. She is a professor in the Department of Communication and Journalism at Rider University, Lawrenceville, New Jersey. She is the author of *The President's Partner: The First Lady in the Twentieth Century* and *Barbara Bush: Presidential Matriarch*, and she is working on a biography of Betty Ford. Gutin has authored numerous articles on the topics of American first ladies and women in politics and is frequently consulted by the media. In 2014, she was featured on the C-SPAN series *America's First Ladies: Image and Influence*, discussing former first lady Barbara Bush.

**Kristie Miller** is the author of political biographies, most recently *Ellen and Edith: Woodrow Wilson's First Ladies*. She

also wrote two award-winning biographies of women in politics: *Ruth Hanna McCormick*, her grandmother, a congresswoman in the 1920s; and *Isabella Greenway*, a close friend of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, and Arizona's sole member of Congress during the New Deal. Miller co-edited Isabella Greenway's fifty-year correspondence with Eleanor Roosevelt, *A Volume of Friendship*, and a collection of essays, *We Have Come to Stay: American Women Enter Political Parties 1880-1960*. She is working on a biography of Mark Hanna with Robert H. McGinnis.


**Barbara A. Perry** is a senior fellow in, and co-chair of, the Miller Center's Presidential Oral History Program at the University of Virginia, where she directs the Edward M. Kennedy Oral History Project. Her eleven books include *Rose Kennedy: The Life and Times of a Political Matriarch*, a finalist for the 2014 Library of Virginia Literary Award in non-fiction, and *Jacqueline Kennedy: First Lady of the New Frontier*. Perry is a frequent media commentator on public affairs for national and international news outlets.

**Will Swift** is a presidential biographer, a royal historian, and a clinical psychologist. He loves repairing historical reputations. His most recent book, *Pat and Dick: The Nixons, An Intimate Portrait of a Marriage* (2014) was a *New York Times* Editors' Choice. His book *The Roosevelts and the Royals* (2004) covered a crucial aspect of the Anglo-American partnership, and *The Kennedys Amidst the Gathering Storm* (2008) told the story of the Kennedy family's emergence on the world stage. A founding board member of BIO and the creator of its coaching program, he has also co-founded the Gotham Biographers Group. He has thoroughly enjoyed coaching individuals and training mentors for the past 40 years. His website is [willswift.com](http://willswift.com).



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- Responsive, mobile-friendly website design & coding
- Education-based marketing




<http://fearless-future.com>

CRAFT

## Lessons Learned from Four Decades of Hunting Facts

9:30–10:45AM LOCATION: MURROW

James McGrath Morris writes primarily biographies and works of narrative nonfiction. His newest works are *Eye on the Struggle: Ethel Payne, The First Lady of the Black Press* and the best-selling Kindle Single *Revolution by Murder*. He is currently working on a new book, *The Ambulance Drivers: Hemingway and Dos Passos—Literary Lives in War and Peace*. Morris is a founder and past executive director and president of BIO.

CRAFT

## Biographies of Non-Persons

11:00AM–12:15PM LOCATION: ZENGER

Some of the best biographies of recent years have traced the lives of inanimate subjects, including cathedrals and scientific advances. This panel's mission will be to discuss the virtues, benefits, challenges, and limitations involved in adopting the biographical narrative structure to write about the life cycle of a non-person—an animal, a cartoon character, a number, a city, a work of art, or an illness.

## Moderator

**Anne C. Heller's** *Ayn Rand and the World She Made* (Nan Talese/Doubleday/Anchor 2009/2010) was a *New York Times* Notable Book and honored as a best book of the year by *Time* magazine, *The Daily Beast*, *USA Today*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Chicago Tribune*, *Library Journal*, and *Bloomberg*. She has been an editor and writer for magazines including *The Antioch Review*, *Esquire*, *Lear's*, and *Vanity Fair* and is the former executive editor of magazine development at Condé Nast Publications. Her new book, *Hannah Arendt: A Life in Dark Times*, will be published in August by James Atlas at [Icons/Amazon.com/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt](http://Icons/Amazon.com/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt).

## Panelists

**Marc Leepson** is a journalist, a historian, and the author of eight books. A former staff writer for *Congressional Quarterly*, he has written for many publications, including *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Encyclopedia Britannica*. His books include *What So Proudly We Hailed: Francis Scott Key, A Life* (2014), the first biography of the author of "The Star-Spangled Banner" by a major publisher in more than seventy-five years; a concise biography of the Marquis de Lafayette for Palgrave's World Generals Series; *Flag: An American Biography*; and *Saving Monticello*. Leepson, who lives in Middleburg, Virginia, and teaches U.S. history at Lord Fairfax Community College, is BIO's treasurer.

**Scott Martelle**, an editorial writer for the *Los Angeles Times*, is the author of *Detroit: A Biography* (new edition from Chicago Review Press, 2014), as well as *The Admiral and the Ambassador: One Man's Obsessive Search for the Body of John Paul*

Jones (Chicago Review Press). His new book, *The Madman and the Assassin: The Strange Life of Boston Corbett, the Man Who Killed John Wilkes Booth*, was published by Chicago Review Press in April. His essays and reviews have appeared in *The Washington Post*, *Sierra Magazine*, *Los Angeles* magazine, and *The New York Times Book Review*.

**William Nack** is a veteran journalist and the author of *Secretariat: The Making of a Champion* (1975) and *Ruffian: A Racetrack Romance* (2007). He covered sports, politics, and the environment for *Newsday* before joining the staff of *Sports Illustrated* as an investigative reporter in 1978. At *SI*, he wrote about everything from horseracing to chess and prizefighting; his report on the imprisoned middleweight boxer Rubin Carter was the inspiration for the 1999 movie *The Hurricane*. Nack has won numerous prizes for outstanding sports journalism and feature writing, and both *Secretariat* and *Ruffian* have been made into major movies.

CRAFT

## Keeping It Short

11:00AM–12:15PM LOCATION: LISAGOR

What opportunities exist for biographers who don't want to write a 500-page tome? A panel of distinguished editors and award-winning writers will discuss alternative forms of biography, from magazine profiles to short-form books. Panelists will discuss technical aspects of bringing a subject to life in fewer pages, and the time and research involved in shorter projects. The panel will also examine the markets available for these types of biographies, and how to break into them.

