ACTA
American Council of Trustees and Alumni

The Case for American History

By Louise Mirrer

Remarks accepting

The Philip Merrill Award
for Outstanding Contributions to Liberal Arts Education

with

Tributes by
Roger Hertog
Robert Caro
Benno Schmidt

November 7, 2014
New York, NY

The American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) is an independent non-profit educational organization committed to academic freedom, excellence, and accountability. Launched in 1995, ACTA has a network of alumni and trustees from over 1,100 colleges and universities, including over 16,000 current board members. The quarterly newsletter, *Inside Academe,* reaches nearly 13,000 readers. ACTA receives no government or university funding and is supported through the generosity of individuals and foundations.

The Case for American History

by Louise Mirrer

Thank you so much, Bob. And thank you, Roger, Benno, and all the New-York Historical Society trustees here with us this evening, among them our chair Pam Schafler. I am deeply, deeply touched by your presence. And thank you President Anne Neal and the American Council of Trustees and Alumni for bestowing this extraordinary honor on me. ACTA's work, as I think all of you know, has been critical to raising Americans' consciousness of the importance of teaching and learning American history and drawing attention to the astonishing lack of historical literacy on the part of many college students today. I urge you to read ACTA's 2000 survey and report, *Losing America's Memory*, which David McCullough endorsed, and more recently, ACTA's survey on historical awareness of the Roosevelts, released in conjunction with Ken Burns' latest documentary.

On this splendid occasion and in the presence of Robert Caro, I cannot help thinking of Lyndon Johnson's remark, which Bob shared with us when he spoke at the New-York Historical Society last spring, in which Johnson says that he wished that his parents could have lived to hear what was so generously said about him, because his father

would have enjoyed it, and his mother would have believed it. I know that my father, who died last February 12th, Lincoln's Birthday, would have enjoyed hearing what has been said about me this evening. My mother, on the other hand, is right here with us tonight. And I am sure that later on she'll let me know whether, like Johnson's mother, she believed it.

Now Lyndon Johnson is actually a good figure with whom to begin my remarks because I want to spend a few moments talking about a time when Americans began to change their minds about what history should be taught in the schools. This time, I want to argue, roughly coincided with the year that Johnson ended his presidency. It was in 1969, in the aftermath of the wrenching struggle for civil rights that Johnson so courageously championed, that the idea first truly began to take flight among a number of American educators that American history, as it had been taught for generations, was inadequate for conveying the perspective of an important segment of American schoolchildren; that American history and its roots in the Western world did not support an understanding of the full totality of the American experience.

I happen to have had a very personal familiarity with this shift in thinking. In 1969 my Uncle Richie, my father's youngest brother by fifteen years, was sent on sabbatical by his school district in Commack, Long Island to Ghana to learn about African Americans' African roots. My uncle was a high school social studies teacher, and his district believed that a sabbatical in Africa would enable him, on his return, to include in his classes developments in African history prior to

the movement of Africans to America as slaves—just as he routinely included developments in Western European history in his classes as part of the story of early American settlement by Europeans seeking, for example, the religious freedom denied them in their countries of birth.

Thinking back now on his residence in Ghana in 1969, I realize my uncle really deserves quite a lot of credit. His travel preparations included a visit to his local G.P. for inoculations against the plague and a number of other potentially-deadly diseases. He was one of only three whites among the ninety-four passengers on his flight, and as a sign of the times and perhaps also as a consequence of the painful reminder to African Americans on the trip of the circumstances under which their ancestors left Africa, not one of the Black passengers exchanged a word with him. Once in Africa my Uncle Richie took courses at the University of Ghana focused on European nations' "mad scramble for colonies." He visited slave castles that showed the imprint of English, Dutch, Portuguese, German, French, Swedish, and Danish slave traders. He stayed, at one point, in a building infested with the largest bugs he'd ever seen, though he was able to pick as many bananas as he wished from trees that grew right outside his bedroom.

