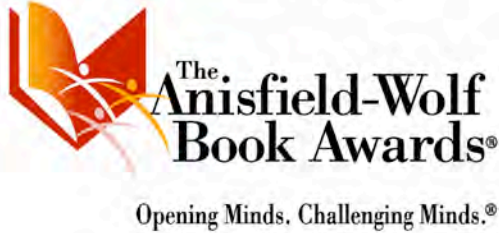


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Press Release

For Immediate Release

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74th Annual Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards® Winners Announced ***Works address issues of race and culture, opening and challenging minds***

CLEVELAND, Ohio (April 23, 2009) – The Cleveland Foundation today announced the winners of the 2009 Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards. They are:

- **Louise Erdrich, *The Plague of Doves*** (Harper Collins)
- **Nam Le, *The Boat*** (Knopf)
- **Annette Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello*** (W.W. Norton)
- **Paule Marshall** – Lifetime Achievement Award

“These 2009 Anisfield-Wolf winners are notable for the thoughtful way each author addresses the provocative and complex issues of race and cultural diversity. Each work is distinct, yet each one shares an unyielding faith in the essential humanity of their subjects,” said Henry Louis Gates Jr., the Alphonse Fletcher University Professor and Director of the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African and African-American Research at Harvard University, who serves as jury chair. “The Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards continue to be internationally recognized for shining a light on the many layers of ethnicity and identity in an increasingly cosmopolitan world.”

“Edith Anisfield Wolf, for whom the awards are named, believed that as individuals and as a society, we need to develop greater understanding, respect and acceptance of other people, cultures and races in order to enrich our humanity,” said Cleveland Foundation President and Chief Executive Officer Ronald B. Richard. “These prize-winning authors challenge us to open our minds and broaden our conversations about how we move forward in this global society.”

About the winners

A Native American whose mother is of Ojibwe descent, Erdrich captures the rich tradition of storytelling in written works. *The Plague of Doves* centers on an unsolved murder and its impact on future generations in the white, off-reservation town of Pluto, N.D., and among the Ojibwe living on the nearby reservation. As the lives of the next generation of whites and Ojibwe

become further entwined, Erdrich detangles the stories of these two separate, yet connected communities that come together in startling fashion. In its review, *Publisher's Weekly* described this novel as "a multigenerational tour de force of sin, redemption, murder and vengeance." *The Plague of Doves* is Erdrich's 13th novel and was a 2009 Pulitzer Prize finalist for fiction. She has also written volumes of poetry, children's books and a memoir of early motherhood. Her first novel, *Love Medicine*, received the 1984 National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction.

The Boat, Le's debut collection of short stories, covers a vast geography in telling seven stories of individuals not easily forgotten. From the slums of Columbia to Iowa City, Le creates characters as diverse and impactful as a Japanese third-grader, an American woman visiting Iran for the first time, and a 14-year-old assassin from Medellin. A reviewer in *The New York Times* said Le "demonstrates an intuitive, gut-level ability to convey the psychological conflicts people experience when they find their own hopes and ambitions slamming against familial expectations or the brute facts of history." The author, born in Vietnam and raised in Australia, also received the Pushcart Prize and the Dylan Thomas Prize for *The Boat*, and it was short listed for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize.

Gordon-Reed's *The Hemingses of Monticello*, explores in startling detail the lives of the Hemings family, Thomas Jefferson, and his white family. Her earlier work, *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings: An American Controversy*, presented the most comprehensive and definitive look at the intricate and often misunderstood relationship between our third president and a female slave in his household. In her latest book, Gordon-Reed broadens our view not just of Jefferson, but of the impact of the Hemings family in our country's history. *The Hemingses of Monticello* received the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for history and 2008 National Book Award for nonfiction. Gordon-Reed is a professor of law at New York Law School and a professor of history at Rutgers University.

The Brooklyn-born Marshall, a novelist, journalist, essayist, poet and short fiction writer, is the daughter of Barbados immigrants whose West Indian influence winds its way through her works. A cum laude graduate of Brooklyn College (now City University of New York), she began her career as the food and fashion editor at *Our World*, a small African-American magazine. It was there she started her first novel, *Brown Girl, Brownstones*, a coming of age story of a young American girl with Bajan parents which explores the intersections of race, culture and class. Published in 1959, it continues to be rediscovered by scholars in African-American, Caribbean and feminist circles. Marshall followed with the short story, *Soul Clap Hands and Sing* and her second novel, *The Chosen Place, The Timeless People*. She has served as writer-in-residence at Oxford University and Columbia University, and recently stepped down as the Helen Gould Sheppard Chair of Literature and Culture at New York University. Among her many honors, she was named a Guggenheim Fellow in 1960 and received a MacArthur Fellowship in 1992. Marshall continues to write, having just published her memoir, *Triangular Road*.

About the Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards

The Anisfield-Wolf winners will be honored in Cleveland on September 10 at a ceremony hosted by the Cleveland Foundation and emceed by Jury Chair Gates. The Cleveland Foundation has administered the book awards since 1963, upon the death of its creator, Edith Anisfield Wolf. The Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards is the only juried American literary competition devoted to recognizing books that have made an important contribution to society's understanding of racism and the diversity of human cultures. Born in 1889, Edith Anisfield Wolf was a published poet and civic activist who became passionately committed to social justice as a young girl. She chose literature as a means to explore racial prejudice and celebrate human diversity. At her death, she left funds for the Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards to the Cleveland Foundation, which continues to carry on her work and wishes.

For additional information, including a complete list of winners, visit www.anisfield-wolf.org.

Established in 1914, the Cleveland Foundation is the world's first community foundation and the nation's third-largest today, with assets of \$1.6 billion and 2008 grants nearing \$85 million. The foundation improves the lives of Greater Clevelanders in perpetuity by building community endowment, addressing needs through grantmaking, and providing leadership on vital issues. Currently the foundation proactively directs two-thirds of its flexible grant dollars to the community's greatest needs: economic transformation (including advanced energy and globalization), public school improvement, early childhood and youth development, neighborhoods and housing, and arts advancement.

For more information on the Cleveland Foundation, visit www.clevelandfoundation.org.