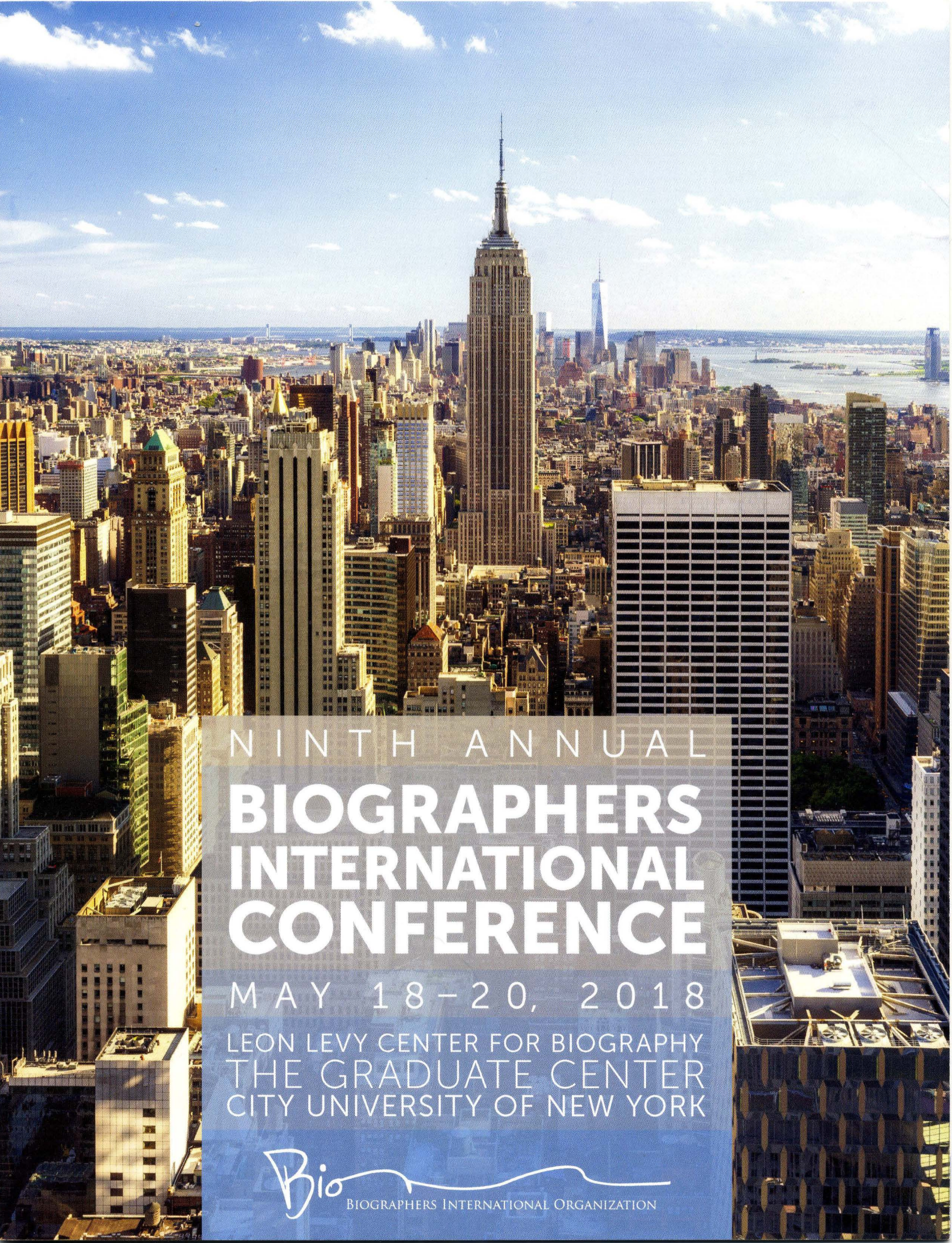
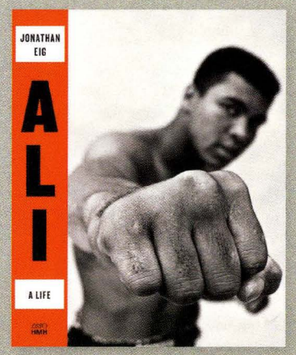
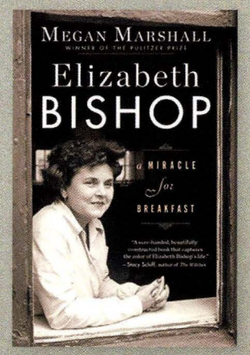

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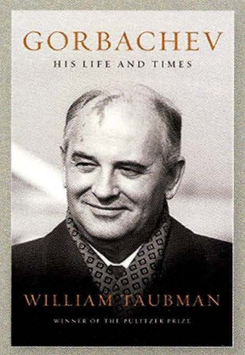
The 2018 Plutarch Award

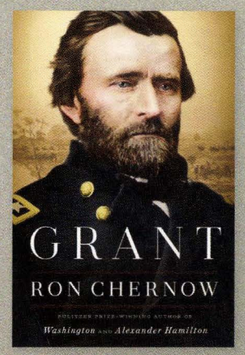
Biographers International Organization is proud to present the Plutarch Award for the best biography of 2017, as chosen by you.

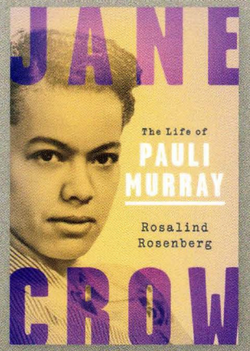
Congratulations to the ten nominees for the Best Biography of 2017:



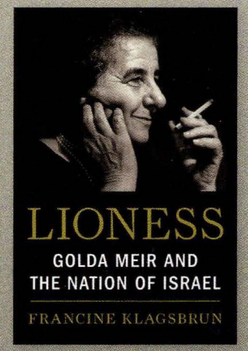


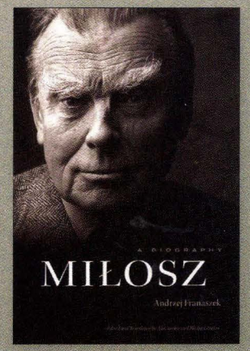


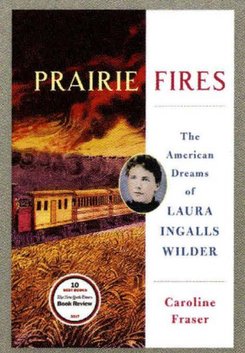


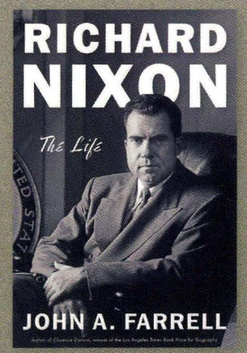




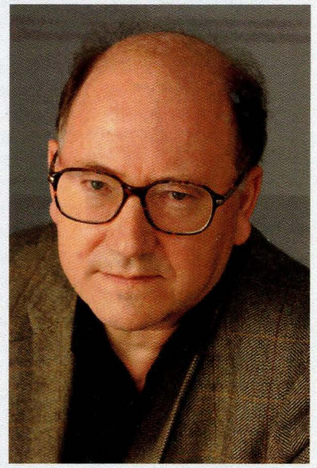








The 2018 BIO Award Recipient:
Richard Holmes



Richard Holmes is the author of the prize-winning and best-selling *The Age of Wonder,* which was shortlisted for the Samuel Johnson Prize and won the Royal Society Prize for Science Books and the National Book Critics Circle Award for Nonfiction. He has written many other books, including *Falling Upwards,* an uplifting account of the pioneering generation of balloon aeronauts, and the classic *Footsteps*. Its companion volume, *Sidetracks*, and *This Long Pursuit* (published in 2017) complete this trilogy.

Holmes's first biography, *Shelley: The Pursuit,* won the Somerset Maugham Prize; *Coleridge: Early Visions* won the 1989 Whitbread Book of the Year Award; *Coleridge: Darker Reflections* won the Duff Cooper and Heinemann Awards; *Dr. Johnson & Mr. Savage* won the James Tait Black Prize.

Holmes holds honorary doctorates from the universities of East Anglia, East London, and Kingston. He was professor of biographical studies at the University of East Anglia from 2001 to 2007. An Honorary Fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge, a Fellow of the British Academy, he was awarded the OBE (Order of the British Empire) in 1992. He lives in London and Norfolk with the novelist Rose Tremain.

On our cover: Midtown Manhattan, looking south. Richard Holmes photo by Stuart Clarke.

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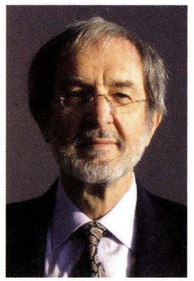
Program Editor
Greg Daugherty

Art Direction
Fearless Future

Breakfast Plenary Session

Edmund Morris and Sylvia Jukes Morris Explain Why "Dead Is Easier"

8:15–9:15AM *LOCATION:* CONCOURSE/ PROSHANSKY AUDITORIUM



Born and educated in Kenya, ***Edmund Morris*** emigrated to the United States in 1968. He now lives with his wife and fellow biographer, Sylvia Jukes Morris, in Kent, Connecticut.