Most remarkable of all, however, and the reason why I have made him a protagonist in my remarks tonight, is that my Uncle Richie was at ground zero of a movement that for almost the next half-century at least would alter what history was taught in our American schools. To my point, just as my uncle was winding up his sabbatical in Africa, my high school social studies teacher in Great Neck, Long Island

was announcing to our class that our school district had decided to jettison the customary history curriculum so that for the remainder of the school year we would be studying Africa. Now I have to admit that since I'd been corresponding with my uncle during his entire stay in Ghana I was pretty happy to find that I had a leg up on my classmates—not to mention my teacher. But even back then, in 1969, I knew that my "leg up" would not be forever; that the question of what history should be taught in the schools would not be resolved by including Africa in the curriculum. America's diversity was growing, prompted substantially by the passage of the Hart-Cellar Act in 1965, which removed restrictive, country-specific quotas. Already by the end of the 1960s it was foreseeable that many other groups would be demanding that their histories be acknowledged and taught in the schools.

And in fact that is exactly what has happened so that today, for example, in the state of California, public school teachers are required to include the histories and contributions of Native Americans, African Americans, Mexican Americans, Asian Americans, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans, and Americans with disabilities. Closer to home, soon after I left the City University of New York in 2004, the new faculty lines that I'd allocated to CUNY's colleges in an effort to increase the number of American history professors were filled for the most part by faculty specializing in and charged with teaching courses in Asian American, African American, Latino American, Native American, or American Women's history. Many faculty felt that, as CUNY students came from all over the world, American history

courses that focused, for example, on the nation's founding, an event that occurred more than two centuries before many of these students arrived on our shores, were irrelevant. What, a number of these faculty asked, does George Washington have to do with students who are new or first generation Americans?

Now, as someone whose arguable claim to fame over the last decade was an exhibition on the earliest African Americans in New York, and who has launched a steady stream of exhibitions with titles like "Nueva York," "Chinese American," "Our French Founding Father," and "Lincoln and the Jews," and who is now working on a major, new women's history center, I am hardly the one to argue that the teaching of American history should not reflect the totality of the American experience. But where American history now so often means the histories of diverse Americans, our exhibition program tells the story of how American it is to be diverse. And where American history has become a discipline and a course in which individual histories are all placed together on an equal footing, our exhibitions make it clear that it is only because of the ideas on which our nation was founded—that all men are created equal and have certain unalienable Rights, among them Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness—that today these individual histories can flower and be told. Where American history curricula have been rethought to reflect the roots of Americans in nations across the globe and in identities related to gender, sexual orientation or physical ability, our exhibitions make it plain that it is because of rights like the freedoms of speech, association, and movement enshrined in our American, not African, Asian, or Latino

Constitution, our American Constitution that individuals with non-Western ancestors and a range of sexual and physical identities can stitch themselves into the American fabric. Our objective, simply put, has been to show that the totality of the American experience is built on an American foundation.

Let me offer a couple of specific examples of what I mean and then conclude by saying why I believe that the teaching of American American history should be privileged in our schools today, and our colleges and universities as well, especially those with many new and first generation Americans. Now don't get me wrong. I will never regret, nor will my uncle I am sure, having learned something about African history. It goes without saying that history of all kinds is enriching and enlightening and is a good thing for people to learn. And of course there is no gainsaying the American appetite for finding roots in the birthplaces of long-ago ancestors. But if we truly want to comprehend the totality of the American experience, the documents of our founding are key.

