

THE LOIS ROTH ENDOWMENT

Fostering international dialogue



2015

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Awards for Cultural Diplomacy

Three exemplary cultural diplomats were recognized at the annual awards ceremony of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) on October 23, 2015. Please see our website for more about these distinguished awardees.

Lois Roth Award. Foreign Service Officer Yolonda Kerney won this year's award for her work at the US Mission to Barbados, the Eastern Caribbean and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States. She was honored for her consummate skill in forging partnerships and cultivating new audiences. Her innovative social inclusion programs are promoting equality for women, the LGBT community, at-risk youth and those with disabilities. Kerney writes: "I'm more convinced every day that I made absolutely the right decision when I became a public diplomacy officer, and there aren't many people in the world who get to wake up every day and go off to work with that assurance."

Gill Jacot-Guillarmod Award. In its third year, this award for Locally Engaged Staff went to Monica Alcalde, Cultural Specialist at the US Embassy in Santiago, Chile. In her 38 years of service, Alcalde has run traditional exchange programs, as well as long-term, specialized initiatives in justice, democracy, economics and social issues, many of which she created and sustained over decades. Her programs have helped move Chile's inquisitorial justice system to one patterned largely on the US system. The Chilean Congress recently recognized the impact of Alcalde's work in an official tribute.

Ilchman-Richardson Award. This year's award for an ECA employee supporting educational and/or cultural programs went to Lorie Nierenberg, Attorney-Advisor for Public Diplomacy. Over a distinguished 23-year career, Nierenberg has provided consistently valuable and insightful advice in a time when the number and complexity of issues are growing steadily, for example in producing Fulbright agreements that meet bilateral priorities. Despite the range of her responsibilities, she is unceasingly generous with her time and willing to share her wisdom and experience with others.

Awards for Literary Translation

Dyankov Prize. Named for Krustan Dyankov, pioneer translator of English-language literature into Bulgarian, this award is managed by the Kostova Foundation in Sofia. The first prize went to Svetlozara Leseva for her translation of *In the Shadow of Banyan*, a 2013 novel by Vaddey Ratner; it tells a story of the struggle to survive under the Khmer Rouge. Second place went to Nadezhda Rosova for her translation of Ruth L. Ozeki's *A Tale for the Time Being*. See interviews with the two translators online.

MLA-Roth Award. With the Modern Language Association, LRE awards a biennial prize for literary translation into English, attracting an increasing number of nominations from all languages. So far the winners have included works translated from Chinese, Russian, Arabic, Japanese, Italian and German. Last year the prize went to Royall Tyler for his translation of *The Tale of the Heike*; it will be awarded again next year.

Persian Translation Prize. Since 2001, LRE has helped the American Institute of Iranian Studies promote English translation

of classical and contemporary Persian texts. Last year, the prize went to the accomplished poet Geoffrey Squires for his volume *Hafez: Translations and Interpretations of the Ghazals*. No prize was awarded this year.

Prix Coindreau. Our oldest translation prize, established in 1993, honors excellent translations of US literature into French. This year's award went to H el ene Hinfray for her masterful translation of Bill Bryson's *At Home: A Short History of Private Life*. Marc Ch en etier, head of the jury, writes: "There is ... the abolition of expected distances: in time, in space, between an American and the English place he describes, between the translator and the malicious game of intertwined tonalities. Wit, play and elegance, ... funny and surprising: these are qualities shared by Bill Bryson and H el ene Hinfray...."

Project Support

Project Support Awards are designed to supplement existing grant funding to help selected individuals enrich and expand their proposed projects in countries to which Lois Roth was particularly attached.

Australia. This year's award went to William Lempert for dissertation research in cultural anthropology (Univ. of Colorado, Boulder), based on the idea that understanding Indigenous media is an essential element in engaging and supporting some of the most culturally rich, yet vulnerable peoples of the world. With high levels of media productivity and success in Aboriginal activism, the Kimberley region of Australia is an ideal place to explore how Indigenous media makers represent different visions of Aboriginality.

Denmark. This year's award, administered with the American Scandinavian Foundation, went to Dr. Ethelene Whitmire (Univ. of Wisconsin–Madison), for research on African Americans who traveled, studied and lived in Denmark during the last one hundred years. The research will inform a combination travel memoir / history. Whitmire is also working on a book on Ethel Ray Nance, an African American / Swedish woman who broke racial barriers; in 2014, she published *Regina Anderson Andrews: Harlem Renaissance Librarian*.