Morris is the author of *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award in 1980. In 1985, he was appointed President Ronald Reagan's biographer. *Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan*, published in 1999, caused an international stir with its stylistic innovations, such as the use of multiple narrative voices and running metaphor. "*Dutch* never fails to convey the power and mystery of its subject," remarked the *New York Times Book Review*.

In the fall of 2001, Morris published *Theodore Rex*, the second volume of his life of the 26th president. It won the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize for biography and currently has three-quarters of a million copies in print. "As a literary work on Theodore Roosevelt, it is unlikely ever to be surpassed," the *Times Literary Supplement* declared. His subsequent book, *Beethoven: The Universal Composer,* was hailed by the *Washington Post* as a "deft, deeply satisfying" musical biography, distinguished by "vast reserves of feeling, fancy and intelligence."

In November 2010, a chorus of critical praise greeted the publication of *Colonel Roosevelt*, the final volume of Morris's Roosevelt trilogy. He is now writing a life of Thomas Edison.



Sylvia Jukes Morris was born and educated in England, where she taught history and English literature before emigrating to America.

Her first book, *Edith Kermit Roosevelt: Portrait of a First Lady*, was published in 1980 to nationwide critical acclaim. The *Christian Science Monitor* said it represented "craftsmanship of the highest order," and R.W.B. Lewis, in a front-page review in the *Washington Post Book World*, called it "an endlessly engrossing book, at once of historical and human importance."

In 1997, Sylvia Morris published the first installment of a two-volume biography, *Rage for Fame: The Ascent of Clare Boothe Luce*. Gore Vidal described it in the *New Yorker* as "a model biography...of the sort that only real writers can write." Karen Heller wrote in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, "In this marvelous volume, Sylvia Jukes Morris has not just amassed information, but distilled it. The result is a portrait that is powerful and resonant." A sequel, *Price of Fame: The Honorable Clare Boothe Luce*, came out in 2015.

"Both books are models of the biographer's art—meticulously researched, sophisticated, fair-minded and compulsively readable," Edward Kosner wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*. Columbia/Sony Pictures is currently adapting the volumes into a miniseries, with Gwyneth Paltrow slated to star in the title role.



Edmund Morris photo by Leslie Lillien Levy.

Panels—Concourse Level of the Graduate Center

ISSUES

Writing About the Vietnam War

9:30–10:30AM

Are the rules different when writing about America's most controversial overseas war? A panel of historians and biographers who have written extensively about the Vietnam War will discuss the challenges and opportunities in researching, writing, and marketing biographies of politicians, military men and women, and others whose lives were shaped by their participation in the war. Veteran biographers and historians detail and compare research techniques, use of interviews and oral histories, managing your time in the archives, tracking notes, and other practical aspects of biography work.

Moderator

Marc Leepson, historian and journalist, is the author of nine books, including three biographies: *Ballad of the Green Beret: The Life and Wars of Staff Sgt. Barry Sadler*; *What So Proudly We Hailed: Francis Scott Key, A Life*; and *Lafayette: Idealist General*. He is the long-time senior writer, arts editor, and columnist for the *VVA Veteran*, the magazine published by Vietnam Veterans of America. A member of BIO's Board of Directors, and the organization's treasurer, he was drafted into the Army and served a 1967-68 tour of duty in the Vietnam War. He was a staff writer at *Congressional Quarterly* in Washington from 1974 to 1986.

Panelists

Kai Bird is the executive director and Distinguished Lecturer of CUNY Graduate Center's Leon Levy Center for Biography. He co-authored with Martin J. Sherwin the Pulitzer Prize-winning biography *American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer*. He has also written biographies of John J. McCloy and McGeorge Bundy—and a memoir, *Crossing Mandelbaum Gate: Coming of Age Between the Arabs and Israelis*. His most recent book is *The Good Spy: The Life and Death of Robert Ames*, and he is currently working on a biography of President Jimmy Carter.

Max Boot, a military historian and foreign-policy analyst, is one of the world's leading authorities on armed conflict. The Jeane J. Kirkpatrick senior fellow in national security studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, his latest book is *The Road Not Taken: Edward Lansdale and the American Tragedy in Vietnam*. His other books include *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* and *Invisible Armies: The Epic History of Guerrilla Warfare From Ancient Times to the Present*. A columnist for the *Washington Post* and a regular contributor to many other publications, he has advised military commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan. Born in Moscow, he grew up in Los Angeles and lives in New York City.

Heath Hardage Lee holds a B.A. with honors in history from Davidson College and an M.A. in French language and literature from the University of Virginia. As the 2017 Robert J. Dole Curatorial Fellow, Lee created a traveling exhibition, *The League of Wives: Vietnam POW MIA Advocates & Allies,* for the Dole Institute of Politics. Her first biography, *Winnie Davis: Daughter of the Lost Cause*, won the 2015 Colonial Dames of America Book Award and a gold medal at the 2015 Independent Publisher Book Awards. Lee is currently working on *The League of Wives: A True Story of Survival and Rescue From the Vietnam Homefront* (St. Martin's Press, 2019).

BASICS

What Four Top Editors Look for in a Book Proposal

9:30–10:30AM

Four senior editors from Doubleday, W. W. Norton, St. Martin's Press, and Penguin Random House explore how the current trends in the publishing world affect them and their colleagues. Giving us personal examples, they will share the most common red flags and the most enticing elements in book proposals they have reviewed. They will also talk about what a book needs to obtain the approval of their marketing departments.

Moderator

Will Swift, Ph.D., writes on American leaders and British royalty. He is the author of *The Roosevelts and the Royals, The Kennedys Amidst the Gathering Storm,* and *Pat and Dick: The Nixons, A Portrait of a Marriage.* Swift has been a featured speaker at the Richard Nixon, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and John F. Kennedy Libraries, and he has appeared on the television programs *Morning Joe, Fox News*, and *The Cycle*. He is a co-founder of Biographers International Organization, its 2016–2018 president, the co-founder of the BIO mentorship program, and the founder of the Editorial Excellence Award.

Panelists

Amy Cherry is vice president and senior editor at the employee-owned W. W. Norton. The majority of her books are in biography and history and the intersection between them, including works whose less-famous subjects embody their era's history. Among the biographies she has acquired and edited are Martha Hodes's *The Sea Captain's Wife*, Lawrence Jackson's *Chester B. Himes,* Louise Knight's *Jane Addams,* Liel Leibovitz's *A Broken Hallelujah,* Donna Lucey's *Sargent's Women*, Deborah Lutz's *Bronte's Cabinet*, John Matteson's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Eden's Outcasts,* William McKeen's *Outlaw Journalist*, Susan Mizruchi's *Brando's Smile,* Barbara Perry's *Rose Kennedy,* and Anne Boyd Rioux's *Constance Fenimore Woolson.*

Tim Duggan is the publisher of Tim Duggan Books, an imprint of Crown at Penguin Random House. His books

include winners of the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Critics Circle Award, and multiple finalists for the National Book Award. He is a fellow at the New York Institute for the Humanities at NYU, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and is on the advisory board of the London Book Fair and Biographers International Organization.

Michael Flamini is an executive editor of nonfiction at St. Martin's Press. His list of published biographies includes *Beatrix Potter: A Life in Nature* by Linda Lear, *The Talented Miss Highsmith: The Secret Life and Serious Art of Patricia Highsmith* by Joan Schenkar, *Maggie Smith: A Biography* by Michael Coveny, and *Joan of Arc: Her Story* by Regine Pernoud. Upcoming titles include biographies of Garrison Keillor, Garry Trudeau, and a group biography of the wives of Vietnam POWs by Heath Lee. He is a faculty member at NYU's School of Continuing and Professional Studies.

Kristine Puopolo acquires and edits serious nonfiction, biography, and memoir for Doubleday. Her list of authors includes journalists Anne Applebaum, Peter Baker, Joby Warrick, David Hoffman, Dana Goldstein, Eugene Robinson, Kim Barker, and Megan K. Stack, scientists Lera Boroditsky and Richard Prum, historians David Oshinsky, Tom Segev, and H. W. Brands, and others. Their books have won honors including the Pulitzer Prize (Joby Warrick's *Black Flags: The Rise of Isis*, Anne Applebaum's *Gulag*, and David Hoffman's *The Dead Hand*) and the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize in biography (John Farrell's *Clarence Darrow*), and have been finalists for the National Book Award (Anne Applebaum's *Iron Curtain* and Megan K. Stack's *Every Man in This Village Is a Liar*), the PEN America prize for biography (John Farrell's *Richard Nixon: The Life*), and the National Book Critics Circle Award in biography (Tom Segev's *Simon Wiesenthal*).

CRAFT

Writing Multiple Lives

9:30–10:30AM

Whether to illuminate the lives of parallel but unconnected people, or to examine multiple individuals who are deeply connected, "group biography" is a loosely defined vehicle for portraying the life story of more than one person. Featuring authors who have successfully employed group biography in diverse formats, this panel explores the special challenges and opportunities—from the initial decision to organizational techniques—for biographers who interweave multiple lives.