My first example is drawn from a set of exhibitions that we mounted at the New-York Historical Society in 2005-2007 on the history of slavery in New York. Now slavery in New York was hardly—if ever—mentioned in the histories that most of us were taught. But as our exhibition program showed, for almost three hundred years, slavery insinuated itself into every nook and cranny of our city's life. New Yorkers traded in slaves, distributed slaves, insured slave ships, and owned slaves. Two statistics that our visitors learned from our exhibitions: enslaved people accounted for 20% of colonial New York's

population and they were owned by 40% of the city's households. Still, as we sought to move the needle on our visitors' understanding of slavery as not simply a southern phenomenon, we also showed, in fact we underscored, that the groundwork for slavery's end, which occurred in 1827 in New York and some thirty-eight years later in the United States as a whole, had been laid long before in the political ideologies of freedom embedded in the American Revolution and in the Declaration of Independence and its notion of equality for all people before God. These principles created a powerful platform from which to advocate and justify freedom for American slaves and they formed the basis for some of the most effective rhetoric around human dignity and human rights of all time. "All I ask of the American people," Frederick Douglass declared, "is that they live up to the Constitution, adopt its principles, imbibe its spirit, and enforce its provisions." "When this is done," Douglass said, "the glorious birthright of our common humanity, will become the inheritance of all the inhabitants of this highly favored country." Now if Frederick Douglass, a former slave, could so clearly see the relevance of America's founding documents and its principles of liberty and equality to African Americans in his day, how is it that we in our own time have come to see the teaching of this very same American history as inadequate for conveying the perspective of an important segment of American schoolchildren; to seeing American history and its roots in the Western world as failing to support an understanding of the full totality of the American experience? One could say that George Washington, metaphorically, at

least, meant everything in the world to Frederick Douglass. How is it possible for this not to be true for our newest Americans today?

Perhaps it is axiomatic that those who, like Frederick Douglass, have most held our feet to the fire; who have insisted that we live up, as a nation, to our founding ideals have been people who have had to struggle to secure their American rights. Most likely this is why we have found it so appealing at the New-York Historical Society to teach and to convey to visitors the principles of the American founding through the stories of diverse Americans' pursuits of freedom, equality, and opportunity. Our current exhibition on the history of Chinese in America is a good example of this kind, showing how, even in the worst of times the American Declaration of Independence and the Constitution continued to provide touchstones and remedies for Americans deprived of their rights. Wong Kim Ark, for instance, a man born in San Francisco in 1873 to Chinese immigrant parents, was denied re-entry into the United States under the Chinese Exclusion Act when he returned from an 1895 visit to his grandparents in China. The grounds for barring Wong Kim Ark from re-entry were that, though he had been born in the United States, his parents were Chinese and that he, therefore, was an immigrant. Wong Kim Ark appealed to the United States Supreme Court and his case became a test for interpreting the meaning of American citizenship. He won his case, with his right to U.S. citizenship recognized under the words and provisions of the Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment. That document, the American Constitution, made Wong Kim Ark and every

single other person born in the United States to this very day, no matter the nation of their parents' birth, an American.

Two last points I want to make in support of privileging American American history in our schools today and in our colleges and universities. This past June, just as my husband and I arrived for our annual summer visit with family in London, the story broke of an infiltration by Islamists of some of England's state-funded schools. These schools, it emerged, served a largely Muslim population and this, according to what we read in the newspapers and heard on TV, was reason enough for some parents and school administrators to decide to segregate boys and girls and to inculcate the students at least to some extent with Islamic teaching. The story, or the scandal better put, occasioned a public outcry and a demand on the part of British government officials to promote more actively British values in England's publicly funded schools. And then the question arose: precisely what, beyond possession of a passport, does it mean to be British? Ultimately, the question was found to be unanswerable by many people because England, unlike America, was not founded upon a set of documented ideals giving hard-and-fast evidence of national values—Magna Carta notwithstanding. If only, one opinion writer lamented, Britain could import the American Constitution and its First Amendment, which not only guarantees freedoms of speech and religion but also formally ring-fences the state from religion, effectively forbidding religious partisanship in public schools, it could solve the problem.