## Moderator

**Ted Geltner** is an associate professor of journalism at Valdosta State University in Georgia. He worked as a

writer and editor for seventeen years at newspapers in Pennsylvania, California, and Florida. His first book, *Last King of the Sports Page* (2012), is a biography of legendary Los Angeles sports columnist Jim Murray. He is completing the manuscript of a biography of renowned Southern novelist Harry Crews. Geltner lives in Gainesville, Florida, where he first met and covered Crews for the *Gainesville Sun* after others in the newsroom refused to call the cantankerous writer for a story.

## Panelists

**Kathleen Burke**, a senior editor at *Smithsonian Magazine*, has commissioned a wide range of groundbreaking long-form history narratives, including many first-serial book excerpts. The writers she has worked with include David McCullough, author of *The Greater Journey: Americans in Paris*; Fergus Bordewich (*Bound for Canaan: The Epic History of the Underground Railroad*); Joshua Zeitz (*Lincoln's Boys: John Hay, John Nicolay, and the War for Lincoln's Image*); Deborah Solomon (*American Mirror: The Life and Times of Norman Rockwell*); and Scott Anderson (*Lawrence in Arabia*). Burke is always on the lookout for history that advances new interpretations of a subject, particularly immersively reported narratives based on recently unearthed or previously unexamined primary sources and new interviews.

**Greg Daugherty** is a career journalist who has held senior-level editing positions at Consumer Reports, Time Inc., Reader's Digest, and other magazine publishers. As a freelancer he has written for *The New York Times*, *Smithsonian Magazine* and *Smithsonian.com*, *PBS NextAvenue.org*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *Parade*, and many other newspapers, magazines, and websites. His books include *You Can Write for Magazines* (Writer's Digest Books).

**Hampton Sides**, a native of Memphis now living in New Mexico, is editor-at-large for *Outside* magazine and the author of the international best seller *Ghost Soldiers*, which was

# Great Lives

Biographical Approaches to History and Culture

For the past twelve years, the University of Mary Washington has presented a public lecture series/academic course titled "Great Lives: Biographical Approaches to History and Culture." During that time, it has become a major cultural and educational attraction in the region of Virginia between Richmond and Washington, D.C.

Offered annually, Great Lives brings to campus between 15 and 20 major

biographers who speak to students enrolled in the course as well as hundreds of area residents who attend the lectures free of charge. Total attendance for the recently completed spring series exceeded 10,000.

Although the University of Mary Washington is a public institution, the Great Lives program is largely supported by private funds. Beginning in 2004 with a grant from a generous benefactor, funds have been substantially augmented each year by local patrons who are devoted to the program.

The innovative combination of an academic course and a public lecture series is unusual, if not unique, in the country. The fact that it is not just a public series, but also an academic course, adds a significant dimension to the program. Students are instructed on the evolution of the genre, then introduced to some of its most prominent contemporary practitioners. The result is an extraordinary opportunity for interaction among biographers, students, faculty, and the general public.

*BIO is grateful for the support and enthusiasm of William Crawley, director of Great Lives, and Torre Meringolo, vice president for advancement and university relations.*

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the basis for the 2005 Miramax film *The Great Raid*. *Ghost Soldiers* won the 2002 PEN USA Award for nonfiction and the 2002 Discover Award from Barnes & Noble. Sides is also the author of *Blood and Thunder*, *Hellhound on His Trail*, and most recently, the *New York Times* best seller *In the Kingdom of Ice: The Grand and Terrible Polar Voyage of the USS Jeannette*.

CRAFT

## Writing About Someone You Know

11:00AM–12:15PM LOCATION: BLOOMBERG

Writing a biography is never easy, but does it make a difference if you know your subject? Perhaps you're writing about a family member, a neighbor, or a former boss. Maybe you've met your subject in the course of researching and writing. Does a personal connection help smooth your path when it comes to approaching sources and gaining insights? Or does familiarity create its own pitfalls? How can you take advantage of your privileged position while still holding onto your artistic independence?

### Moderator

**Barbara Burkhardt's** *William Maxwell: A Literary Life* (University of Illinois Press, 2005; paperback, 2008), a biography of the longtime *New Yorker* editor and novelist, received praise in *The New York Times*, *TLS*, *The Washington Post*, and *Chicago Tribune*, among other periodicals. She subsequently edited *Conversations with William Maxwell* (University Press of Mississippi, 2012). Burkhardt is associate professor emerita of American literature at the University of Illinois Springfield, where she was named University Scholar in 2007. A founding member of BIO, she has served on the BIO board for three years as its secretary. She is at work on a biography of Garrison Keillor under contract to St. Martin's Press.

### Panelists

**Beverly Gray**, who once developed 170 low-budget features for B-movie maven Roger Corman, is the author of the best-selling *Roger Corman: An Unauthorized Biography of the Godfather of Indie Filmmaking*. Tastefully retitled *Roger Corman: Blood-Sucking Vampires, Flesh-Eating Cockroaches, and Driller Killers*, it is now available (as both e-book and paperback) in an updated and unexpurgated third edition. Gray has also published *Ron Howard: From Mayberry to the Moon... and Beyond*. She teaches online screenwriting workshops for UCLA Extension's renowned Writers' Program. Her blog, *Beverly in Movieland*, covers movies, moviemaking, and growing up Hollywood-adjacent.

**J. Michael Lennon** is president of the Norman Mailer Society. He teaches in the Wilkes University low-residency M.F.A. program and is the author of *Norman Mailer: A Double Life* (Simon & Schuster, 2013). Most recently, he edited *Selected Letters of Norman Mailer* (Random House, 2014). He also wrote the introduction to the new illustrated Taschen edition, *JFK: Mailer's "Superman Comes to the Supermarket."* His work has appeared in the *Paris Review*, *The New Yorker*, *New York Review of Books*, *Provincetown Arts*, *Creative Nonfiction*, *New York*, and *Playboy*, among others.

**Amy Schapiro** is the author of *Millicent Fenwick: Her Way*, a biography of the New Jersey congresswoman best remembered as the pipe-smoking grandmother who served as the model for Garry Trudeau's *Doonesbury* character Lacey Davenport and who was dubbed the "Conscience of Congress" by Walter Cronkite. Schapiro is currently working on her next book, *Leading Justice: The Life of Nicholas deBelleville Katzenbach*. She has appeared on C-Span/BookTV, NPR, WOR, and WABC.