Moderator

Linda Leavell's *Holding On Upside Down: The Life and Work of Marianne Moore* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013) was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award and won the Plutarch Award, the Modernist Studies Association book award, and the PEN/Bograd Weld award for biography. She is also the author of *Marianne Moore and the Visual Arts: Prismatic Color* (LSU Press, 1995), an award-winning book of literary criticism. For twenty-four years she was a professor of American literature at Oklahoma State University. Her current project, under contract with FSG, is a group biography of the Stieglitz circle. She lives in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Panelists

Lisa Cohen's *All We Know: Three Lives* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012) was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle, PEN/Bograd Weld, Lambda Literary, and BIO Plutarch awards, as well as a *New York Times* Notable Book and Editors' Choice. Her writing has also appeared in many anthologies and journals, including *Women in Clothes*, *Queer 13*, *BOMB*, *newyorker.com*, the *Paris Review*, *Vogue*, the *New York Times*, the *Vassar Review*, *Ploughshares*, and *Bookforum*. She teaches at Wesleyan University.

Carla Kaplan, Davis Distinguished Professor of American Literature at Northeastern University and chair of the *Signs* editorial board, writes on African-American and women's literature and culture. Her trade books include the award-winning *Zora Neale Hurston: A Life in Letters* and *Miss Anne in Harlem: The White Women of the Black Renaissance* (both *New York Times* Notable Books) and the forthcoming *Something to Offend Everyone: The Life and Times of Jessica Mitford*. Kaplan has also edited and authored numerous scholarly books and editions and received fellowships from the NEH Public Scholar Program, Cullman Center, DuBois Institute, Ransom and Beinecke libraries, and the Guggenheim Foundation.

Justin Spring is the author of three full-length biographies, as well as various monographs and museum publications. He has received many honors for his work as a biographer, an art historian, and a curator. *Secret Historian: The Life and Times of Samuel Steward, Professor, Tattoo Artist, and Sexual Renegade* (FSG) was a 2010 National Book Award Finalist, a Stonewall Honor Book of the American Library Association, the recipient of the Randy Shilts Prize, the Lambda Literary Award, and the Geoff Mains Prize, and was runner-up for the 2011 PEN prize for biography. His latest book, *The Gourmands' Way* (FSG), has been named a Best Book of 2017 by *Publishers Weekly*. He has also received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and Leon Levy Biography Center.

BIZ

Reviewing Biography, or What Makes the Critical Cut and Why?

9:30–10:30AM

Four eminent critic-editors (authors all) dive deep into how biographies are chosen (and not chosen) for review. What really stands out? What are the trends? Where should biographers look for coverage, and what should they expect, in our rapidly changing media landscape? How best can they help their cause? What are the biographies that are not being written and should be? These and other topics will be discussed, followed by a Q&A.

Moderator

Gayle Feldman is under contract to Random House for a biography of its co-founder Bennett Cerf, for which she received an NEH Public Scholar Fellowship, and is also New York correspondent for the *Bookseller*. She has published a cancer memoir and a monograph on prize-winning and best-selling books, was a senior editor at *Publishers Weekly* and publishing stringer for the business section of the *New York Times*, has written for many magazines and newspapers, and started as a book editor in London. She was a founding board member of BIO and architect of the Hazel Rowley Prize.

Panelists

Marie Arana was born in Peru and came to the U.S. at the age of nine. Her memoir, *American Chica*, was a finalist for the National Book Award in 2001. *Bolivar: American Liberator*, won the *Los Angeles Times* biography prize in 2014. She has published two novels and a book of essays, *The Writing Life*. Arana began her career in book publishing, where she held executive positions. For many years, she was editor-in-chief of the *Washington Post's Book World*. She currently is director of the National Book Festival, chair of the Cultures of the South at the Library of Congress, writer-at-large for the *Washington Post*, and senior adviser to the Librarian of Congress.

Ruth Franklin, a former editor at the *New Republic*, is author of two books, *A Thousand Darknesses: Lies and Truth in Holocaust Fiction* (2011) and *Shirley Jackson: A Rather Haunted Life*. Her biography of Jackson won the 2016 National Book Critics Circle, Edgar, Plutarch, and other awards. Franklin has received Guggenheim, Cullman Center, and Leon Levy Biography fellowships in support of her work. She has won the Roger Shattuck Prize for criticism. Her reviews and writing have appeared in the *New Yorker*, the *New York Review of Books*, the *New York Times Book Review*, and other publications.



James Marcus is the former editor of *Harper's Magazine* and the author of *Amazonia: Five Years at the Epicenter of the Dot-Com Juggernaut* as well as seven translations from the Italian, the most recent being Giacomo Casanova's *The Duel*. His work has appeared in *Harper's*, the *Nation*, the *Atlantic*, *Story Quarterly*, the *Paris Review*, *Raritan*, and *Best American Essays*. His next book, *Glad to the Brink of Fear: A Portrait of Emerson in Thirteen Installments*, will be published in 2019. He is also compiling a personal selection from Emerson's journals, which will be published simultaneously by Penguin Classics.

Mark Rotella has been a senior editor at *Publishers Weekly* for many years, supervising biography and memoir reviews among other areas. He is the author of two books, *Stolen Figs and Other Adventures in Calabria* (2004), a memoir and travelogue on the Italian region from which his grandparents emigrated; and *Amore: The Story of Italian-American Song* (2010), a cultural history of forty songs during the 1940s and '50s and the singers—from Sinatra and Bennett to Bobby Darin—who performed them. He is on the board of the National Book Critics Circle.

ISSUES

(Dis)Regarding Biography

10:45–11:45AM

Why the long-standing prejudice against biography in the university, and is that changing now that many splendid commercial biographers are also academics? What differences are there between biographical works by journalists and generalists—Evan Thomas, David McCullough, whomever—and by academics like our panelists? What can we learn from each other?

Moderator

John A. Farrell is the author of *Richard Nixon: The Life*, a finalist for the 2018 Pulitzer Prize, the 2017 PEN/Bograd Weld and Plutarch awards for biography, and a long list nominee for the Carnegie prize in biography. His biography of Speaker Tip O'Neill won the Hardeman prize for the best book on Congress, and *Clarence Darrow: Attorney for the Damned*, was awarded the *Los Angeles Times* prize for the best biography of 2012. He is a graduate of the University of Virginia and a former White House correspondent for the *Boston Globe*, where he also worked on the Spotlight team. He is at work on a biography of Senator Edward Kennedy.

Panelists

Nell Irvin Painter is the award-winning author of the biography of Sojourner Truth, as well as *Southern History Across the Color Line, Creating Black Americans, The History of White People,* and *Standing at Armageddon*. She is currently the Edwards Professor of American History, Emerita, at Princeton University.

David O. Stewart is the best-selling author of four award-winning works of history, including *The Summer of 1787: The Men Who Invented the Constitution* and *Madison's Gift: Five Partnerships That Built America*. He also has published three historical mysteries; *The Lincoln Deception* was named the best historical novel of 2013 by *Bloomberg View*. A lawyer for 25 years, Stewart was law clerk to Justice Lewis F. Powell, Jr., of the U.S. Supreme Court and then focused on constitutional disputes and white-collar criminal defense. Stewart, a veteran BIO member, is also the president of the *Washington Independent Review of Books*, an online literary journal in Washington, D.C., and so knows the literary world in and out. He is currently working on a political biography of George Washington.

William Taubman is the Bertrand Snell Professor of Political Science Emeritus at Amherst College and the author of *Gorbachev: His Life and Times*. His biography *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* won the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award.

BASICS

Telling Life Stories: What Biographers Can Learn From Narrative Nonfiction

10:45–11:45AM

This panel will consider how biographers can use the elements of narrative nonfiction to tell (and sell) engaging life stories. "Narrative nonfiction" basically means telling true stories that read like novels. The panelists will discuss how they developed their life stories, focusing on narrative elements such as plot, scene, voice, imagery, and theme. This panel is for everyone wondering how to tell their story, how to attract an agent or editor to their story, or how to make their story impossible to put down.

Moderator

Anne Boyd Rioux is professor of English at the University of New Orleans and the author of *Constance Fenimore Woolson: Portrait of a Lady Novelist* (Norton), chosen as one of the ten best books of 2016 by the *Chicago Tribune* and reviewed on the cover of the *New York Times Book Review*. Her most recent book is *Meg, Jo, Beth, Amy: The Story of Little Women and Why It Still Matters* (Norton), forthcoming this summer. She is a member of BIO's Board of Directors.

Panelists

Alan Pell Crawford is the author of *How Not to Get Rich: The Financial Misadventures of Mark Twain* and *Twilight at Monticello: The Last Years of Thomas Jefferson*, among other books. His essays and reviews have been published in the *New York Times,* the *Washington Post,* the *Nation, National Review,* the *Weekly Standard*, and many others. He has written regularly for the *Wall Street Journal* for 20 years. He has also been a congressional press secretary and U. S. Senate speechwriter. He lives in Richmond, Virginia.