What I, together with my husband—an Englishman by birth but for many years now also an American citizen—took away from what we heard and read about in England last June was, above all, a renewed realization that we Americans have a great case to make, to ourselves and to the world, for our American history. But we also reflected, sadly, that we do a poor job of telling our story. This, in fact, was something that quickly became even more apparent to us as we learned, almost on the heels of the school scandal in England, of a debate and then a decision in New York State to allow high school students to swap an exam in hospitality management or carpentry for the current graduation requirement in American history. "It's really broadening the definition of success," one well-regarded New York City high school principal declared. "Our students are global citizens" and the new changes are "raising the standards beyond what's required locally and preparing them for what's required globally." I just wish that that principal had read the comments of the British columnist I cited a few moments ago, yearning for the globalization of those local American values embedded, for example, in the Declaration of Independence and the American Constitution, two documents among many about which his students will no longer learn.

One final point. The case for teaching American American history has always been strong. But in times when many of the world's nations are in internal turmoil, that case is even more powerful. Let me illustrate this point by very briefly describing an exhibition that was proposed by a group of artists and curators in 1940. The group aspired to use the walls and galleries of a museum to remind Americans of their history. They envisaged the museum as a space within which visitors could practice the skills required for active participation as citizens and within which they could see themselves as agents in safeguarding the future of democracy. The exhibition's first gallery was to feature the narrative of American history against a background of music. And then suddenly and jarringly a voice would interrupt, announcing a crisis that faced every man and woman in the room. An image of Abraham Lincoln would be projected onto one wall; an image of Adolph Hitler onto the other.

The exhibition I've just described was proposed to the trustees of the Museum of Modern Art. They turned it down flat, believing that the exhibition was too propagandistic; that making the case for American history against the backdrop of a possible threat posed by anti-democratic ideologies and violent aggression was inappropriate for the walls of a museum. This was a mistake in 1940. And it certainly would be a mistake today. In today's world, when so many nations are finding it difficult, if not impossible, to incorporate different ethnic, religious, and racial groups, the case for reminding Americans of their history in our museums and in our schools and colleges and universities, and for advocating active participation of Americans as citizens and agents in safeguarding the future of democracy could not be stronger—especially as that history conveys our nation's stunning successful recipe, based on the documents of our founding, for an inclusive and tolerant society. Thank you.

* * *

The following are tributes given in honor of Louise Mirrer at the presentation of the Philip Merrill Award on November 7, 2014.

Roger Hertog
Businessman and Philanthropist

Good evening. I'm Roger Hertog. My connection with Louise Mirrer and the Historical Society dates back to 2003 when I joined its board and then became Chairman from 2007 through 2013. Louise joined the Historical Society in June 2004, becoming President and CEO just ten years after the Society had almost declared bankruptcy.

The organization was what we in the investment business would have called a classic depressed value stock. On the one hand, it had a beautiful 100-year old building on Central Park West and a truly irreplaceable collection. On the other hand, the Society had a *de minimis* endowment, very few donors and, if you can believe it, about 12,000 visitors a year. On most days, the Historical Society seemed more like a mausoleum than a museum.

In reviving this great institution, Louise was guided by just a few big ideas. It's not that ideas matter—it's that ideas are the only things that matter. First and foremost, the institution had to stand for excellence in history. This was especially important because American history tragically isn't taught in any depth these days in our public schools.

Someone once said that those who will not confront the past will be unable to understand the present and, maybe even worse, unfit to face the future. Sadly, this is the condition which confronts many of our young people today.

Her second idea was to mount blockbuster exhibitions as a way to teach history that were ground-breaking and, yes, controversial in the best sense of the word. People had to leave the museum saying, "Gee! I want to learn more!"

Think back to a few of her greatest hits, and see if they met her standard. First came Alexander Hamilton: The Man Who Made America, with a giant $10 bill covering the front of the museum. Next was Slavery in New York, which truly broke new ground in proving that slavery wasn't just a sin of the South, that, if anything, it was of equal and greater consequence to New York City!