CRAFT

## Writing About Writers

11:00AM–12:15PM LOCATION: HOLEMAN

Literary biographers confront engaging challenges different from those faced by biographers writing about politicians, entertainment figures, or sports celebrities. The literary biographer must deal with both the life and writing. How should we navigate between recording the facts of the life and the material found in the writer's work to avoid reducing the work of the literary imagination to biographical material? Should the literary biographer aim to become a literary critic? To what extent should the literary biography provide historical background for the literary text? In sum, how do we define literary biography? Our panel of seasoned literary biographers will wrestle with these questions.

### Moderator

**Deirdre David** published her first biography, *Fanny Kemble: A Performed Life*, in 2007, after a long career teaching and writing about Victorian literature, nineteenth-century women writers, and the history of the novel, and editing two editions of the *Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel*. She followed this with *Olivia Manning: A Woman at War* (2013) and is currently at work on *Pamela Hansford Johnson: A Writing Life* (under contract to Oxford University Press).

### Panelists

**Valerie Boyd** is author of the award-winning *Wrapped in Rainbows: The Life of Zora Neale Hurston*. She is currently curating and editing the journals of Alice Walker. Simon & Schuster/37 Ink will publish *Gathering Blossoms Under Fire: The Journals of Alice Walker* in 2017. Formerly arts editor at *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Boyd has written about the intersection of race, arts, and culture for such publications as *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Paste*, *Ms.*, *Essence*, and *Atlanta Magazine*. She is a journalism professor at the University of Georgia, where she directs a new low-residency M.F.A. program in narrative nonfiction.

**Brian Jay Jones**, a *New York Times* best-selling biographer, spent nearly two decades as a public policy analyst before turning to biography in 2006. He currently serves as president of Biographers International Organization. In 2013, his book *Jim Henson: The Biography* won the Goodreads Choice Award as the year's best biography and was named one of the year's top books by CNN viewers. He has been featured on *Today* and *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*. A biographer of

American icons, he is also the author of *Washington Irving*, and is currently working on a biography of filmmaker George Lucas.

**Martha Nell Smith** is distinguished scholar-teacher, professor of English, and founding director of the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities at the University of Maryland. She is the author of *Emily Dickinson, A User's Guide* (2015), *Open Me Carefully: Emily Dickinson's Intimate Letters to Susan Dickinson* (1998), and *Comic Power in Emily Dickinson* (1993). She is also coordinator of the *Dickinson Electronic Archives* projects at the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities at the University of Virginia. She is currently working on *Lives of Susan Dickinson*, a biography of Emily Dickinson's most important contemporary audience.

#### ISSUES & TOPICS

### Go There: In Search of Truth

11:00AM–12:15PM LOCATION: MURROW



**David Maraniss** is an associate editor at *The Washington Post*. He is the winner of the 1993 Pulitzer Prize for national reporting and has been a Pulitzer finalist two other times for his journalism and again for *They Marched into Sunlight*, a book about Vietnam and the sixties. The author also of best-selling works on Bill Clinton, Vince Lombardi, Roberto Clemente, and Barack Obama, Maraniss is a fellow of the Society of American Historians. He and his wife, Linda, live in Washington, D.C., and Madison, Wisconsin. His forthcoming book, *Once in a Great City: A Detroit Story*, will be published in September.

## Lunch and Keynote Address by Taylor Branch, winner of the 2015 BIO Award

12:30–2:00pm Location: Ballroom

*The BIO Award is given to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the art and craft of biography.*



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Charles J. Shields

*And So It Goes: Kurt Vonnegut, A Life*

**Biographer for Hire**

2:15–3:30PM LOCATION: LISAGOR

Find out how and why your skills as a writer, researcher, and shaper of life stories are sought after by private and nonprofit businesses, and individuals. Tap into the demand for corporate histories, personal memoirs, oral histories, community histories, and “as told to” autobiographies. Professionals with skills like yours share their experience: what kinds of projects they work on, the challenges of writing for a client or organization, the benefits, and the drawbacks. This is not a career fair, but a highly informative session for those looking to pursue the field of biography while broadening their opportunities and income streams.

**Moderator**

**Charles J. Shields** is the author of *Mockingbird: A Portrait of Harper Lee* (Holt, 2006), a *New York Times* best seller in hardback; *And So It Goes: Kurt Vonnegut, A Life* (Holt, 2011), a *New York Times* and *Washington Post* Notable Nonfiction Book of the Year; *I Am Scout: The Biography of Harper Lee* (YA, Owl, 2008); and numerous nonfiction books for young people. He is writing the first biography of John Williams, author of *Stoner* and the National Book Award-winning *Augustus*.

**Panelists**

**Dalene Bickel**, founder of Lasting Legacies, is a life story author, editor, and publisher who has written and published several privately commissioned biographies. She holds a dual degree in English and history from Chatham University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and has worked as an editor for both small publishers and large university presses. Her own writing has appeared in local and national publications, including the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series, and she serves as a digital volunteer for the Smithsonian Transcription Center. Her website is [lasting-legacies.net](http://lasting-legacies.net)

**Marian Carpenter** enjoys working with communities as a public historian to connect the importance of object preservation with the documentation of oral histories. She has worked with African-American community museums and historians in Maryland, Tennessee, and Mississippi. Carpenter also has more than twenty years of experience in curation, collection management, and exhibitions at several museums, including the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service in Washington, D.C. She has a B.A. in American history from Indiana University and an M.A. in American history with a concentration in African-American history from the University of Cincinnati.

**Adam Nemett**, an author, feature filmmaker, and television concept developer, brings a variety of narrative experience to the corporate storytelling space. As creative director at The History Factory, a Washington, D.C.-based heritage management firm, Nemett has conducted hundreds of oral history interviews and StoryARC sessions with business leaders. He has directed campaigns for clients including Adobe, Booz Allen Hamilton, CME Group, HarperCollins,

Pfizer, and Whirlpool, and authored corporate history books for Lockheed Martin, Discover Financial Services, and City of Hope National Medical Center. Nemett has a B.A. from Princeton and an M.F.A. in fiction and screenwriting from California College of the Arts. He recently completed a novel about superheroes.