John Matteson is Distinguished Professor of English at John Jay College, CUNY. His first book, *Eden's Outcasts: The Story of Louisa May Alcott and Her Father,* received the 2008 Pulitzer Prize for Biography. His second book, *The Lives of Margaret Fuller,* was awarded the Ann M. Sperber Prize

The 2018 William B. Crawley Lecture Series

Great Lives

Biographical Approaches to History and Culture

Since 2004, the University of Mary Washington has presented a public lecture series/academic course titled "Great Lives: Biographical Approaches to History and Culture." During that time, it has become a major cultural and educational attraction in the region of Virginia between Richmond and Washington, D.C.

Offered annually, Great Lives brings to campus between 15 and 20 major biographers who speak to students enrolled in the course as well as hundreds of area residents who attend the lectures free of charge. Total attendance for the recently completed spring series exceeded 10,000.

Although the University of Mary Washington is a public institution, the Great Lives program is largely supported by private funds. Beginning in 2004 with a grant from a generous benefactor, funds have been substantially augmented each year by local patrons who are devoted to the program.

The innovative combination of an academic course and a public lecture series is unusual, if not unique, in the country. The fact that it is not just a public series, but also an academic course, adds a significant dimension to the program. Students are instructed on the evolution of the genre, then introduced to some of its most prominent contemporary practitioners. The result is an extraordinary opportunity for interaction among biographers, students, faculty, and the general public.

BIO is grateful for the support and enthusiasm of William Crawley, director of Great Lives, and Brian Jay Jones, associate director.

Bio Biographers International Organization

University of Mary Washington

for Best Biography of a Journalist. He is the editor of *The Annotated Little Women*, published in 2015. He is currently writing a book on the Battle of Fredericksburg and its influence on American thought and culture.

Laurie Gwen Shapiro is a native of New York City's Lower East Side. She has most recently written articles for the *New Yorker, New York Magazine,* the *Daily Beast, Slate, Aeon, Los Angeles Review of Books,* and the *Forward*. Shapiro is also a documentary filmmaker who won an Independent Spirit Award for directing IFC's *Keep the River on Your Right: A Modern Cannibal Tale* and an Emmy nomination for producing (and "story by" credit) HBO's *Finishing Heaven*. Shapiro's first nonfiction book, *The Stowaway: A Young Man's Extraordinary Adventure to Antarctica*, was published by Simon & Schuster in January 2018 and was an Indie Next Pick.

ISSUES

Resurrecting Forgotten Figures

10:45–11:45AM

This panel explores the rewards and challenges biographers face when attempting to resurrect the lives of men and women who may have been overlooked or marginalized—sometimes deliberately. Thanks to the success of books like *Hidden Figures* and *Code Girls*, biographies that shed light on forgotten or little-known figures are now popular in the nonfiction/history market. Whether tackling issues like escaping slavery—when your owner is this country's first presidential couple, George and Martha Washington; serving as a controversial minister in the Black Panther Party of the 1960s; or working as a visionary civil rights movement pioneer, the authors on this panel will offer guidance on how to successfully research and write about forgotten lives.

Moderator

Pamela Newkirk, Ph.D., is a multifaceted scholar, author, and award-winning journalist. Her latest book, *Spectacle: The Astonishing Life of Ota Benga* (HarperCollins)—a NAACP Image Award and Zora Neale Hurston/Richard Wright Foundation Legacy Award winner and a top pick by NPR and other media outlets—illuminates how racial mythology distorted the historical accounts about a young African exhibited in the Bronx Zoo monkey house in 1906. Newkirk's first book, *Within the Veil: Black Journalists, White Media* (NYU Press), examines how race influences news coverage. Her insightful articles on race, media, and African-American culture have appeared in major newspapers nationwide.

Panelists

Erica Armstrong Dunbar, Ph.D., is the Charles and Mary Beard Professor of History at Rutgers University. Her first book, *A Fragile Freedom: African American Women and Emancipation in the Antebellum City*, was published by Yale University Press in 2008. Her recent book, *Never Caught: The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge* (37Ink/Atria/Simon & Schuster) was recently named as a finalist for the National Book Award in nonfiction. Dunbar's op-eds and commentaries in outlets such as the *New York Times,* the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and CNN, and her appearances in several PBS documentaries, place her expertise in high demand.

Justin Gifford, Ph.D., is an associate professor of English at the University of Nevada, Reno, where he teaches African-American literature. His first book, *Pimping Fictions: African American Crime Literature and the Untold Story of Black Pulp Publishing*, is the first book on black street literature and was a finalist for the Edgar Allan Poe Award. His second book, *Street Poison: The Biography of Iceberg Slim*, was one of Amazon.com's Top 100 Books of the Year in 2015. He is a fellow at the Leon Levy Center, where he is writing a book on Black Panther Party leader Eldridge Cleaver.

Diane Kiesel is a judge on the Supreme Court of the State of New York. Prior to her legal career, Kiesel was a journalist in Washington, D.C., where she was the congressional and Supreme Court correspondent for the San Diego *Union* and *Evening Tribune*. She is the author of two textbooks on domestic violence, the latest being *Domestic Violence: Law, Policy, and Practice,* 2nd Ed., and the biography *She Can Bring Us Home: Dr. Dorothy Boulding Ferebee: Civil Rights Pioneer*. Kiesel is the winner of the Worth Bingham Award, the Richard Slatten Prize for Virginia Biography, and the Colonial Dames of America National Book Award.

BIZ

Biography: The Ultimate Interdisciplinary Approach

10:45–11:45AM

We are living in the Golden Age of Biography. The genre's appeal to readers, from all walks of life, has granted it a more serious look by academics in higher education. Liberal-arts professors are dedicating whole semesters to the study of biography. Doctoral candidates are writing biographical dissertations. And those outside of the humanities are beginning to see the value of infusing their STEM courses with biography in order to humanize the subject matter. The genre is transcending traditional scholarly views like never before. But how do biographers themselves become a part of the conversation? How do they gain the attention of academics and get their work listed on course syllabi? Those questions, and much more, will be addressed by this group of educators. (This panel is part of BIO's exchange program with the Community College Humanities Association.)

Moderator

Billy Tooma, D.Litt., soon-to-be tenured assistant professor of English at Essex County College, is the award-nominated filmmaker of the documentaries *Clarence Chamberlin: Fly First & Fight Afterward* (2011), *Poetry of Witness* (2015), and *The Black Eagle of Harlem* (2017). He holds various degrees in literature and writing from

Round-Table Discussions

1:45–2:45 PM

Round tables offer a chance to network with biographers working in your field, share resources, and solve common problems. Conference participants are invited to register for one of the following topical round tables, with leaders present at each table to facilitate discussion.

- The Power of Celebrity Bios, led by Beverly Gray and Vanda Krefft
- Political Biographies, led by Irv Gellman
- First-time Biographers, led by Cathy Curtis
- Women's Lives, led by Sarah Kilbourne and Heath Hardage Lee
- Writing for Young Readers, led by Ray Shepard
- Literary Biography, led by Anne Boyd Rioux
- Biography and Narrative Nonfiction, led by Jonathan Eig and Dean King
- Finding an Agent, led by Roger S. Williams

William Paterson University and Drew University. As a deputy director of the Community College Humanities Association and trustee on the Board of the New Jersey College English Association, he makes it a point to advocate the value of the liberal arts in higher education.

Panelists

Tony Calandrillo, Doctor of Letters candidate at Drew University, focuses his research on the intersection of politics and sports. He is working on a dissertation that is concerned with baseball as "soft power" diplomacy during the beginnings of American expansion in the late 19th century, illustrating the place of Albert Spalding as an agent of foreign policy. His next project is slated to be the biography of Richard L. "Dixie" Walker, United States ambassador to the Republic of Korea (1981-1986).

Rebecca L. Williams, assistant professor of English at Essex County College, teaches African-American literature, women's literature, and college composition II. She currently serves as the president of the Community College Humanities Association's Eastern Division as well as regularly chairing her college's annual spring humanities conference. Her favorite authors include Toni Morrison, Octavia E. Butler, Flannery O'Connor, and Edward P. Jones.

CRAFT

Putting the 'I' in Biography

3:00–4:00PM

This panel will confront the challenging question of when (and how) it's appropriate for the author to make an appearance in the biography of someone else. Panelists have published first-person biographies, in which their own stories intersect meaningfully with the lives of their subjects. Critics have not always been kind to such experiments in point-of-view, but they can offer an innovative and useful path into the life of the biography's central figure.

Moderator

Amanda Vaill is the author of the best-selling biography of Gerald and Sara Murphy, *Everybody Was So Young*; *Somewhere: The Life of Jerome Robbins*; *Hotel Florida: Truth, Love, and Death in the Spanish Civil* War; the forthcoming *The World Opened Up: Selected Writings of Jerome Robbins;* and the Emmy- and Peabody Award-winning documentary, *Jerome Robbins: Something to Dance About.* A finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award, a 1999 Guggenheim Fellow, and a 2017 Fellow of the Center for Ballet and the Arts at New York University, she is at work on a biography of the Schuyler sisters, wife and sister-in-law of Alexander Hamilton.

