



Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards® News



Message from Ronn Richard

Spring brings the announcement of the annual Anisfield-Wolf book prize winners. This year's 75th anniversary gives us even more to celebrate as we honor the woman behind the prize and the writers who make it come alive.

This year's honorees represent some of the most passionate and important voices today. Kamila Shamsie, Elizabeth Alexander, William Julius Wilson, and Oprah Winfrey are more than fitting recipients for the diamond anniversary of this special prize.

We are enthusiastic about our newly designed website with a lively blog for writers and readers to share their thoughts and ideas. I encourage you to take a look.

Those familiar with our awards ceremony will notice a number of changes to this year's event in recognition of our anniversary celebration. Mark your calendar for Tuesday, September 14. You don't want to miss the festivities. Look for your invitation in early July.

Ronn Richard is president and CEO of the Cleveland Foundation, which administers the Anisfield-Wolf book prize.

2010 Winners Add Excitement to Anniversary Celebration

The 75th Annual Anisfield-Wolf Book Prize winners are Kamila Shamsie, *Burnt Shadows*, fiction; Elizabeth Alexander, Lifetime Achievement in Poetry; William Julius Wilson, Lifetime Achievement in Nonfiction; and Oprah Winfrey, Lifetime Achievement Award.

Seventy-five years ago, the belief that race relations would be the most critical issue facing our country motivated Cleveland poet and philanthropist Edith Anisfield Wolf to create this book prize, noted Cleveland Foundation President and Chief Executive Officer Ronald B. Richard.

"It was her fervent desire to break down stereotypes and encourage civil discourse so that future generations would appreciate the richness in our differences," he said.

Shamsie is a Pakistani novelist whose *Burnt Shadows* bookends the time period between August 1945 in Nagasaki, Japan, and September 2001 in the United States. It is an epic narrative of love and betrayal that tells the story of two linked families with a "complicated shared history" that demonstrates how small and connected the world truly is. *Burnt Shadows* was shortlisted for the Orange Prize for fiction for 2009.

A noted poet and essayist, Alexander delivered one of her most recent poems, *Praise Song for the Day*, at the January 2009 inauguration of President Barack Obama. She has published five books of poems and her collection *American Sublime* was a 2005 Pulitzer Prize finalist.

(see "Winners" on page 2)



Kamila Shamsie
Burnt Shadows



William Julius Wilson
Lifetime Achievement in Nonfiction



Oprah Winfrey
Lifetime Achievement Award

75th Anniversary Brings Changes to Awards Ceremony

This year's awards ceremony will feature many changes. Regular attendees will want to make special note of them:

- The venue is moving to Severance Hall (from the Cleveland Play House).
- Book sales will go on before and after the ceremony.
- Book signing will take place as time permits after the awards ceremony (not before).
- A dessert reception will take place after the ceremony (no reception before the ceremony).
- The ceremony will begin a half-hour earlier, at 6 p.m.

Following is the schedule for the 75th anniversary ceremony:

- 5:00–6:00 p.m. Arrival of guests, book sales
- 6:00 p.m. Start of ceremony
- 8:00 p.m. Dessert reception, book sales, book signing
- 8:40 p.m. Conclusion of book signing
- 9:00 p.m. Conclusion of reception

Writers and Readers Series Kicks Off Anisfield-Wolf Week



Cleveland Public Library's "Sunday Afternoon for Writers and Readers" series kicks off Sunday, September 12, with

1998 Anisfield-Wolf winner Walter Mosley. Mosley received the prize for his novel, *Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned*.

The free event begins at 2 p.m. in the Louis Stokes Wing Auditorium of Cleveland Public Library. Mosley will talk about the writing life and answer questions from the audience. Seating is limited, on a first-come, first-serve basis. Doors open at 1 p.m.

"We are thrilled to have our Sunday Afternoons for Writers and Readers start the 75th anniversary Anisfield-Wolf celebration," said Cleveland Public Library Director Felton Thomas. "Edith Anisfield Wolf was an important member of the library's board of trustees for many years, and we are proud to carry on her wish that the public have easy access to books about race and cultural diversity." Cleveland Public Library houses the complete collection of Anisfield-Wolf prize-winning books in its extraordinary Special Collection.

Launched in 2000, the free series of lectures has hosted more than 50 of the world's most famous writers, including previous Anisfield-Wolf winners Maxine Hong Kingston, Junot Diaz, James McBride, David Levering Lewis, Jonathan Kozol, and jury member Rita Dove.

The Cleveland Foundation
1422 Euclid Avenue, Suite 1300
Cleveland, Ohio 44115



CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

Opening Minds. Challenging Minds.®

Winners (from page 1)

Alexander is the recipient of two Pushcart Prizes. She currently chairs the African-American Studies Department at Yale University.



Elizabeth
Alexander
*Lifetime
Achievement
in Poetry*

Wilson wrote a number of critically acclaimed and culturally challenging works, including the 1978 publication *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions*. In it he argued that the significance of race was declining and an African-American's economic class was comparatively more important in determining his or her chances in life. His most recent book, *More Than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City*, was published in 2009. A noted sociologist, Wilson joined the faculty of Harvard University in 1996, where he holds the professional distinction of University Professor. Among his many honors is the Burton Gordon Feldman Award for "outstanding contributions in the field of public policy."

As a television host, businesswoman, and philanthropist, Winfrey is often called the "most influential woman in the world." Through her television talk show, she launched Oprah's Book Club and single-handedly brought the joys of reading to millions of people around the world and re-engaged those whose interest may have waned over time. Her commitment to issues of diversity and human cultures runs through the topics she addresses on her show, the books she recommends, and the cultural arts she supports.

Photo credits: Shamsie, © Mark Pringle; Wilson, Jon Chase/Harvard News Office, (c) 2000 President and Fellows of Harvard College; Winfrey, Copyright: Harpo, Inc./All Rights Reserved/Photographer: Cliff Watts; Alexander, © Ficare Ghebreyesus

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Cleveland, OH
Permit No. 1362