**Raphael Sagalyn** is a literary agent based in Washington, D.C., who represents leading journalists, historians, thought leaders, business thinkers, and novelists. In the fields of history and biography, among the authors he represents are Richard Norton Smith, David Maraniss, Michael Dobbs, Rick Atkinson, Jeff Shesol, Steve Vogel, Susan Glasser, and Peter Baker. Two years ago, The Sagalyn Agency joined forces with the global talent agency ICM Partners and is now ICM/Sagalyn.

**CRAFT****Biography vs. Narrative Nonfiction**

2:15–3:30PM LOCATION: HOLEMAN

You have a life story with some significant highlights that you want to tell, so what do you do with it? Do you tell it from cradle to grave? Or do you spin the narrative around the subject's most climactic moments? This panel explores the differences between an A-to-Z biography and a work of narrative nonfiction—where the story, not the biological clock, determines the structure and mode of storytelling. The panel will discuss how to shape the life to the genre, methods for building around the dramatic moments, including cinematic techniques, and markets for various forms of biography.

**Moderator**

**Dean King**, a native of Richmond, Virginia, is the nationally best-selling author of nine books, including *Skeletons on the Zahara*, a Salon Book Award winner, and *The Feud*, which the *Wall Street Journal* calls “popular history the way it ought to be written.” His biography *Patrick O'Brian: A Life Revealed* was serialized in the *Daily Telegraph*, which named it a book of the year. He has appeared on NPR, the BBC, and as the chief storyteller on two History Channel documentaries, and his writing has appeared in *Outside*, *Garden & Gun*, *Granta*, *National Geographic Adventure*, and *The New York Times*.

**Panelists**

**Katherine Flynn** joined the Kneerim, Williams & Bloom Agency in 2008. She previously worked at the Sanford Greenburger Agency, taught literature and composition, edited history textbooks, worked in a bookstore, and pursued her B.A. in history from Johns Hopkins and Ph.D. in history from Brown. Flynn represents history, biography, politics, current affairs, science, business, pop culture, psychology, sociology, and narrative nonfiction. For fiction, she represents both literary and commercial. That said, she is open to anything that is well written and contains a fresh story.

**Justin Martin** is the author of four biographies featuring subjects ranging from a Federal Reserve chairman, *Greenspan: The Man Behind the Money* (1999), to a pioneering

architect, *Genius of Place: The Life of Frederick Law Olmsted* (2011). His most recent is a group biography, *Rebel Souls: Walt Whitman and America's First Bohemians* (2014). Martin prides himself on being a thorough researcher and reporter. Armed with the facts, he aims to render his subjects in novelistic fashion and considers it the highest compliment when someone says: "your book reads like fiction."

**Hampton Sides**, a native of Memphis now living in New Mexico, is editor-at-large for *Outside* magazine and the author of the international best seller *Ghost Soldiers*, which was the basis for the 2005 Miramax film *The Great Raid*. *Ghost Soldiers* won the 2002 PEN USA Award for nonfiction and the 2002 Discover Award from Barnes & Noble. Sides is also the author of *Blood and Thunder*, *Hellhound on His Trail*, and most recently, the *New York Times* best seller *In the Kingdom of Ice: The Grand and Terrible Polar Voyage of the USS Jeannette*.

**Charles Slack** is the award-winning author of four books of nonfiction, including *Hetty: The Genius and Madness of America's First Female Tycoon*; *Noble Obsession: Charles Goodyear, Thomas Hancock, and the Race to Unlock the Greatest Industrial Secret of the 19th Century*; and most recently, *Liberty's First Crisis: Adams, Jefferson, and the Misfits Who Saved Free Speech*. He lives in Connecticut and works in New York as executive director of financial content at Time, Inc. Content Solutions.

#### CORE

### Market Trends in Biography

2:15–3:30PM LOCATION: ZENGER

Readers' taste in biography has changed immensely over the years. What sold only a decade ago is now out of fashion with editors at trade houses. This panel will look at what types of biographies are selling, in print and e-books, and draw conclusions about which biographical subjects, kinds of approaches, and style of writing are best suited to find readers in coming years. It will also address the question, should biographers try to gear their writing to current trends?

#### Moderator

**James McGrath Morris** writes primarily biographies and works of narrative nonfiction. His newest works are *Eye on the Struggle: Ethel Payne, The First Lady of the Black Press* and the best-selling *Kindle Single Revolution by Murder*. He is currently working on a new book, *The Ambulance Drivers: Hemingway and Dos Passos—Literary Lives in War and Peace*. Morris is a founder and past executive director and president of BIO.

#### Panelists

**Gayle Feldman** has covered the book business for many years, as a senior editor at *Publishers Weekly*, a contributor to *The New York Times*, as author of *Best and Worst of Times: the Changing Business of Trade Books* (Columbia Journalism School, 2003), and currently as New York correspondent of *The Bookseller*, the British book trade magazine. She is also author of a cancer memoir, *You Don't Have to Be Your Mother* (Norton, 1994), and is under contract to Random House for a biography of its co-founder Bennett Cerf.

**Brian Jay Jones**, a *New York Times* best-selling biographer, spent nearly two decades as a public policy analyst before turning to biography in 2006. He currently serves as president of Biographers International Organization. In 2013, his book *Jim Henson: The Biography* won the Goodreads Choice Award as the year's best biography and was named one of the year's top books by CNN viewers. He has been featured on *Today* and *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*. A biographer of American icons, he is also the author of *Washington Irving*, and is currently working on a biography of filmmaker George Lucas.

**Gail Ross**, president of the Ross Yoon Agency, represents important commercial nonfiction in a variety of areas and counts top biographers, doctors, CEOs, prize-winning journalists, and historians among her clients. In the last year alone, a half-dozen of her books have been *New York Times* best sellers. Ross is also a partner in the law firm of Trister, Ross, Schadler & Gold, PLLC, where she focuses on the legal aspects of publishing and media law. She writes and lectures frequently on publishing issues and is the author of *The Writer's Lawyer* (Times Books, 1989).