Panelists

Beverly Gray, who once developed 170 low-budget features for B-movie maven Roger Corman, is the author of *Roger Corman: Blood-Sucking Vampires, Flesh-Eating Cockroaches, and Driller Killers.* Gray has also published *Ron Howard: From Mayberry to the Moon...and Beyond.* She teaches online screenwriting workshops for UCLA Extension's world-famous Writers' Program, and her popular blog, "Beverly in Movieland," covers movies, moviemaking, and growing up Hollywood-adjacent. In November 2017, in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the film's release, Algonquin Books published her *Seduced by Mrs. Robinson: How* The Graduate *Became the Touchstone of a Generation.*

Megan Marshall is the author of the new biography *Elizabeth Bishop: A Miracle for Breakfast.* She is the winner of the 2014 Pulitzer Prize in biography for *Margaret Fuller: A New American Life* and the author of *The Peabody Sisters,* which won the Francis Parkman Prize and the Mark Lynton History Prize and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. She is the Charles Wesley Emerson College Professor in the Department of Writing, Literature and Publishing at Emerson College, where she teaches narrative nonfiction and the art of archival research in the M.F.A. creative writing program.

Daniel Mendelsohn is an internationally best-selling author, critic, essayist, and translator who writes frequently for the *New Yorker* and *New York Review of Books* and has been a columnist for *New York*, *Harper's*, and the *New York Times Book Review.* His most recent book, *An Odyssey: A Father, a Son, and an Epic,* published in 2017, was shortlisted for the Baillie Gifford Prize and named a Best Book of the Year by NPR, *Library Journal*, *Kirkus*, and *Newsday.* His other books include two memoirs, *The Lost: A Search for Six of Six Million* (2006) and *The Elusive Embrace* (1999), two collections of essays, and a translation, with commentary, of the complete poems of Constantine Cavafy. He teaches literature at Bard College.

George Prochnik's most recent book, *Stranger in a Strange Land: Searching for Gershom Scholem and Jerusalem*, was a *New York Times* Editors' Choice and has been shortlisted for the Wingate Prize in the U.K. His previous book, *The Impossible Exile: Stefan Zweig at the End of the World,* received the National Jewish Book Award for Biography/Memoir in 2014. Prochnik is also the author of *In Pursuit of Silence: Listening for Meaning in a World of Noise* (2010) and *Putnam Camp: Sigmund Freud, James Jackson Putnam, and the Purpose of American Psychology* (2006). He has written for the *New York Times*, the *New Yorker*, and the *L.A. Review of Books* and is editor-at-large for *Cabinet* magazine.

CRAFT

On the Screen and on the Page

3:00–4:00PM

A conversation on the differences in narrative strategy, framing, pacing, research, and other issues of art and craft between filmed and written works of biography, with filmmaker Griffin Dunne and print biographer Stacy Schiff.

Moderator

Anne C. Heller's *Ayn Rand and the World She Made* (Nan Talese/Doubleday/Anchor 2009/2010) was a *New York Times* Notable Book and was chosen a best book of the year by *Time* magazine, the *Daily Beast, USA Today*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Chicago Tribune, Library Journal*, and *Bloomberg*. Her most recent book is *Hannah Arendt: A Life in Dark Times*, published by Harcourt Houghton Mifflin in 2015. She has been an award-winning editor at magazines including the *Antioch Review, Esquire,* and *Lear's*, is the former executive editor of magazine development at Condé Nast Publications, and is a fellow of the New York Institute for the Humanities and a board member of the New York University Biography Seminar.

Panelists

Griffin Dunne is an actor and filmmaker. He has appeared in *An American Werewolf in London, After Hours, Quiz Show, Game 6*, and other films. More recently he played opposite Matthew McConaughey, as Dr. Vass, in the Oscar-nominated *Dallas Buyers Club*, and in the Jill Soloway series *I Love Dick* with Kevin Bacon and Katherine Haun. In 1995, Dunne was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Live Action Short Film for *Duke of Groove*, which he directed and co-wrote. Since then he has directed films such as *Addicted to Love, Practical Magic,* and *Fierce People*, as well as numerous episodes of the TV show *The Good Wife*. In 2017, he produced and directed *Joan Didion: The Center Will Not Hold*, a documentary about the life of his aunt, Joan Didion.

Stacy Schiff is the author of *Véra (Mrs. Vladimir Nabokov)*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize; *Saint-Exupéry*, a Pulitzer Prize finalist; and *A Great Improvisation: Franklin, France, and the Birth of America*, winner of the George Washington Book Prize. A No. 1 best seller, her *Cleopatra: A Life*, was published to great acclaim in 2010. David McCullough hailed her most recent book, *The Witches: Salem, 1692*, also a No. 1 best seller, as "brilliant from start to finish." Schiff has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities and was a Director's Fellow at the Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers.

Visit Our Conference Bookseller

The independent Merritt Bookstore of Millbrook, New York, in partnership with BIO 2018, will be selling recent biographies by our speakers, panelists, and other conference participants at the book table on Saturday, May 19. The table will be open from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

ISSUES

Biography and the Arts

3:00–4:00PM

For writers with a background in visual art, music, or dance, working on a biography of an outstanding individual in these fields can be a uniquely pleasurable experience. But books about people in the arts involve special challenges. You need to write clearly and persuasively about complex works (or ephemeral performances), decide how much specialist language to employ, and find a publisher willing to take a gamble on a subject who may be unknown to the general public. Four biographers will discuss their experiences in writing about visual artists, a choreographer, a classical composer, and an avant-garde pop composer and performer.

Moderator

Heath Hardage Lee holds a B.A. with honors in history from Davidson College and an M.A. in French language and literature from the University of Virginia. As the 2017 Robert J. Dole Curatorial Fellow, Lee created a traveling exhibition, *The League of Wives: Vietnam POW MIA Advocates & Allies*, for the Dole Institute of Politics. Her first biography, *Winnie Davis: Daughter of the Lost Cause*, won the 2015 Colonial Dames of America Book Award and a gold medal at the 2015 Independent Publisher Book Awards. Lee is currently working on *The League of Wives: A True Story of Survival and Rescue from the Vietnam Homefront* (St. Martin's Press, 2019).

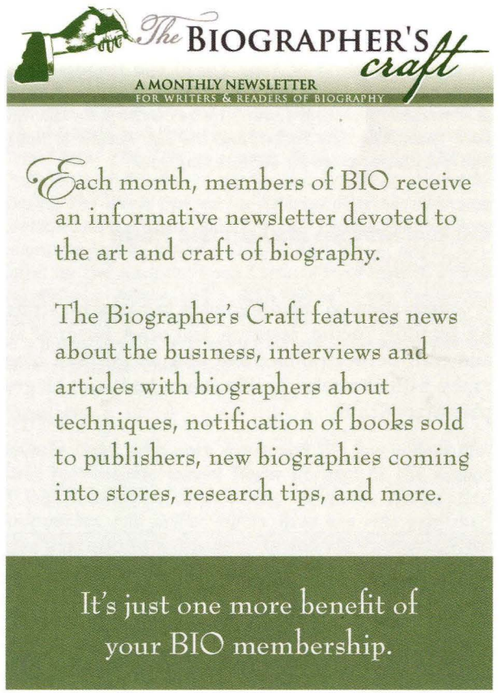
Panelists

Cathy Curtis is the author of *A Generous Vision: The Creative Life of Elaine de Kooning* (Oxford University Press, 2017) and *Restless Ambition: Grace Hartigan, Painter* (OUP, 2015). Forthcoming in her OUP trilogy of biographies of women artists is *Alive Still: The Singular Journey of Nell Blaine*—about a painter stricken by a severe type of polio at the height of her career who made an extraordinary comeback. Curtis, a board member and former vice president of BIO, has a master's degree in the history of art from the University of California, Berkeley. She is a former *Los Angeles Times* staff writer and art critic.

Anthony DeCurtis, a contributing editor at *Rolling Stone*, is the author of *Lou Reed: A Life* (Little, Brown, 2017) and *Rocking My Life Away: Writing About Music and Other Matters* (Duke University Press, 1998). He collaborated with Clive Davis on his memoir, *The Soundtrack of My Life* (Simon & Schuster, 2013). A three-time winner of ASCAP Deems Taylor/Virgil Thomson Awards for excellence in writing about music, he has served on the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame nominating committee for more than two decades. DeCurtis holds a Ph.D. in American literature from Indiana University and is a Distinguished Lecturer in the creative writing program at the University of Pennsylvania.

Elizabeth Kendall is a dance and culture critic and associate professor of literary studies at The New School. Her book *Balanchine and the Lost Muse: Revolution and the Making of a Choreographer* was published by Oxford University Press in 2013. She has also written *Where She Danced: The Birth of American Art-Dance; The Runaway Bride: Hollywood Romantic Comedy of the 1930s*; and two memoirs, *American Daughter* and *Autobiography of a Wardrobe*. Kendall has received fellowships from the Rockefeller, Guggenheim, and Fulbright foundations, the New York Public Library's Cullman Center, the Likhachev Foundation, and the Leon Levy Center for Biography. She is at work on *Balanchine: a Cultural Geography*.

Anthony Tommasini is the chief classical music critic of the *New York Times* and the author of three books. He holds degrees from Yale University (B.A.), Yale School of Music (M.M.), and Boston University (D.M.A.). His interest in the work of the composer and critic Virgil Thomson culminated with his book *Virgil Thomson: Composer on the Aisle*, published in 1997 by W. W. Norton & Company. As a pianist, he made two recordings for Northeastern Records of Thomson's music, *Portraits and Self-Portraits* and *Mostly About Love: Songs and Vocal Works*. Before joining the *Times*, he covered classical music and theater for the *Boston Globe*.