Then there was The Dramatic New York Story of the Discovery of Insulin. Followed by World War II and New York City, on the significance of the War to the City and the City to the War.

And finally, last year, The Armory Show at 100, which featured an incredible variety of the original artworks borrowed from 30 of the greatest museums in the world, that were first shown on these shores in the great Armory Show of 1913, which introduced modern art to Americans.

The larger message was that great history comes in many flavors and can be understood on many dimensions. Medical history. Art history. Military history. Cultural history. Political history. All shown through the prism of New York City. These exhibitions sparked the imagination of young and old, and dramatically raised the profile of the New-York Historical Society. As the great cultural observer Yogi Berra noted,

"Nobody goes anymore, it's too crowded." Yogi was right; last year close to half a million visitors came through our doors. Up from 12,000 a decade ago.

In this period, the Society has put on 100 other exhibitions, some large, some small, but all of which tried to engage New Yorkers' imagination, the young and old, the rich and poor, to know something more about their birthright, and to take pride in the American story.

This record is a tribute to what a single individual following powerful ideas can accomplish. More evidence of the fact that when you pair the best ideas with the best people, important institutional change can happen faster than anyone thinks is possible.

Louise, we can only dream of what will be accomplished in the next decade. Congratulations.

Robert Caro
Historian and Biographer

I'm Robert Caro. I'm an historian. For those of you who don't live in New York, I live on Central Park West, which is the same street the New-York Historical Society lives on. And I've lived on it most of my life. In fact, when I was a little boy my mother got very sick when I was quite small. And her sister, my Aunt Bea, used to come in every Saturday and take me down Central Park West to either the Museum of Natural History or the New-York Historical Society.

I don't remember much about the New-York Historical Society then, except that there were a lot of paintings of Napoleonic sea battles on the wall. But I remember that for some reason I loved coming there. So I was sorry when the Society entered into what Anne called, quite accurately, some decades of near death. In fact, during those decades, I was several times asked to do a speech for them at some gala. You know, if something isn't well organized, it's not the organizers who are embarrassed, it's the guy who has to stand up there. That's me. And after one embarrassing event, I said I'm not going to do that anymore.

Then came 2008. As I say, I had sort of dropped out of being interested in the New-York Historical Society, so the name Louise Mirrer actually meant nothing to me. But she called me to say she was the president of the Historical Society and that she wanted to give me an award—the Society's History Maker Award. I asked what I had learned to be wary about: "Does that entail giving a speech?" And she said, "Yes, a small talk." And I said I wasn't sure I wanted

to do that, and she invited me to come in and talk about it. During the conversation, my surname, Caro, came into the conversation. I can't remember how. A Jewish writer named Joseph Caro may or may not—I'm not quite sure, I haven't done enough research on it to be sure—have been an ancestor of mine. He lived in Spain in the 15th and 16th Century and was a very famous medieval Spanish Jewish scholar and writer of whom nowadays no one ever seems to have heard. But when I mentioned his name in my conversation with Louise and started to explain who he was, Louise said, "I know who Joseph Caro is" and proceeded to give me a detailed and fascinating little lecture on him. When I asked her how she knew all this, she said, sort of indignantly—well, actually not sort of indignantly—she said, indignantly, "My field is medieval Spanish literature." Then she talked to me about her plans for the Historical Society.

I think because Louise is always unfailingly gracious, that she even asked for my advice about those plans. But I didn't have anything to add to what she was telling me, because I remember thinking—because her little lecture to me was so knowledgeable and so fascinating about my ancestor, and because her vision for the museum, her plans for the museum were just so absolutely right—that I had nothing to add. And I remember thinking, How wonderful. The Historical Society has selected as its president not only an historian but someone who loves history. And someone who understands something very basic about history.

History, you know, is exciting. We know it's exciting if you think about it for a minute because it's exciting when we live through it.