**David O. Stewart** writes fiction and nonfiction. His historical books include *Madison's Gift: Five Partnerships That Built America* (2015), *American Emperor: Aaron Burr's Challenge to Jefferson's America* (2011); *Impeached: The Trial of President Andrew Johnson* (2009); and *The Summer of 1787: The Men Who Invented the Constitution* (2007). His first historical mystery, *The Lincoln Deception*, was released in 2013; a sequel, *The Wilson Deception*, will be published in October 2015. Stewart is president of *Washington Independent Review of Books*, a four-year-old online book review.



Each month, members of BIO receive an informative newsletter devoted to the art and craft of biography.

The Biographer's Craft features news about the business, interviews and articles with biographers about techniques, notification of books sold to publishers, new biographies coming into stores, research tips, and more.

It's just one more benefit of your BIO membership.

## ISSUES & TOPICS

### Civil War Women

2:15–3:30PM LOCATION: BLOOMBERG

We will explore the lives of women who played important roles before, during, and after the Civil War. How did Kate Chase Sprague, Harriet Tubman, Mary Todd Lincoln, and others define themselves both as women of their era and as political, social, and reform leaders? Our panel of biographers will comment on their work as we close out the Civil War sesquicentennial. We will also speak to the issue of male biographers vs. female biographers writing about women's lives: How do the different gender perspectives influence readings of the subject?

#### Moderator

**Carol Berkin** is Presidential Professor, emerita, Baruch College and the Graduate Center, CUNY. She is the author of numerous books, including *Jonathan Sewall: Odyssey of an American Loyalist*, which won the Bancroft Award and was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize; *A Brilliant Solution: Inventing the American Constitution*; *Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for American Independence*; *Civil War Wives: The Lives and Times of Angelina Grimké, Varina Howell Davis, and Julia Dent Grant*; *Wondrous Beauty: The Extraordinary Life and Adventures of Elizabeth Patterson Bonaparte*; and, most recently, *The Bill of Rights: The Fight to Secure America's Liberties*.

#### Panelists

**Catherine Clinton** is the author and editor of two dozen books, including *Fanny Kemble's Civil Wars*, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom*, and most recently, *Mrs. Lincoln: A Life*. She is an award-winning children's book author and has served as a historical consultant on several films, including Maria Agui Carter's 2013 documentary *Rebel*, and Steven Spielberg's *Lincoln* (2012). Clinton holds the Denman Chair of American History at the University of Texas San Antonio and is an International Research Professor at Queen's University Belfast. She is president of the Southern Historical Association and will complete her term in 2016.

**Heath Hardage Lee** is a biographer and freelance writer with a museum background. She has worked for the Levine Museum of the New South, Stratford Hall, Menokin Plantation, and Salisbury House & Gardens. Lee has written on Southern history for numerous magazines, newspapers, and blogs. Potomac Books, a division of the University of Nebraska Press, published her biography of Varina Anne "Winnie" Davis, *Winnie Davis: Daughter of the Lost Cause*, in 2014. She is currently working on a group biography of Vietnam POW and MIA wives. Lee is also editorial assistant at *The Virginia Magazine of Biography and History*.

**John Oller**, a lawyer and former journalist, is the author of four books, including, most recently, *American Queen: The Rise and Fall of Kate Chase Sprague—Civil War "Belle of the North,"* and *Gilded Age Woman of Scandal* (Da Capo Press, 2014). His first book, *Jean Arthur: The Actress Nobody Knew* (Limelight Editions, 1997), was lauded by film critic Leonard Maltin, who called it "an outstanding biography . . . among the best

I've read in years." Although principally a biographer, his 2014 e-book, *An All-American Murder*, led to the reopening of a forty-year-old homicide cold case in Columbus, Ohio.

## CORE & THE TEAM

### Social Media Ins and Outs

2:15–3:30PM LOCATION: MURROW

This is the part of the job most authors hate (and ignore at their peril). Learn how, and why, to deploy basic social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and blogs. Nothing can replace the expertise of a skilled PR person who executes a calculated campaign on your behalf, but we'll show you the tricks of the trade and how these tools can also help you at the research and pre-publication stage. We want to make this session as interactive as possible, so come with questions about media in a broader sense as well as about the challenges you face.

**Lisa Napoli** is a biographer/career journalist (*New York Times*, CNN, MSNBC) who currently works in public radio as an arts and culture reporter at KCRW in Santa Monica, CA. She left her position as a reporter/host for the public radio show *Marketplace* after being invited to the Kingdom of Bhutan to help start a radio station at the dawn of democratic rule there, which led to her 2011 book *Radio Shangri-La* (Crown). She is currently at work on a biography of the late philanthropist and McDonald's heiress, Joan Kroc.

## CRAFT

### From Journalist to Biographer

3:45–5:00PM LOCATION: BLOOMBERG

The reporting and writing skills that journalists bring to their work for newspapers, magazines, television, and websites can serve them well as biographers. But the two disciplines are very different in scale, the pace of the work, the expectations of editors and readers, and other respects. Three journalists who have become accomplished biographers explain how they made the transition, either full-time or while keeping their day jobs.

#### Moderator

**Greg Daugherty** is a career journalist who has held senior-level editing positions at Consumer Reports, Time Inc., Reader's Digest, and other magazine publishers. As a freelancer he has written for *The New York Times*, *Smithsonian Magazine* and *Smithsonian.com*, *PBS NextAvenue.org*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *Parade*, and many other newspapers, magazines, and websites. His books include *You Can Write for Magazines* (Writer's Digest Books).

#### Panelists

**John Aloysius Farrell** graduated from the University of Virginia and worked as a newspaperman, most notably for *The Boston Globe*. He covered presidential campaigns and two wars, and served as White House correspondent. In 2001 he

published *Tip O'Neill and the Democratic Century*, a biography of the late Speaker of the House, which won the Hardeman prize for the best book on Congress. Farrell's biography *Clarence Darrow: Attorney for the Damned* won the 2012 *Los Angeles Times* award for the best biography of the year. He is currently working on a biography of Richard Nixon.

**Michael Kranish** is deputy chief of the Washington bureau of *The Boston Globe*. Kranish has been the *Globe's* congressional reporter, White House correspondent, and national political reporter, filing stories from forty-nine states and twenty-five countries. He is the co-author of *John F. Kerry: The Boston Globe Biography* and *The Real Romney*. Kranish is the author of *Flight from Monticello: Thomas Jefferson at War*, named one of top 10 nonfiction books of 2010 by the *Wilson Quarterly*. He is a co-winner of the 2013 Dirksen Award for distinguished reporting of Congress, and his work is included in *Best Business Writing of 2014*.