Finland. Two Roth-Thomson Awards are granted each year to US Fulbrighters working in Finland. At the Finnish Environment Institute (Aalto Univ.), Taylor Tyger (Georgia Inst. of Tech.) conducted research on the health benefits of urban aquatic environments in the Helsinki area. Her award enabled her to present this work at conferences in Belgium and Denmark in May 2015. Based at the Arctic Center in Rovaniemi, Michael Brown (Univ. of Washington) worked on a comparative assessment of Finnish and US policies on environmental issues in the arctic. His award enabled him to join the University of the Arctic's Calotte Academy, which met at research centers in Finland, Norway and Russia.

New Zealand. One Winks Award is granted to a New Zealander planning to pursue graduate study in the U.S. This year's award went to Bonnie Scarth to help support her work in the Anthropology Department at Cornell. Her comparative research project focuses on the subjective meanings, lived experiences, and potential transformations of trauma for women diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the U.S. and New Zealand.

Norway. This award went to Haley Peterson (Arizona State Univ.), who explored ways to incorporate traditional Norwegian materials and dress into costume design, as part of her Master's program at the innovative Oslo National Academy of the Arts. While in Norway, she had her costume designs for the world premiere of Charles Mee's play *soot and spit* accepted at the 2015 Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space; her award enabled her to attend this unique live exhibition of world theater and scenography.

Sweden. Two Roth-Thomson Awards are granted each year to US Fulbrighters working in Sweden. In Kiruna, photographer Clare Benson (Central Michigan Univ.) worked with a Sámi filmmaker and the Swedish Institute of Space Physics to explore the intersection of astronomy and the mythology of Indigenous Sámi culture. Her award is helping her organize a symposium with a wide range of artists, scientists and Indigenous peoples. Filmmaker Melanie Aronson (School of Visual Arts) was in Sweden making a documentary about Syrian refugees in Sweden entitled *Dreamland Sverige*. The film explores how the preconceptions of asylum seekers compare to their actual experiences as refugees.

Co-Sponsored Programs

Fulbright Legacy Lectures. To honor the life of Oxford alumnus J. William Fulbright, prominent figures in international relations give a set of three lectures annually, at Pembroke College Oxford, Kings College London and the University of Edinburgh. Other sponsors include the US-UK Fulbright Commission, Pembroke College (where Senator Fulbright studied, 1924-28), Oxford's Department of Politics and International Relations, the US Fulbright Association, and

private donors. The fifth annual Fulbright Legacy Lectures were given by Jack Matlock, US Ambassador to the Soviet Union during the critical years of 1987-91. In addressing "The Ukrainian Crisis: Reflections on Power in Today's World," Matlock drew on his experience of these years to illustrate the importance of personal relations and cultural diplomacy in addressing current political flashpoints. This conviction, he recounted, is a far cry from his earlier hawkish stance and disagreements with Senator J. William Fulbright about the Vietnam War. In particular, the seasoned diplomat acknowledged all he had learned while working for President Ronald Reagan.

Henry and Judith Millon Award. The recipient of the Millon Architectural History Grant was Prof. Mauro Mussolin (Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa / NYU Florence). In his research project on *Michelangelo and Paper as Palimpsest*, he seeks to investigate the sources of Michelangelo's graphic work and the lifecycle and uses of paper in the Italian Renaissance artist's studio. The resulting book will argue that Michelangelo's use of paper was indissolubly linked to the genesis of his ideas.

Sozopol Writers Seminar. In spring 2015, LRE helped the Kostova Foundation bring authors Claire Messud, Georgi Gespodinov and Hristo Karastoyanov together to join Elizabeth Kostova in working with an group of young Bulgarian and American authors. The seminar fosters sharing of their recent work among fiction writers of Bulgarian and English; admission has grown very selective since it began in 2008. It is linked to the CapitaLiterature program, which takes place in Sophia, Bulgaria following the seminar.

For details on programs and awardees, please see www.rothendowment.org

The Lois Roth Endowment relies entirely on individual gifts to support projects like these. Your generous contribution is greatly appreciated. For annual giving or bequests, please contact us at

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