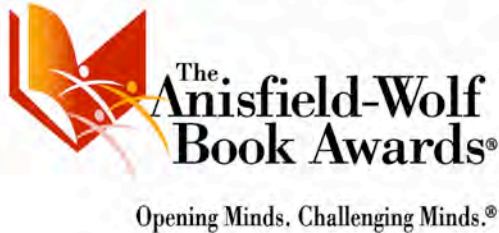


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## Press Release

For Immediate Release

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### **75<sup>th</sup> Annual Anisfield-Wolf Book Prize Winners Announced** ***Oprah Winfrey Receives Lifetime Achievement Award***

CLEVELAND, Ohio (April 22, 2010) – The Cleveland Foundation today announced the winners of the 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Anisfield-Wolf Book Prize ([www.anisfield-wolf.org](http://www.anisfield-wolf.org)). They are:

- **Kamila Shamsie**, ***Burnt Shadows***, Fiction
- **Elizabeth Alexander**, Lifetime Achievement in Poetry
- **William Julius Wilson**, Lifetime Achievement in Nonfiction
- **Oprah Winfrey**, Lifetime Achievement

“The 2010 Anisfield-Wolf winners are among the most influential voices in today’s global society, challenging conventional thinking and prodding us to think beyond what we believe to be true,” 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. “In celebrating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this internationally renowned prize, it is appropriate to look beyond singular works and recognize writers and thinkers who, over time, have opened our minds to the possibilities of more than our individual place in societies, but our individual places in the world.”

“Seventy-five years ago, the belief that race relations would be the most critical issue facing our country drove Cleveland poet and philanthropist Edith Anisfield Wolf to create this book prize. It was her fervent desire to break down stereotypes and encourage civil discourse so that future generations would appreciate the richness in our differences,” said Cleveland Foundation President and Chief Executive Officer Ronald B. Richard. “This prize remains fitting testimony to the vision of an amazing woman truly ahead of her time.”

#### **About the winners**

A Pakistani novelist, Shamsie in her fifth novel, *Burnt Shadows*, bookends the time period between August 1945 in Nagasaki, Japan, and September 2001 in the United States, in an epic

narrative of love and betrayal. It 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. In 1999, Shamsie received the Prime Minister’s Award for Literature and in 2004 the Patras Bokhari Award, both from the Pakistan Academy of Letters.

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, beginning with *The Venus Hottentot* in 1990. Her collection *American Sublime* was a 2005 Pulitzer Prize finalist. Born in New York City and raised in Washington, D.C., Alexander is the 2007 winner of the first Jackson Prize for Poetry, awarded by Poets and Writers and is the recipient of two Pushcart Prizes. Her collections of essays include *The Black Interior* and *Power and Possibility*. Alexander currently chairs the African-American Studies Department at Yale University.

Wilson is the author of a number of critically acclaimed and culturally challenging works, including the 1978 publication *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions*. In this work, Wilson argued that the significance of race was declining and an African-American’s 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 sociologist, Wilson holds a Ph.D. from Washington State University. In 1996 he joined the faculty at Harvard University, where he is among an exclusive group to hold the highest professional distinction of University Professor. Among his many honors, he is a recipient of the Burton Gordon Feldman Award for “outstanding contributions in the field of public policy.”

Winfrey, often called the “most influential woman in the world,” is a television host, businesswoman, and philanthropist. Her difficult childhood – born out of wedlock, raised in poverty, sexually abused – is well documented and she is widely respected for overcoming hardship. Through her television talk show, Winfrey 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 financially supports, including the 2009 movie *Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' by Sapphire* and the Broadway production of *The Color Purple*.

### **About the Anisfield-Wolf Prize**

The Anisfield-Wolf winners will be honored in Cleveland on September 14 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 prize remains 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. For additional information, including a complete list of winners, visit [www.anisfield-wolf.org](http://www.anisfield-wolf.org).

Established in 1914, the Cleveland Foundation is the world's first community foundation and the nation's second-largest today, with assets of \$1.8 billion and annual grants between \$80 million and \$85 million. The foundation improves the lives of Greater Clevelanders in perpetuity by building community endowments, 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](http://www.ClevelandFoundation.org).

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