**William Souder** is the author of *Under a Wild Sky: John James Audubon and the Making of The Birds of America*, which was a finalist for the 2005 Pulitzer Prize in biography. More recently, he wrote *On a Farther Shore: The Life and Legacy of Rachel Carson*, a *New York Times* Notable Book of 2012, also named by *Kirkus Reviews* as one of the 25 Best Nonfiction Books of 2012, and by *Booklist* as one of the Top 10 biographies of the year. He is currently at work on a biography of John Steinbeck. Souder is a board member of BIO.

CRAFT

## The Biographer's Voice

3:45–5:00PM LOCATION: HOLEMAN

In her 2014 BIO keynote speech, Stacy Schiff said, "You can write without theme, but not without voice." This session will explore the biographer's relationship to the subject and how that relationship affects the narration. For example, is the biographer a neutral observer or a chummy gossip? A debunker or a mythologizer? Does the biographer pull out the dirty linen or keep a respectful distance from the subject's personal life? How does the narrator bring forth the subject's own unique voice? Above all, how does the biographer use voice to establish credibility and engage the reader's confidence throughout the story?

## Moderator

**Beverly Gray**, who once developed 170 low-budget features for B-movie maven Roger Corman, is the author of the best-selling *Roger Corman: An Unauthorized Biography of the Godfather of Indie Filmmaking*. Tastefully retitled *Roger Corman: Blood-Sucking Vampires, Flesh-Eating Cockroaches, and Driller Killers*, it is now available (as both e-book and paperback) in an updated and unexpurgated third edition. Gray has also published *Ron Howard: From Mayberry to the Moon... and Beyond*. She teaches online screenwriting workshops for UCLA Extension's renowned Writers' Program. Her blog, Beverly in Movieland, covers movies, moviemaking, and growing up Hollywood-adjacent.

## Panelists

**Evelyn Barish**, an award-winning professor emerita at the Graduate Center, CUNY, has written biographies of Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Victorian poet Arthur Hugh Clough. Her much-discussed 2014 book, *The Double Life of Paul de Man*, shows how this revered inventor of deconstruction and theory concealed the many crimes of his past in wartime Belgium when he came as an exile to the United States. In delving into the lives of three very different subjects, Barish has discovered that she is pursuing one central question: how writers turn into themselves, how they grow. Her many honors include two Fulbright fellowships.

**Linda Leavell** is the author of *Holding On Upside Down: The Life and Work of Marianne Moore*, which won last year's Plutarch Award, the Modernist Studies Association book award, and the PEN/Weld award for biography. It was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award and the Pegasus Award for Poetry Criticism. She is also the author of *Marianne Moore and the Visual Arts: Prismatic Color*, a book of literary criticism, and for twenty-five years was a professor of American literature. Her current project, under contract with Farrar, Straus and Giroux, is a group biography of the Stieglitz circle.

**Amanda Vaill** is the author of the best-selling *Everybody Was So Young: Gerald and Sara Murphy—A Lost Generation Love Story*, a finalist in biography for the National Book Critics Circle Award; *Somewhere: The Life of Jerome Robbins*; and the recently published *Hotel Florida: Truth, Love, and Death in the Spanish Civil War*, one of *The New York Times Book Review's* 100 Notable Books of 2014. Her film work includes the screenplay for the Peabody- and Emmy-award-winning documentary *Jerome Robbins: Something to Dance About*, and a production credit for the Lifetime feature *Sex and Mrs. X*, starring Jacqueline Bisset and Linda Hamilton. She is a former Guggenheim Fellow, and her journalism has appeared in numerous national magazines and newspapers.

ISSUES & TOPICS

## Biography as History: The Great War 1914–1918

3:45–5:00PM LOCATION: MURROW

The centennial of The Great War has presented us with several new biographies of persons whose lives were bound up with or heavily influenced by this worldwide conflict. Subjects have included Franz Ferdinand, his assassin Gavrilo Princip, and Woodrow Wilson, as well as artists such as Tristan Tzara and Piet Mondrian. Three outstanding biographers will discuss their research and the choices they had to make. How much context can a biography contain? What can biography add to history? How can biography change the big picture? And, probably most important, how can we construct a sound biographical narrative?

## Moderator

**Hans Renders** holds a chair in History and Theory of Biography and is director of the Biography Institute at Groningen University, The Netherlands. He has written two

biographies, on the Dutch poet Jan Hanlo, and the Dutch journalist and author Jan Campert. Now he is working on the biography of Theo van Doesburg, founder of *De Stijl*, painter, poet, and theorist. Renders is editor of the *Biographical Studies* series and has published studies on the theme of biography in various international journals, among them *Journal of Historical Biography*, *Le Temps des Médias*, *Quaerendo*, and *Storia della Storiografia*. He is coeditor of *Theoretical Discussions of Biography: Approaches from History, Microhistory, and Life Writing* (Brill, Leiden-Boston, 2014).

## Panelists

**Marc Dierikx** is a scholar of foreign policy with an interest in aviation and biography. He has been affiliated with the Radboud University, the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), the London School of Economics, Auburn University, the Smithsonian Institution, Utrecht University, and the Institute for Netherlands History. From 1998 to 2009, he was responsible for a six-volume series on Dutch development cooperation policy. Since 2008, he has been project manager of a digital source publication about Netherlands foreign policy on European integration, 1950-1986, a commission from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in conjunction with foreign partners.

**Joanny Moulin** is professor of Anglophone literatures at Aix-Marseille University (France) and the author of biographies of Ted Hughes (Éditions Aden, 2007), Charles Darwin

(Autrement, 2009), Queen Victoria (Flammarion, 2011) and Elizabeth II (Flammarion, 2012). He is currently involved in a research project to develop a theory of biography as an emerging crossroads discipline in the humanities.

## ISSUES & TOPICS

### Does Gender Matter?

3:45–5:00PM LOCATION: LISAGOR

Does the gender of the author have any effect on the way a biography is researched and written? What's the difference—if there is any—between male and female biographers?