BIZ

New Wrinkles in Literary Law

3:00–4:00PM

Writing about any subject, living or dead, may involve legal issues. Libel is one concern, relaxation in the standards of "fair use" another. This panel of legal literary experts will examine the recent market trends in this area and help biographers understand their rights—and limits—under the law.

Moderator

Diane Kiesel is a judge on the Supreme Court of the State of New York. Prior to her legal career, Kiesel was a journalist in Washington, D.C., where she was the congressional and Supreme Court correspondent for the San Diego *Union* and *Evening Tribune*. She is the author of two textbooks on domestic violence, the latest being *Domestic Violence: Law, Policy, and Practice,* 2nd Ed., and the biography *She Can Bring Us Home: Dr. Dorothy Boulding Ferebee: Civil Rights Pioneer*. Kiesel is the winner of the Worth Bingham Award, the Richard Slatten Prize for Virginia Biography, and the Colonial Dames of America National Book Award.

Panelists

Eric Rayman, a graduate of Harvard College and Columbia Law School, is a partner at Miller Korzenik Sommer Rayman LP, where his practice focuses on media and publishing, employment, and copyright. He joined the firm in 2008 after serving as an in-house attorney, counsel, or executive for several major media companies, including the *New Yorker*, Simon & Schuster, and Home Box Office. He taught media and entertainment law as an adjunct professor at the Cardozo School of Law for more than 20 years.

Kirk T. Schroder operates an extensive entertainment and arts law practice, involving all aspects of entertainment and the arts, including film, television, literary publishing, music, radio, theater, visual arts, advertising and marketing, internet, and new media. He is the immediate past chair of the American Bar Association Entertainment and Sports Law section and a past program chair of the Harvard Law School/ABA Symposium on Entertainment Law. He has taught at the law schools of the University of Virginia and the University of Richmond and in the Graduate School of Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University. In addition to being selected to the Best Lawyers in America, he is AV-rated by Martindale-Hubbell, its highest rating for lawyers.

CRAFT

The Soul of a Biographer

4:15–5:15PM

A conversation between two stellar longtime biographers who both published memoirs about the biographer's life last year: Richard Holmes (*This Long Pursuit*) and James Atlas (*The Shadow in the Garden: A Biographer's Tale*).

Panelists

James Atlas is the author of *Delmore Schwartz: The Life of an American Poet*, which was nominated for a National Book Award, and *Bellow: A Biography*. His memoir about his career as a biographer, *The Shadow in the Garden: A Biographer's Tale*, was published in 2017. Atlas is also the founder of the Penguin Lives series. In his long career as a journalist and critic, he has been on the staffs of the *New Yorker*, the *New York Times*, and the *Atlantic*.

Richard Holmes is the author of *The Age of Wonder*, which won the Royal Society Prize for Science Books and the National Book Critics Circle Award for Nonfiction. His other books explore the lives of Shelley, Coleridge, and the young Dr. Samuel Johnson; *Falling Upwards*, about the early aeronauts; and the classic biographical trilogy, *Footsteps*, *Sidetracks*, and *This Long Pursuit*. Holmes was professor of biography at the University of East Anglia and is an honorary fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge. He writes for the *New York Review of Books* and lives in London with the novelist Rose Tremain.

NEED HELP WITH YOUR BIOGRAPHY?

BIO's mentoring program offers the advice of biographers in many fields of expertise. Whether you are just starting to think of a subject, working on your manuscript, or deciding how to launch your book, our mentors can help with questions large and small. We offer you a selection of mentors suited to your topic. You choose the number of hours you need, for mentoring by phone, email, or Skype. The introductory fee is $60 for the first hour. Subsequent hours are charged at a higher rate. For more information, and to sign up, contact:

Cathy Curtis—Cathy@biographersinternational.org

BIZ

The Antagonist

4:15–5:15PM

What do you do when your book blows up? How do you deal with antagonistic subjects? Kitty Kelley (Frank Sinatra) and Joe Hagan (Jann Wenner), with tales from the trenches.

Moderator

Charles Slack is the award-winning author of several books. His latest, *Liberty's First Crisis: Adams, Jefferson, and the Misfits Who Saved Free Speech*, was published in 2015 by Grove Atlantic. *Hetty*, based on the life of Wall Street pioneer Hetty Green, won the 2005 Connecticut State Book Award for Biography and the *Elle Magazine* Reader Prize for Biography. *Noble Obsession* was based on the life of inventor Charles Goodyear. The New York Public Library named *Noble Obsession* one of the 25 best Books to Remember for 2002. *Blue Fairways*, an American journey based on a trip down the East Coast from Maine to Florida, one public golf course at a time, was a finalist for the United States Golf Association's International Book Award. A graduate of Harvard, Slack was a newspaper reporter in Tennessee and Virginia before turning to writing and editing full-time.

Panelists

Joe Hagan has written for *New York, Rolling Stone,* the *Wall Street Journal*, and many other publications and published long-form profiles and investigative exposés of some of the most significant figures and subjects of our time, including Hillary Clinton, Karl Rove, the Bush family, Henry Kissinger, Dan Rather, Goldman Sachs, the *New York Times,* and Twitter. *Sticky Fingers,* his biography of *Rolling Stone* publisher Jann Wenner, won acclaim in the *Times* and elsewhere as one of the top biographies of 2017.

Kitty Kelley is an internationally acclaimed writer, having published seven *New York Times* best-selling biographies, five of which debuted at No. 1. Kelley's awards include the 2014 Founders Award for Career Achievement from the American Society of Journalists and Authors; 2011 International Book Award for *Oprah: A Biography*; and 2005 PEN Oakland Censorship Award for *The Family: The Real Story of the Bush Dynasty*. After *His Way: The Unauthorized Biography of Frank Sinatra*, Kelley received the American Society of Journalists and Authors' Outstanding Author Award for "courageous writing on popular culture" and the Philip M. Stern award for "outstanding service to writers and the writing profession." She lives in Washington, D.C.

ISSUES

Writing About Friendship in Biography

4:15–5:15PM

Eleanor Roosevelt was said to have had a "talent for friendship." How does a biographer view his or her subject through the particular lens of friendship? What are the challenges and rewards of examining friendships in subjects' lives? This panel of biographers will discuss how writing about Eleanor Roosevelt and her female relationships outside of her marriage to FDR enriched their portraits of the subject.

Moderator

Marlene Trestman, author of *Fair Labor Lawyer: The Remarkable Life of New Deal Attorney and Supreme Court Advocate Bessie Margolin* (LSU Press), is currently at work on a collective biography, *Most Fortunate Unfortunates: History of New Orleans's Jewish Orphans' Home, 1855-1946.* Both books draw on experience. Lawyer-turned-author Trestman, who has won funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Hadassah-Brandeis Institute, American Jewish Archives, Supreme Court Historical Society, and Texas Jewish Historical Society, had a personal relationship with Margolin prompted by common childhood experiences; Margolin grew up in the orphanage, and Trestman was a ward of the successor agency.

Panelists

Patricia Bell-Scott is professor emerita of women's studies at the University of Georgia and author of *The Firebrand and the First Lady: Portrait of a Friendship: Pauli Murray, Eleanor Roosevelt, and the Struggle for Social Justice*, which won the Lillian Smith Book Award. This book was also named Best Adult Nonfiction by the American Library Association, a finalist for the Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Nonfiction, and longlisted for the National Book Award. Bell-Scott wrote the introduction for a new edition of Pauli Murray's memoir, *Song in a Weary Throat*, which will be published by W. W. Norton in May of 2018.

Brigid O'Farrell, author of *She Was One of Us: Eleanor Roosevelt and the American Worker*, is an independent scholar affiliated with the Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, George Washington University. Her six earlier books include *Rocking the Boat: Union Women's Voices 1915-1975* with Joyce Kornbluh and *Beyond Gender: The New Politics of Work and Family* with Betty Freidan. Her research on working women has appeared in academic journals, newspapers, magazines, and online. She is currently writing a history of women in the construction trades. She is a member of the National Writers Union, UAW 1981.

Blanche Wiesen Cook is Distinguished Professor of history and women's studies at John Jay College and the Graduate Center, CUNY. Author of the three-volume biography of Eleanor Roosevelt (Vol. I, 1992, awarded the *Los Angeles Times* Biography Prize and the Lambda Literary Prize; Vol. II, 1999; and Vol. III 2016), she is a longtime print and media journalist (Radio Pacifica and CUNY-TV). Her previous books include *The Declassified Eisenhower: A Divided Legacy of Peace and Political Warfare* and *Crystal Eastman on Women and Revolution.* An activist for peace and democracy, Cook is a former vice-president for research, American Historical Association; founder and chair, the Fund for Open Information and Accountability (FOIA, Inc.); and co-chair, Freedom of Information and Access Committee, Organization of American Historians. Her work has been featured on C-Span and Ken Burns's PBS documentary *The Roosevelts.*

BASICS

What to Leave In, What to Leave Out

4:15–5:15PM

You work for a year or two (or more) gathering a mountain of material. Now what? Biographers choose the facts and anecdotes that best tell their stories. But how much research can you include and still keep the narrative lively? What determines how you treat your subject? Hear these issues and others discussed by three highly acclaimed biographers whose work ranges in length from nearly a thousand pages to a hundred fifty pages to *New Yorker* profiles of several thousand words.

