

# Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

HONORING  
MAXINE HONG KINGSTON  
Featuring Carol T. Christ,  
Maxine Hong Kingston, and  
Viet Thanh Nguyen

HONORING  
ROBERT D. PUTNAM  
Featuring Robert D. Putnam  
and Antonia Hernández

CHICAGO AND  
ITS INSTITUTIONS:  
WHAT IS OUR  
RESPONSIBILITY  
TO THE CITY?

Delivering  
Humanitarian Health  
Services in Violent Conflicts

SUMMER 2023

# WAYS TO ENGAGE

WITH THE ACADEMY

There are several ways members may be involved in the life and work of the Academy.

## Participate in the Member Election Process

Members may submit nominations, vote for candidates, and serve on selection panels.

## Connect Locally

A national network of Local Program Committees and Representatives provides opportunities for members to connect with the work of the Academy and with each other in the communities where they live.

## Contribute to *Dædalus*

Each issue of *Dædalus*, the Academy's quarterly journal, explores a single theme or subject from a multidisciplinary perspective in essays written by Academy members and other experts. Members are encouraged to propose topics for issues of *Dædalus* and to serve as guest editors.

## Attend an Event

The Academy holds events in person and virtually. These gatherings bring members and others in their communities together to explore important topics through an interdisciplinary lens that draws on the Academy's breadth and expertise.

## Share the Academy's Work

Members play a vital role in disseminating the Academy's work to policy-makers, the media, scholars, students, and leaders in higher education, nonprofit organizations, business, and philanthropy.

## Stay in Touch on Social Media

The Academy shares news, events, and updates on Facebook and Twitter. Follow, tag, and retweet to stay up to date and help promote the Academy's work.

For more information about becoming involved, please contact Laurie McDonough, Morton L. Mandel Director of Membership Engagement, at [lmcdonough@amacad.org](mailto:lmcdonough@amacad.org).



Downtown Chicago

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“The true essence of the Academy lies in building connections: between research and policy, among fields and disciplines, and, most important, across diverse groups of people and perspectives.

## From the President

When I took office as President in 2019, I quickly realized that one of the great joys of this role is the opportunity to travel to meet with members of our remarkable community. During 2019–2020, I visited some of our largest member communities in New York, Chicago, and the San Francisco Bay area; smaller member groups in locations such as Dallas, St. Louis, and Nashville; and many international members in places such as Colombia, Japan, and the United Kingdom.

Shortly after completing my first year in office the COVID-19 pandemic struck, and the Academy changed to a largely online community. I was inspired by the dedication and resilience of our members, governance leaders, and staff. The Academy did not just survive; it thrived, electing outstanding and diverse classes of new members, hosting virtual events that engaged more members in more places than ever before, and achieving record-breaking fundraising results. While the response of our members to the pandemic was remarkable, I know we all dearly missed the opportunity to gather in person to connect, exchange ideas, and collaborate to advance the public good.

This is why it has been so heartening to see the in-person life of the Academy return with vigor during the past year. From July 2022 through June 2023, the Academy hosted 54 events for members, Affiliates, and broader audiences – 31 were in person across 12 cities (Cambridge, New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Diego, Washington, D.C., Palo Alto, Phoenix, Madison, Berkeley, Seattle, and Aspen), and 23 were virtual. This diverse year-long program included stated meetings, roundtable discussions, conversation dinners, receptions, local member lunches, meetings, workshops, and webinars. A total of 1,077 members attended at least one event throughout the year, our highest total ever.



In the pages that follow, you will find reports on some of the most recent of these events. In April, the Chicago Program Committee convened local members for a discussion with Paul Alivisatos (University of Chicago), Michael Schill (Northwestern University), and Andrea Sáenz (The Chicago Community Trust) on “Chicago and Its Institutions: What is Our Responsibility to the City?” In May, the Academy’s Berkeley Program Committee hosted an event honoring Maxine Hong Kingston and presenting her with the Academy’s Emerson-Thoreau Medal for distinguished achievement in the field of literature. And in June, members, Affiliate leaders, and other experts gathered in Aspen, Colorado, for the Academy’s second annual Higher Education Forum, discussing such topics as political challenges for higher education both at home and abroad; the changing nature of work; and the future of artificial intelligence and advanced technologies.

