



Contact:
Daniel Burnett
Press Secretary
(202) 467-0376
DBurnett@goacta.org

Thomas M. Rollins, founder of The Teaching Company, selected as 2012 recipient of Philip Merrill Award for Outstanding Contributions to Liberal Arts Education

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The American Council of Trustees and Alumni announced today the selection of Thomas M. Rollins, founder of The Teaching Company, as the recipient of the 2012 Philip Merrill Award for Outstanding Contributions to Liberal Arts Education.

The award honors individuals who advance liberal arts education, core curricula, and the teaching of Western civilization and American history.

Rollins, a nationally-recognized debater, graduated from Georgetown University with a major in philosophy, and then entered Harvard Law School where he became an editor of the Harvard Law Review. After practicing law for a few years, and serving as Chief Counsel for the U.S. Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, Rollins went in a new direction, starting The Teaching Company.

As a Harvard Law School student, Rollins had an unforgettable experience that opened his eyes to the extraordinary power of a great lecturer captured on tape. Rollins was facing an important exam in the Federal Rules of Evidence but was not well prepared. He managed to obtain videotapes of 10 one-hour lectures by a noted authority on the subject, Professor Irving Younger.



"I dreaded what seemed certain to be boring," Rollins said. "I thought that few subjects could be as dull as the Federal Rules of Evidence. But I had no other way out."

Rollins planted himself in front of the TV and played all 10 hours nearly non-stop. The lectures, he said, "were outrageously insightful, funny, and thorough." Watching Professor Younger's lectures was one of Rollins' best experiences as a student. And he never forgot the unique power of recorded lectures by a great teacher.

With over 10 million courses sold, The Teaching Company has been described by the *New York Times* as "a force in continuing education" and by the *Wall Street Journal* as "the colossus of its field." From ancient literature to medieval theology, enlightenment philosophy to modern corporate and economic theory, The Teaching Company has for over 20 years been in the

business of offering video and audio lectures on the foundational disciplines that have shaped civilization. The Company's founder ignited the public's passion for lifelong learning by recruiting the most dynamic professors from colleges and universities across the country and making their lectures available to schools and all who are interested in continuing their education.

"Tom Rollins' success in bringing the finest instruction to so many thousands of learners throughout the world is one of the most significant contributions to the liberal arts in our time," said Anne D. Neal, president of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, the higher education organization that sponsors the award. "Mr. Rollins understood long before anyone else that, in a democratic society, excellent teaching and a rich liberal arts education should not be the privilege of the few, but rather the birthright of all."

The award is named in honor of Philip Merrill, a distinguished public servant, publisher, businessman, and philanthropist who served as a trustee of Cornell University, the University of Maryland College Park Foundation, the Aspen Institute, the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, and the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Throughout his career, Merrill was an outspoken proponent of academic excellence and an articulate spokesman for the importance of historical literacy in a free society. Merrill was also a charter member of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni's national council.

Previous winners of the award include acclaimed historian and author David McCullough (2011) and Benno Schmidt (2010), chairman of the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York.

The award will be presented Nov. 9 at the Anderson House of The Society of Cincinnati.

Friday, Nov. 9, 2012

Gala Dinner presenting the Eighth Annual Philip Merrill Award for Outstanding Contributions to Liberal Arts Education

Anderson House
The Society of the Cincinnati
2118 Massachusetts Avenue
Washington, DC 20008

6:00pm Tour of Anderson House
6:30pm Cocktails and Dinner

Join us as we present the eighth annual Philip Merrill Award to Thomas M. Rollins, founder of The Teaching Company, at the historic Anderson House, headquarters of The Society of the Cincinnati. Founded in 1873 to preserve the memory of the American Revolution, The Society is the nation's oldest patriotic organization. For registration information, go to www.goacta.org.