



Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards® News



Message from Ronn Richard

The 2009 Anisfield-Wolf ceremony left us with magical memories. It was a tremendous evening with our dear friend and jury chair Skip Gates as well as with our four amazing honorees. For the audience that packed the Cleveland Play House's Bolton Theatre, it was a night that softly, yet dramatically, reinforced the significance of this book prize, 74 years after it began.

The 2009 honorees—Louise Erdrich, Nam Le, Annette Gordon-Reed, and Paule Marshall—spent a whirlwind 48 hours in Cleveland, combining media appearances and interviews with reflections of what it means to be an Anisfield-Wolf award recipient.

In October, I hope you saw our television special, “A Story . . . About Stories,” which you can view anytime in the multimedia library of our website at www.anisfield-wolf.org.

We already are deep into planning for our 75th anniversary next year. Among the changes for next year's ceremony is a move to Severance Hall to accommodate the annual event's growing audience. Cleveland's own internationally acclaimed Anisfield-Wolf book prize promises to be something special in 2010.

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

2009 Ceremony Delivers Thrills and Memories

The 2009 Anisfield-Wolf book prize ceremony was itself a winner—a joyous celebration of cultures and humanity, highlighted by dramatic readings by the evening's honorees from their prize-winning works.

More than 600 guests filled the Bolton Theatre of the Cleveland Play House September 10 and were treated to a special opening performance by local sixth-grade student Chavonne Christian. A participant in the Cleveland Foundation's SmArt in the City summer arts program, Christian read one of the poems she wrote during the program, *The Way I Want to Be*, which compelled Cleveland Foundation President and CEO Ronn Richard to note that the audience may be seeing a future Anisfield-Wolf winner in the making.

In welcoming the crowd, Richard reminded the audience of the particular significance this prize holds in our society.

“Throughout history and in modern times, issues of race, gender, and culture have always played a key role, and more often than not a negative role, in societies across the globe. These issues matter and shape our world—something that was fully understood way back in 1935 by the poet and philanthropist Edith Anisfield Wolf,” said Richard.

Today, the Anisfield-Wolf prize remains the only independent book prize for works solely devoted to issues of race and human cultures.

In recognizing the four honorees, Jury Chair Henry Louis Gates Jr., Harvard University's Alphonse Fletcher University Professor, highlighted a long list of achievements for each. He applauded the sheer honesty in their writings and their push to challenge conventional thinking.

The personal and emotionally packed readings by each honoree moved the audience from bouts of laughter to gasps of shock and sadness.

It is those moments, and the range of emotions felt by the listeners, that remind us of the power and beauty of the Anisfield-Wolf book prize and its special place in our hearts and souls.



*Sixth-grade student Chavonne Christian dazzled the crowd with the reading of her poem, *The Way I Want to Be*.*



Ronn Richard, left, and Henry Louis Gates Jr., far right, join 2009 honorees Paule Marshall, Annette Gordon-Reed, Louise Erdrich, and Nam Le in celebrating the evening's festivities.

Book Prize Winner Returns to Lecture Here

1997 Anisfield-Wolf winner Jamaica Kincaid returned to Cleveland in September for the 5th Annual Anisfield-Wolf/SAGES Lecture, held in conjunction with the Baker-Nord Center for the Humanities at Case Western Reserve University.

Speaking on the theme of *Culture of Green: Nature and the Environment*, Kincaid, who is known for writings on gardening, shared personal thoughts and observations on the power of language.

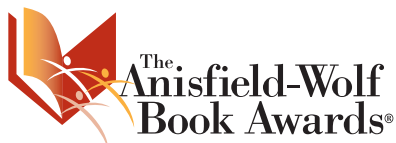


Anne Helmreich, director of the Baker-Nord Center for the Humanities and associate professor of art history at Case Western Reserve University, enjoys keynoter Jamaica Kincaid.

Save the Date

Tuesday, September 14, 2010, is the date for the 75th anniversary celebration of the Anisfield-Wolf prize. It moves to a new location at Cleveland's historic Severance Hall. Reservations will be accepted beginning in July.

The Cleveland Foundation
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CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

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Local Book Clubs Embrace Anisfield-Wolf



Cuyahoga County Public Library and the Anisfield-Wolf book prize are teaming up for a special 75th anniversary celebration. During 2010, book clubs at the library's branches will read as many as eight books by authors who have won an Anisfield-Wolf award.

"The Anisfield-Wolf book prize is such a tremendous asset to Cleveland and the literary world," said Sari Feldman, executive director of Cuyahoga County Public Library. "We want to help increase awareness and share the Anisfield-Wolf message of understanding, acceptance and respect with more people in the community. Through book clubs in our branches and through our website we will connect readers with Anisfield-Wolf book prize-winning authors and highlight the rich, storied history of this prestigious prize."

"We are pleased to be partnering with Cuyahoga County Public Library to celebrate the Anisfield-Wolf 75th anniversary," said Robert Eckardt, Cleveland Foundation senior vice president for programs and evaluation. "The library is a vital resource in our community and an outstanding partner to help spread the word of the book prizes, the importance of reading, and the message of tolerance in today's global society."

In addition to in-person book club discussions, the library will host Anisfield-Wolf online book discussions from January through August. Other potential activities include web chats with Anisfield-Wolf authors as well as guest lectures at Case Western Reserve University's Baker-Nord Center for the Humanities.

Online book discussions will start in January. Following is the complete schedule:

JANUARY—*The Plague of Doves* by Louise Erdrich
FEBRUARY—*The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Diaz
MARCH—*Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
APRIL—*Devil in a Blue Dress* by Walter Mosley
MAY—*The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros,
and for young readers, *The Birchbark House* by Louise Erdrich
JUNE—*South of Broad* by Pat Conroy
JULY—*Infidel* by Ayaan Hirsi Ali
AUGUST—*The Hemingses of Monticello* by Annette Gordon-Reed

For additional information, visit www.CuyahogaLibrary.org

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