So, if history is to be treated honestly and truthfully, it should be in the reading just as exciting as it was in the living. History is a story, a narrative. And Louise Mirrer's exhibits, the ones that Roger mentioned that have become so famous like New York Divided, Slavery in the Civil War, Slavery in New York, and the lesser known ones that I love because they bring back my boyhood—New York in World War II—share that quality. They are panoramas, not just of historical truth and insight, but also of history as narrative: the story that contains not only truth and knowledge, but excitement as well. And it's not only her exhibits that Louise has brought. The next time that you get a pamphlet laying out what the lectures and the panels are for the next season, just think of the subjects that are being presented and the quality of the people who are presenting them. There's a whole university of knowledge available in that building that has been so wonderfully renovated.

So I grew up on Central Park West, as I said, at 94th Street. Now I live on Central Park West at 69th Street. And just like when I was a little boy, except I go north now instead of south a few blocks, I go to the New-York Historical Society a lot. And it is largely due to her, Louise Mirrer.

So, Louise, before I say this last thing, I want to issue what they call now a disclaimer and say that what I have to say is completely disinterested. Your New-York Historical Society has been kind enough to give me not only that medal in 2008, but, also, for the last book I wrote, its American History Book Prize. You have already made me American History Laureate. So there's nothing else you can do for

me. So you can be sure that what I have to say now comes from the heart. Louise has made the Society's new building a monument to the wonders of history, and also, in a way, it is a monument to her. In this world, in which everything is changing—it seems to me to be changing faster and faster—in which nothing seems to last, in which nothing seems to endure, there are few people who can say that they have created something, have created an institution that will endure, that will last beyond them. Louise, you have created something that will last far beyond you. We should thank her for it. And, you know, now when I go into it, I think history should thank her for it. And also when I go into it—and even when I just walk past it going someplace else—I imagine myself as smiling again, as I smiled when I went into it as a little boy, and I thank her for it.

Benno Schmidt
Chairman, City University of New York Board of Trustees

Good evening, my name is Benno Schmidt. The previous speakers have spoken about Louise's great work at the New-York Historical Society, with which I'm very familiar since I'm a member of that board of trustees. I want to talk about Louise's years at the City University of New York.

In the late 1990s, the City University was in deep trouble, academically and socially and politically, in fact. Louise was a key part of the solution that raised the quality of accomplishment at CUNY, so that once more CUNY has become a national model of urban public education. She led the effort at CUNY to change the way that CUNY did remediation of students who were not prepared for college. She helped move remediation out of our senior colleges, where it was diluting standards and causing a serious dumbing-down of the curriculum and where remediation, in any event, was not a very appropriate task for the faculty of the senior colleges. Louise guided the direction of remediation into our community colleges, where it makes far more sense, and where CUNY is still an open admission institution.

At the same time, Louise led the effort to strengthen our senior colleges, to help them become more competitive in the students they attracted. And she led the effort to hire what has become more than 2,000 additional full-time faculty members at CUNY. Louise was the point person at CUNY in dealing with the State Board of Regents,

who had to approve all these changes. And none of this was easy. The regents were very skeptical about the reforms at CUNY at the end of the 1990s and the early part of the 2000s.

Louise helped raise the standards at CUNY for students. She brought in nationally-normed tests that enabled CUNY to judge where their students were vis-à-vis students across the country in other colleges. Louise also did the planning for CUNY's Macaulay Honors College. The Macaulay Honors College is a tremendous success. It now admits students of an Ivy League quality into CUNY. It has thousands and thousands of applicants. And the students at the Honors College have won Rhodes Scholarships, Goldwater and Marshall Scholarships, and other prizes.

Louise also played an essential role in what we call CUNY's Decade of the Sciences, which is our effort from 2005 to 2015 to invest over two billion dollars in science research facilities, new faculty, new laboratory equipment, and so on. She led the planning for the Decade of the Sciences, and we've hired hundreds of new science faculty who have come into New York and who are state-of-the-art researchers and teachers. Finally, Louise took the leadership role in creating our new Graduate School of Journalism, which is now the number-one-ranked school of journalism in the northeast. It has even surpassed Columbia in the quality in its admissions.