In my first Annual Report in 2019, I reflected on my early travels and concluded that “the true essence of the American Academy lies in building connections: between research and policy, among fields and disciplines, and, most important, across diverse groups of people and perspectives.” Having witnessed the Academy’s response and recovery from the pandemic, I believe this even more strongly today. Thank you for your membership in the Academy, and I hope you will be able to join us in person for an event in the coming year.

*David W. Oxtoby*



## *Dædalus* Explores the Challenges of “Delivering Humanitarian Health Services in Violent Conflicts”

By **Peter Walton**, *Associate Editor*

**R**ussia’s invasion of Ukraine has unleashed a humanitarian catastrophe. Along with the thousands killed or injured, more than twelve million Ukrainians have been internally displaced or have fled to neighboring countries. Russia’s air bombardment of Ukraine’s power grid, water supply, and health infrastructure has cut off

an estimated 17.7 million Ukrainians from the humanitarian assistance they desperately need, turning the cold of winter into another weapon of war. Ukraine’s prosecutor general has registered more than seventy thousand charges of Russian war crimes, including indiscriminate shelling of civilians, targeting of relief convoys, torture, murder, and

sexual violence. For historian Lawrence Freedman, it has become a genocidal war: Russia’s changes to education, currency, and language in Ukrainian territories under its control have denied the existence of a separate Ukrainian people.

But Ukraine is not exceptional. Russia’s blatant violation of international law in Ukraine is an

## *Dædalus* takes a transdisciplinary approach to understanding both the dilemmas facing humanitarian health actors in conflict areas and the potential for innovation in humanitarian health delivery.

extension of the “total war” strategy it employed in its air campaign in Syria’s civil war, and in Chechnya before that. Ukraine is only the most visible example of contemporary conflicts subjecting populations to systematic violence and depriving them of life-saving humanitarian assistance. In Ethiopia, Sudan, Yemen, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the eroding purchase of international humanitarian law, combined with intensifying geopolitical competition and the rapidly changing character of modern warfare, have put enormous strain on humanitarian actors. Deliberate attacks on health care facilities, transports, and personnel have forced humanitarians to flee or go underground, often literally, in makeshift, fortified treatment sites. States experiencing civil war are attacking their own populations and refusing to allow aid to reach communities they view as their enemy. And in the Americas, migrants from South and Central America seeking asylum in the United States and Mexico are targeted by organized criminal networks engaged in human trafficking. Traditional humanitarian approaches aren’t enough.

At the same time, ethical imperatives to decolonize and localize humanitarian health services are challenging the field’s long-standing values and power systems. As Ana Elisa Barbar asks, what values and purposes do “humanitarian principles serve if they are not confronting the inequitable distribution of power, knowledge, and resources

in the humanitarian space?” Localization and the representation of affected populations in organizational leadership are fundamental to this question, but are rarely implemented comprehensively.

The Spring 2023 issue of *Dædalus* on “Delivering Humanitarian Health Services in Violent Conflicts” takes a transdisciplinary approach to understanding both the dilemmas facing humanitarian health actors in conflict areas and the potential for innovation in humanitarian health delivery. Guest edited by **Jaime Sepúlveda** (University of California, San Francisco), **Jennifer M. Welsh** (McGill University), and **Paul H. Wise** (Stanford University), the volume attends to both conceptual and operational challenges. The issue’s contributors include doctors, field workers, scholars, leaders of international health organizations, military servicepeople, and journalists – as well as poets, painters, photographers, and novelists. Recognizing that shared compassion cannot be mandated but must be authentically *felt*, the issue draws on the power of the arts, and features visual and written works by artists whose lives have been shaped by violent conflict and displacement.