## Moderator

**Abigail Santamaria** earned an M.F.A. in nonfiction writing from Columbia University and has been awarded fellowships from the Ragdale Foundation, Jentel Arts, and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. Her debut biography—*Joy: Poet, Seeker, and the Woman Who Captivated C.S. Lewis*—will be published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt on August 4.

## Panelists

**Kitty Kelley**'s last five books have been number one on *The New York Times* best-seller list: *Oprah: A Biography* (2010); *The Family: The Real Story of the Bush Dynasty* (2004); *The Royals* (1997); *Nancy Reagan: The Unauthorized Biography* (1991); and



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*His Way: The Unauthorized Biography of Frank Sinatra* (1986). Her other biographies, *Elizabeth Taylor: The Last Star*, and *Jackie Oh!*, also *New York Times* best sellers, have sold millions of copies, and have been translated into more than forty foreign languages. Kelley's honors include the 2005 PEN Oakland Censorship Award (for *The Family*) and the Outstanding Author Award from the American Society of Journalists and Authors for "courageous writing on popular culture." Her website is [kittykelleywriter.com](http://kittykelleywriter.com).

**Linda Lear** began writing full-time after an academic career in environmental history. She holds a Ph.D. from The George Washington University and an honorary doctorate from Chatham University. Lear is the author of two award-winning biographies, *Rachel Carson: Witness for Nature* and *Beatrix Potter: A Life in Nature*. She has written the

introductions to all of Carson's published works and is the editor of *Lost Woods: The Discovered Writing of Rachel Carson*. Lear is a trustee emerita at Connecticut College, where she founded the Linda Lear Center for Special Collections and Archives. She lives in Bethesda, Maryland and Charleston, South Carolina.

**James McGrath Morris** writes primarily biographies and works of narrative nonfiction. His newest works are *Eye on the Struggle: Ethel Payne, The First Lady of the Black Press* and the best-selling Kindle Single *Revolution by Murder*. He is currently working on a new book, *The Ambulance Drivers: Hemingway and Dos Passos—Literary Lives in War and Peace*. Morris is a founder and past executive director and president of BIO.



## Networking Reception and Presentation of the Plutarch Award

5:15–7:00pm in First Amendment Room

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## SAVE THE DATE!

Wednesday, November 4, 2015



*Photo by Michael Lionstar*

### How Great Biographies Get Made— and Why They Matter: A Tribute to Jonathan Segal

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Spend an evening with five prize-winning biographers and their legendary editor, as they explore how major biographical works are conceived and crafted, and how a gifted editor can make the difference between a good biography and a great work that has a significant impact on people's lives.

Jonathan Segal, vice president and senior editor at Knopf, is the recipient of the second BIO Editorial Excellence Award, which will be presented to him by Carl Bernstein, whose best-selling biography of Hillary Clinton was edited by Segal.

This event was planned by Anne Heller, Gayle Feldman, Will Swift, Deirdre David, and Kate Buford. Venue in New York City to be announced.

Joining us for a panel discussion will be:

- **Eric Lax**, former president of PEN USA and the author of *Woody Allen*.
- **Paul Hendrickson**, author of *Hemingway's Boat* and a winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award and the Heartland Prize.
- **T.J. Stiles**, winner of both the Pulitzer Prize and a National Book Award, and the author of *The First Tycoon: The Epic Life of Cornelius Vanderbilt* and *Jesse James: Last Rebel of the Civil War*.

The panel's moderator is **Kate Buford**, author of biographies of Jim Thorpe and Burt Lancaster, both edited by Segal.

## The 2015 Coaching Program

BIO would like to thank these leading biographers for their participation in our inaugural coaching program. All available slots for the conference coaching program are filled, but beginning this fall, BIO will be offering a coaching program via email, phone, or Skype. More information about the new program will be available soon on our website ([biographersinternational.org](http://biographersinternational.org)) and in the July issue of our newsletter, *The Biographer's Craft*.

**Kai Bird** is a Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer, a historian, and a journalist. His most recent book, *The Good Spy: The Life and Death of Robert Ames*, was a *New York Times* best-seller. He chronicled his childhood in *Crossing Mandelbaum Gate: Coming of Age Between the Arabs and Israelis*. The author of biographies of John J. McCloy, McGeorge Bundy, and William Bundy, he won the Pulitzer Prize for biography in 2006 for *American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer* (co-authored with Martin J. Sherwin). He has also won the National Books Critics Circle Award and the Duff Cooper Prize for History.

**Kate Buford's** award-winning *Native American Son: The Life and Sporting Legend of Jim Thorpe* (Knopf, 2010; University of Nebraska, 2012) was a *New York Times* Editors' Choice. *Burt Lancaster: An American Life* (Knopf/Da Capo/Aurum UK) was named one of the best books of 2000 by the *Times* and other publications. Buford has also written for numerous publications, including the *Times*, and has appeared on many television and radio shows including *Charlie Rose*, *CSPAN-TV*, and BBC 4's *Great Lives*. She reviews books for *The Washington Independent Review of Books*. She was a commentator on NPR's *Morning Edition* and APM's *Marketplace* from 1995 to 2004. She serves on the board of BIO and of the Union Settlement Association in East Harlem.

**Cathy Curtis** is vice president of BIO. She is the author of *Restless Ambition: Grace Hartigan, Painter* (Oxford University Press), the first biography of a prominent New York artist in the 1950s whose life was as colorful as her paintings. A former staff writer for the *Los Angeles Times*, Curtis is a graduate of Smith College and the University of California, Berkeley. She has worked as a copywriter, editor, and freelance writer, and has contributed entries to the *Dictionary of American History* (Scribner's). Curtis is currently working on a biography of artist, writer, and free spirit Elaine de Kooning.

**Irwin Gellman** is a presidential biographer and a diplomatic historian of twentieth-century America. He has been a professor, an academic dean, and a real estate developer. One of his greatest joys is assisting serious authors in fine-tuning their work and getting it published. Johns Hopkins University Press nominated his *Secret Affairs* (1995) for the Pulitzer Prize. *The Contender* (1999), the first of his multi-volume biography of Richard Nixon, received glowing reviews. In August, Yale University Press will release his fifth book, *The President's Apprentice*, covering Nixon and Eisenhower from 1952 to 1959.