Moderator

William Souder is the author of *Under a Wild Sky* (2004), a biography of John James Audubon that was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, and *On a Farther Shore: The Life and Legacy of Rachel Carson* (2012), a *New York Times* Notable Book of the year and named one of the Top 25 Nonfiction Books of the Year by *Kirkus Reviews.* Souder's current project, *Mad at the World: John Steinbeck and the American Century,* will be published by Norton in 2019. Souder lives near Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Panelists

Anne C. Heller's *Ayn Rand and the World She Made* (Nan Talese/Doubleday/Anchor 2009/2010) was a *New York Times* Notable Book and was chosen a best book of the year by *Time* magazine, the *Daily Beast, USA Today,* the *San Francisco Chronicle,* the *Chicago Tribune, Library Journal,* and *Bloomberg.* Her most recent book is *Hannah Arendt: A Life in Dark Times,* published by Harcourt Houghton Mifflin in 2015. She has been an award-winning editor at magazines including the *Antioch Review, Esquire,* and *Lear's,* is the former executive editor of magazine development at Condé Nast Publications, and is a fellow of the New York Institute for the Humanities and a board member of the New York University Biography Seminar.

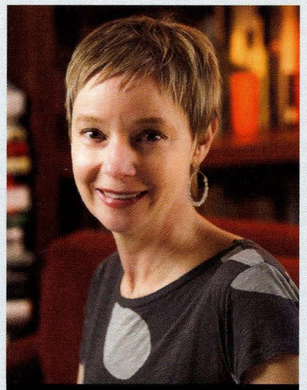
Vanda Krefft is the author of *The Man Who Made the Movies: The Meteoric Rise and Tragic Fall of William Fox* (Harper, 2017), the first in-depth biography of 20th Century Fox founder William Fox. The *Washington Post* called the book "a tale that will engage amateur movie enthusiasts and film historians" and praised its "expert scholarship" and "tight prose." *Publishers Weekly* described the book as "captivating," with "gripping storytelling," and Amazon.com chose it as a Best Book of December 2017, one of only ten across all categories. A former entertainment industry journalist, she has a B.A. and M.A. from the University of Pennsylvania and is a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

Claudia Roth Pierpont is a staff writer for the *New Yorker*, where she has written about the arts for more than twenty years. She is the author of three books: *Passionate Minds* (2000), a collection of essays about women writers ranging from Hannah Arendt to Mae West; *Roth Unbound: A Writer and His Books* (2013), an exploration of the life and work of Philip Roth; and *American Rhapsody* (2016), a collection of essays on American subjects including George Gershwin, Nina Simone, and the Chrysler Building. She has a Ph.D. in Italian Renaissance art history and lives in New York City.

BIO AWARDS TWO NEW FELLOWSHIPS

Robert and Ina Caro have graciously agreed that BIO should establish a travel fellowship in their name, and Kitty Kelley generously offered to support the first year of funding for the award. The fellowship is designed to support biographers in developing the importance of a sense of place in their subjects' lives. Our two winners, each receiving $2,500, were Natalie Dykstra, who will travel to Italy, and Marina Harss, who will visit Russia.

The Chip Bishop Fellowship is named in honor of a BIO board member who treasured the memory of his first visit to a BIO conference; for the first year, it has been generously supported by James McGrath Morris and has been awarded to Natascha Scott-Stokes, who has traveled from Chile to attend the conference.



Lisa Reardon, former senior editor, Chicago Review Press, will receive the fifth annual BIO Editorial Excellence Award in November.

SAVE THE DATE!

Please join us on the evening of **Wednesday, November 7**, at the **Fabbri Mansion in New York City** for the presentation of the fifth annual BIO Editorial Excellence Award to **Lisa Reardon**, former senior editor, Chicago Review Press.

In past years, we have honored legendary editors at large publishing companies. For the 2018 award, we sought an editor at an independent press who has made a serious effort to acquire biographies and to help biographers produce books that inform and delight readers.

Reardon's profile on the Chicago Review Press website listed biography first among her specialties and quoted her as saying that she is especially interested in "literary/arts figures and fascinating women."

Among Reardon's authors are: Steve Paul (*Hemingway at Eighteen: The Pivotal Year That Launched an American Legend*—acquired at a BIO Conference); Mary Wisniewski (*Algren: A Life*); Paige Bowers (*The General's Niece: The Little-Known de Gaulle Who Fought to Free Occupied France*; and Matthew Algeo (*Harry Truman's Excellent Adventure: The True Story of a Great American Road Trip* and *The President Is a Sick Man*, about Grover Cleveland).

Reardon was senior editor at Chicago Review Press from 2011 to March 2018. She began at the press in 1999, working in the marketing department at its distribution company before moving to editorial in 2004. Reardon majored in French language and literature at Kalamazoo College and holds a master's degree in writing from DePaul University.

The Fabbri Mansion (The House of the Redeemer) is at 7 East 95th Street. A reception with light refreshments will precede Reardon's talk about her experience of editing biographies. Venue and ticketing information will be available later this year in the Biographer's Craft *newsletter and on the BIO website.*

A Special Thank-You

The Biographers International Organization would like to express its heartfelt gratitude to the Leon Levy Center for its generous collaboration in arranging our conference. We would especially like to thank Kai Bird, executive director of the center, and his assistant, Thad Ziolkowski, for their helpful advice at all stages of our joint planning.

Sunday

9:00AM–11:00AM

Sunday morning will afford attendees a chance to participate in one of the following optional in-depth workshops. The workshops will be held on the Concourse Level of The Graduate Center.

The Art of the Proposal

SUSAN RABINER

For many would-be biographers, writing a good proposal can be as daunting as researching or writing the book. So what makes a good proposal? Passion, research, and fine writing all count. But perhaps most important is the recognition that, while it's your subject's life, it's your story. This session with an editor with thirty years of experience will teach you how to know your story, write that great proposal, and even more important, how to recognize when you have done so.

Susan Rabiner was an editor for more than thirty years and currently runs Susan Rabiner Literary. She is the co-author (with Alfred Fortunato) of *Thinking Like Your Editor: How to Write Great Serious Nonfiction—and Get It Published.* Two of the biographers she represents have won Pulitzer Prizes for their work.

Making the Most of Research Interviews

JAMES McGRATH MORRIS & MARLENE TRESTMAN

What goes into a productive research interview? Geared for novice biographers as well as seasoned authors seeking to hone their skills, co-presenters James McGrath Morris and Marlene Trestman will share practical tips and model techniques to prepare for and conduct effective interviews, present various ways to record interviews and make transcripts, and discuss legal and ethical issues involved in conducting interviews and quoting from the interviews.

James McGrath Morris is author of *The Ambulance Drivers: Hemingway, Dos Passos, and a Friendship Made and Lost in War,* as well as several biographies, including the *New York Times* best-selling *Eye on the Struggle: Ethel Payne, The First Lady of the Black Press* and *Pulitzer: A Life in Politics, Print, and Power.* He is currently at work on a biography of the late mystery writer Tony Hillerman that requires conducting many interviews.

Marlene Trestman, author of *Fair Labor Lawyer: The Remarkable Life of New Deal Attorney and Supreme Court Advocate Bessie Margolin* (LSU Press), is currently at work on a collective biography, *Most Fortunate Unfortunates: History of New Orleans's Jewish Orphans' Home, 1855-1946.* Both books draw on experience. Lawyer-turned-author Trestman, who has won funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Hadassah-Brandeis Institute, American Jewish Archives, Supreme Court Historical Society, and Texas Jewish Historical Society, had a personal relationship with Margolin prompted by common childhood experiences; Margolin grew up in the orphanage and Trestman was a ward of the successor agency.

Writing Biography for Young Readers

WINIFRED CONKLING & CATHERINE REEF

This workshop is for biographers who are interested in writing or adapting life stories for younger audiences, from picture-book readers to young adults. The new emphasis on nonfiction in education and in children's publishing has created an opportunity for biographers whose subjects are relevant to younger readers and who would like to reach new markets. Two accomplished writers of biography and biographical narratives (picture books through YA) will guide participants through the process of telling engaging life stories for young readers and provide their perspectives on how to market such stories.

Winifred Conkling is an award-winning author of fiction and nonfiction for young readers. Her recent works include *Votes for Women! American Suffragists and the Battle for the Ballot* (Algonquin, 2018); *Hidden Figures* (the picture book written with Margot Lee Shetterly, Harper Collins, 2018); *Radioactive!* (Algonquin, 2016); *Passenger on the Pearl* (Algonquin, 2015), winner of the Carter Woodson Award; and *Sylvia and Aki* (Random House, 2011), winner of the Jane Addams Children's Literature Award and the Tomás Rivera Mexican-American Children's Book Award. Conkling studied journalism at Northwestern University and received an M.F.A. from the Vermont College of Fine Arts.