In short, Louise was part of the leadership that took a university, which as Bob Caro said about the New-York Historical Society, a university that was stumbling along in a very bad way, and turned it into a model of public, urban higher education for New York. We now have over 500,000 students at CUNY. We educate more immigrants than any university, more poor people. Most of our students would not be in college if it weren't for CUNY, and because they are at CUNY, they are moving on to lives of productivity and success and highly-constructive social contributions. So, even before she got to the Historical Society, Louise had a tremendous record of success in helping to rescue one of the most important academic institutions in our country. And CUNY is vastly stronger to this day because of her efforts.

Louise Mirrer

Distinguished among scholars and teachers for her visionary insistence on preserving America's memory, Dr. Louise Mirrer is President and CEO of the New-York Historical Society. The Society, now in its 210th year, has flourished under her leadership, evident in the major renovation of its landmark building on Central Park West, with new permanent installation galleries and a children's history museum. Under her direction, the Society has offered a remarkable array of exhibits, lectures, debates, and family programs. Dr. Mirrer also inaugurated the "Saturday Academy," an American history enhancement program for high-school students, and a new Graduate Institute on Constitutional History.

Prior to joining the New-York Historical Society in 2004, Dr. Mirrer was Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the City University of New York. At CUNY, she spearheaded the U.S. History Initiative, which strengthened the university's American history program through faculty development, online course materials, and increased enrollment in American history courses.

In recent years, Dr. Mirrer has been honored with the Woman of Distinction Medal, League of Women Voters, 2007; Dean's Medal, CUNY Honors College, 2005; Education and Student Advocacy Award, Hostos Community College, 2005; President's Medal, CUNY Graduate Center, 2004; Leadership Award, Asian-American Research Institution, 2003; and *New York Post's* "50 Most Influential Women in New York," 2003, among others. In 2007, she was made an Honorary Fellow of Wolfson College, Cambridge.

Dr. Mirrer holds a double Ph.D. in Spanish and Humanities and an M.A. in Spanish from Stanford University. Her scholarly research focuses on how the creation of historical narratives helps to shape and define social institutions.

The Philip Merrill Award for Outstanding Contributions to Liberal Arts Education

ACTA is most pleased to present the tenth annual Philip Merrill Award for Outstanding Contributions to Liberal Arts Education. The awarding of this prize, made with the advice of a distinguished selection committee, advances ACTA's long-term goal to promote and encourage a strong liberal arts education.

The Merrill Award offers a unique tribute to those dedicated to the transmission of the great ideas and central values of our civilization and is presented to inspire others and provide public acknowledgment of the value of their endeavors. Past recipients of the award are Robert P. George, the McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence and founder and director of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions at Princeton University (2005); Harvey C. Mansfield, William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of Government at Harvard University (2006); Gertrude Himmelfarb, Professor Emeritus of History at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York (2007); Donald Kagan, Sterling Professor of Classics and History at Yale University (2008); Robert "KC" Johnson, Professor of History at Brooklyn College and The Graduate Center of the City University of New York (2009); Benno C. Schmidt, Jr., Chairman, Board of Trustees of the City University of New York (2010); historian David McCullough (2011); Thomas M. Rollins, founder of The Teaching Company (2012); and Gary Gallagher, the John L. Nau III Professor in the History of the American Civil War at the University of Virginia (2013).

The prize is named in honor of Philip Merrill, who served as a trustee of Cornell University, the University of Maryland Foundation, the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, the Aspen Institute, and the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Mr. Merrill was also a founding member of ACTA's National Council.

American Council of Trustees and Alumni
1726 M Street, NW, Suite 802 • Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 1-888-ALUMNI-8 or 202-467-6787 • Fax: 202-467-6784
Email: info@goacta.org • Website: GoACTA.org