**Anne C. Heller's** *Ayn Rand and the World She Made* (Nan Talese/Doubleday/Anchor 2009/2010) was a *New York Times* Notable Book and honored as a best book of the year by *Time* magazine, *The Daily Beast*, *USA Today*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Chicago Tribune*, *Library Journal*, and *Bloomberg*. She has been an editor and writer for magazines including *The Antioch Review*, *Esquire*, *Lear's*, and *Vanity Fair* and is the former executive editor of magazine development at Condé Nast Publications. Her new book, *Hannah Arendt: A Life in Dark Times*, will be published in August by James Atlas at [Icons/Amazon.com/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt](http://Icons/Amazon.com/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt).

**Linda Leavell** welcomed the challenge of writing for a general audience after years of writing for an academic one, and she likes to help others, as she was helped, in meeting the challenges of biography. She is the author of an academic book on Marianne Moore and of the 2013 biography, *Holding On Upside Down: The Life and Work of Marianne Moore*. The latter won BIO's Plutarch Award as well as the Modernist Studies Association book award and the PEN/Weld award for biography. It was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award and was widely praised in periodicals such as *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *TLS*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. Her current project is a group biography of the Stieglitz circle. For more information, see [linda-leavell.com](http://linda-leavell.com).

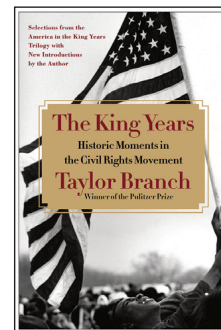
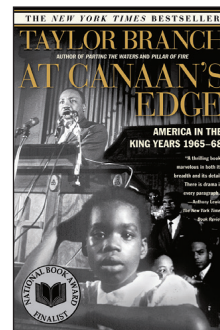
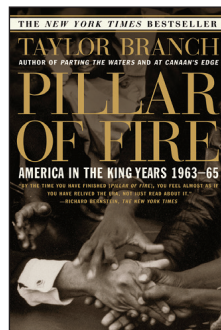
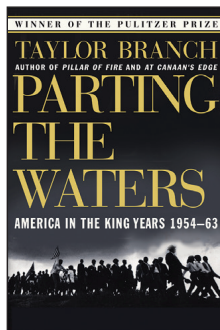
**Justin Martin** is the author of four biographies featuring subjects ranging from a Federal Reserve chairman, *Greenspan: The Man Behind the Money* (1999), to a pioneering architect, *Genius of Place: The Life of Frederick Law Olmsted* (2011). His most recent is a group biography, *Rebel Souls: Walt Whitman and America's First Bohemians* (2014). Martin prides himself on being a thorough researcher and reporter. Armed with the facts, he aims to render his subjects in novelistic fashion and considers it the highest compliment when someone says: "your book reads like fiction."

**William Souder** is the author of *Under a Wild Sky: John James Audubon and the Making of The Birds of America*, which was a finalist for the 2005 Pulitzer Prize in biography. More recently, he wrote *On a Farther Shore: The Life and Legacy of Rachel Carson*, a *New York Times* Notable Book of 2012, also named by *Kirkus Reviews* as one of the 25 Best Nonfiction Books of 2012, and by *Booklist* as one of the Top 10 biographies of the year. He is currently at work on a biography of John Steinbeck. Souder is a board member of BIO.

**Will Swift** is a presidential biographer, a royal historian, and a clinical psychologist. He loves repairing historical reputations. His most recent book, *Pat and Dick: The Nixons, An Intimate Portrait of a Marriage* (2014) was a *New York Times* Editors' Choice. His book *The Roosevelts and the Royals* (2004) covered a crucial aspect of the Anglo-American partnership, and *The Kennedys Amidst the Gathering Storm* (2008) told the story of the Kennedy family's emergence on the world stage. A founding board member of BIO and the creator of its coaching program, he has also co-founded the Gotham Biographers Group. He has thoroughly enjoyed coaching individuals and training mentors for the past 40 years. His website is [willswift.com](http://willswift.com).

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Many thanks to the  
Biographers International Organization  
for its continued efforts to  
promote the art and craft of biography.



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# Schedule

## Saturday, June 6

co Core 
 c Craft 
 I Issues & Topics 
 T The Team

7:00–8:00AM	Registration Lobby				
7:30AM	Breakfast Serving Begins Ballroom				
8:00–8:15AM	Welcome by Brian Jay Jones Ballroom				
8:15–9:15AM	Breakfast Plenary Session: The Art and Craft of Biography: Evan Thomas and Douglas Brinkley in Conversation Ballroom				
9:30–10:45AM	The Rewards & Challenges of Writing Lives of Color <span>I</span> Zenger	The Agent Panel <span>T</span> Holeman	The Doctor Is In: Diagnosing Your Subject's Medical Condition <span>I</span> Lisagor	First Ladies: Writing the Lives of the Wives <span>I</span> Bloomberg	Lessons Learned from Four Decades of Hunting Facts <span>c</span> Morrow
11:00AM–12:15PM	Biographies of Non-Persons <span>c</span> Zenger	Keeping It Short <span>c</span> Lisagor	Writing About Someone You Know <span>c</span> Bloomberg	Writing About Writers <span>c</span> Holeman	Go There: In Search of Truth <span>I</span> Morrow
12:30–2:00PM	Lunch and Keynote Address by Taylor Branch, winner of the 2015 BIO Award Ballroom				
2:15–3:30PM	Biographer for Hire <span>I</span> Lisagor	Biography vs. Narrative Nonfiction <span>c</span> Holeman	Market Trends in Biography <span>co</span> Zenger	Civil War Women <span>I</span> Bloomberg	Social Media Ins and Outs <span>co</span> <span>T</span> Morrow
3:45–5:00PM	From Journalist to Biographer <span>c</span> Bloomberg	The Biographer's Voice <span>c</span> Holeman	Biography as History: The Great War 1914–1918 <span>I</span> Morrow	Does Gender Matter? <span>I</span> Lisagor	
5:15–7:00PM	Networking Reception and Announcement of the 2014 Plutarch Award Winner First Amendment Room				

Coaching Sessions will be held in the First Amendment Room (in the Ballroom for the 3:45–5:00PM time slot only).