Catherine Reef has written more than forty books, most recently *Victoria: Portrait of a Queen* (Clarion). Her books include the highly acclaimed *Florence Nightingale: The Courageous Life of the Legendary Nurse*; *The Brontë Sisters: The Brief Lives of Charlotte, Emily, and Anne;* and *Frida & Diego: Art, Love, Life.* Her work has earned her the Sydney Taylor Award, the Joan G. Sugarman Award, and Jefferson Cup, Golden Kite, and National Jewish Book Award honors. In addition, her titles have consistently appeared on lists of "best" and "notable" books. Reef lives in College Park, Maryland, with her husband, photographer John Reef.

Audio Books

ROBIN MILES & SONJA WILLIAMS

An award-winning radio documentary producer—Sonja Williams—joins with one of the audio world's top voices—Robin Miles—to explain the swelling popularity of audiobooks in our multi-platform world, their importance to a biography's sales and marketing, and other ins and outs of taking the words you

put down on the page and transforming them into the drama, interpretation, and magic of an audiobook.

Robin Miles, dubbed "a voice that never disappoints," is an *AudioFile Magazine* Golden Voice, an *Audible* Hall of Famer, the 2014 *Booklist* Voice of Choice, a 2009 Grammy finalist director, and winner of more than 40 *Best-of-the-Year* and *Earphones* awards. Her chameleon-like vocal and acting ability has won accolades for nuance and variety. Her credits include: Hugo winners *The Fifth Season* trilogy (N.K. Jemisin) and *Binti* (Nnedi Okorafor); *Hidden Figures* (Margot Lee Shetterly); *Cleopatra* (Stacy Schiff); *The Warmth of Other Suns* (Isabel Wilkerson); *The Violet Hour* (Broadway); several regional productions and museum installations; and *Law & Order*. Miles holds degrees from Yale (B.A.) and the Yale School of Drama (M.F.A.), and owns Voxpertise, Inc., a studio for voiceover training and production.

Sonja D. Williams is a 2016 Phyllis Wheatley Book Award finalist for her biography *Word Warrior: Richard Durham, Radio, and Freedom* (University of Illinois Press), about pioneering National Radio Hall of Fame broadcast dramatist, journalist, and Chicago-based activist Richard Durham. Williams has served as a journalist and media trainer in Africa, the Caribbean, and throughout America. Her radio documentaries have won numerous awards, including three consecutive George Foster Peabody Awards for Significant and Meritorious Achievement and a DuPont-Columbia University Journalism Award. Williams is a professor in the Howard University Department of Media, Journalism, and Film in Washington, D.C.

The 2018 Coaching Program

BIO would like to thank the following biographers for their participation in our fourth annual coaching program. These accomplished biographers are providing half-hour, one-on-one coaching sessions to those who have paid and arranged for such sessions in advance. In addition, BIO now provides a year-round mentoring service via email, phone, or Skype. For more information, see the advertisement elsewhere in this program or email Cathy Curtis at Cathy@biographersinternational.org.

The Coaches

Kate Buford's award-winning *Native American Son: The Life and Sporting Legend of Jim Thorpe* (Knopf, 2010; University of Nebraska, 2012) was a *New York Times* Editors' Choice. *Burt Lancaster: An American Life* (Knopf/Da Capo/Aurum UK) was named one of the best books of 2000 by the *New York Times*. Buford has written for the *New York Times* and other publications and has appeared on many radio and television shows. She was a commentator on NPR's *Morning Edition* and APM's *Marketplace* from 1995 to 2004 and is a founding co-partner, with fellow BIO member Abby Santamaria, of Biography by Design, LLC.

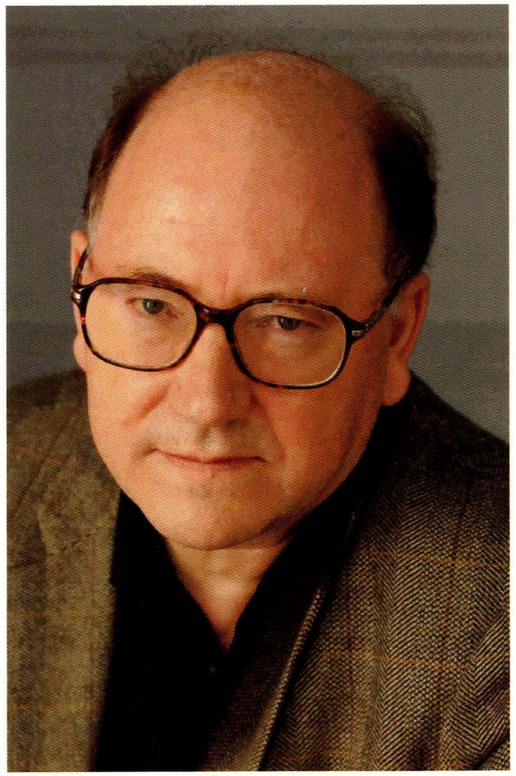
Cathy Curtis is the author of two biographies of women artists, *Restless Ambition: Grace Hartigan, Painter* (Oxford University Press, 2015) and *A Generous Vision: The Creative Life of Elaine de Kooning* (OUP, 2017). *Alive Still: The Singular Journey of Nell Blaine*, forthcoming from OUP in 2019, is about a leading New York painter who became a paraplegic after contracting a severe form of polio at age thirty-seven but battled the odds to become one of America's great watercolorists. Curtis, who has led and served on many BIO committees as a member of the Board of Directors, especially enjoys her work as a long-distance biography mentor to BIO members. A former BIO vice president, she was recently elected BIO president.

Carla Kaplan, Davis Distinguished Professor of American Literature at Northeastern University and chair of the *Signs* editorial board, writes on African-American and women's literature and culture. Her trade books include the award-winning *Zora Neale Hurston: A Life in Letters* and *Miss Anne in Harlem: The White Women of the Black Renaissance* (both *New York Times* Notable Books) and the forthcoming *Something to Offend Everyone: The Life and Times of Jessica Mitford*. Kaplan has also edited and authored numerous scholarly books and editions and received fellowships from the NEH Public Scholar Program, Cullman Center, DuBois Institute, Ransom and Beinecke libraries, and the Guggenheim Foundation.

Justin Martin is the author of four biographies featuring subjects ranging from a Federal Reserve chairman (*Greenspan: The Man Behind the Money, 1990*) to a pioneering landscape architect (*Genius of Place: The Life of Frederick Law Olmsted*, 2011). Next up is *A Fierce Glory* (September 2018), a group biography treatment of Antietam, the pivotal Civil War battle. Martin prides himself on being a thorough researcher and reporter. Armed with the facts, he aims to render his subjects in novelistic fashion and considers it the highest compliment when someone says, "Your book reads like fiction." Martin, a former member of the BIO Board of Directors, lives in New York City.

Will Swift is a biographer, a historian, and a practicing clinical psychologist. His book *Pat and Dick: The Nixons, An Intimate Portrait of a Marriage* (2014) was shortlisted for the 2015 Plutarch Award and was a *New York Times* Editors' Choice. He is also the author of *The Roosevelts and the Royals* (2004) and *The Kennedys Amidst the Gathering Storm* (2008). Swift particularly enjoys discovering facts that help repair historical reputations. A founding member of the BIO Board of Directors, he has served as president, as chair of the Awards Committee, and as a member of the Plutarch Nomination Committee. He is also a co-founder of the BIO mentorship program.

Congratulations to Richard Holmes Recipient of the 2018 BIO Award



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Schedule—Saturday, May 19, 2018

All panels will take place on the Concourse Level of the Graduate Center.

7:00–8:00AM	**Registration** CONCOURSE			
7:30AM	**Buffet Breakfast Begins** CONCOURSE			
8:00–8:15AM	**Welcome by 2016-18 BIO President Will Swift** CONCOURSE			
8:15–9:15AM	**Breakfast Plenary Session:** Edmund Morris and Sylvia Jukes Morris Explain Why "Dead Is Easier" CONCOURSE/ PROSHANSKY AUDITORIUM			
9:30–10:30AM	Writing About the Vietnam War I	What Four Top Editors Look for in a Book Proposal B	Writing Multiple Lives C	Reviewing Biography, or What Makes the Critical Cut and Why? BZ
10:45–11:45AM	(Dis)Regarding Biography I	Telling Life Stories: What Biographers Can Learn From Narrative Nonfiction B	Resurrecting Forgotten Figures I	Biography: The Ultimate Interdisciplinary Approach BZ
12:00–1:30PM	**Lunch and Keynote Address by Richard Holmes, winner of the 2018 BIO Award** CONCOURSE			
1:45–2:45PM	**Round-Table Discussions** SEE PAGE 10 FOR LISTING			
3:00–4:00PM	Putting the 'I' In Biography C	On the Screen and on the Page C	Biography and the Arts I	New Wrinkles in Literary Law BZ
4:15–5:15PM	The Soul of a Biographer C	The Antagonist BZ	Writing About Friendship in Biography I	What to Leave in, What to Leave Out B
5:30–7:00PM	**Closing Reception and Announcement of the 2018 Plutarch Award Winner** CONCOURSE			

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