Divided into two sections, the volume first explores the effects of twenty-first-century violent conflict on humanitarian health. The introduction by David Miliband and Ken Sofer underscores that “health care for civilians in conflict settings around the world is suffering not just from operational or technical

challenges, but from a broader ‘system failure’ globally.” Anastasia Shesterinina considers the roles humanitarian actors play among non-state, state, civilian, and external actors in contemporary civil wars. She maps systems of relationships to demonstrate that relationships established by humanitarian actors are contingent and transform for reasons outside their control.

While civil wars are the dominant form of twenty-first-century violent conflict, Lawrence Freedman turns to the Russian invasion of Ukraine to imagine what a war between great powers might look like. Freedman explores the humanitarian consequences of two contrasting ideal types of warfighting: total war, represented by Russia, that treats civilian infrastructure as a legitimate military target; and the approach taken by Ukraine, using “smart” NATO weapons to attempt to avoid civilian casualties. Ana Elisa Barbar then considers the ethical principles guiding humanitarian health responses, and identifies the pressures and narratives that constrain humanitarian health actors from meeting their commitments to ethical conduct.

The final essays in this section focus on two specific conflict environments: urban conflict zones and organized criminal enterprises. Keith Stanski examines how urban conflict zones have come to exemplify many of the most intractable humanitarian dilemmas around the delivery of medical care: in particular, operational independence and physical



Sergiy Maidukov, *Izium* (September 2022).  
© 2022 by Sergiy Maidukov.

“There is a colossal difference between one’s real-life perception of war versus perceptions of war from the media. As a Ukrainian, I wanted to see this tragedy – the exhumation of the bodies of Ukrainians tortured by the Russians – with my own eyes. When I tell my daughter about the war in the future, I want to share what I personally witnessed. I watched the exhumation for an hour and a half before I could no longer bear to look. It was extremely difficult.”

Artistic works centered on the themes of violence, displacement, compassion, and life after war are included in the *Dædalus* volume.

safety, as encountered in Syria and Yemen. Sergio Aguayo points out that some of the greatest humanitarian challenges are generated by political and criminal violence in areas not formally considered to be at war. Aguayo sharply criticizes the lack of attention given to organized crime in human trafficking in the Americas, and offers recommendations for Mexican and U.S. migratory and asylum policies that could help liberate migrants from the control of criminal networks.

The second half of the issue looks toward the evolving challenges confronting humanitarian health responders. Ann-Kristin Sjöberg and Mehmet Balci explore the role of nonstate armed groups in providing health care. They identify strategies for navigating the complex web of armed actors in intrastate conflicts, and stress the importance of treating nonstate armed groups not just as threats, but also as potential facilitators and promoters of health care. They look to the specific case

of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) and the Syrian Defense Force, its military wing, with whom they conducted interviews.

Larissa Fast returns to the question of ethics, this time from the perspective of data governance and trust. Fast points out that humanitarian data can function as an empowering and informative tool, but it can also reinforce profound differentials of power in the international health ecosystem, and can even be used by hostile actors to target recipients of aid.

Amanda Murdie and Morgan Barney articulate the importance of localization, a commitment to respect the role of local communities in shaping the goals and means of humanitarian health delivery. They approach localization from “the outside in,” focusing on the role international health nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) can play in promoting local decision-making and diverse leadership. Drawing on

their survey of almost one thousand public health NGOs, they highlight the unique opportunities health organizations have to promote peace. But first, they argue, heightened investment, data collection, and rigorous program evaluation by academics and policy-makers are necessary to understand this potential and act on it responsibly.

Punctuating the issue are artistic works centered on the themes of violence, displacement, compassion, and life after war. Sergiy Maidukov, Svitlana Biedarieva, and Mark Neville contribute paintings, illustrations, and photography representing both the horror and the commonplace in twenty-first-century conflicts. Fiction contributions include an excerpt from Viet Thanh Nguyen’s novel *The Committed*, as well Bina Shah’s “A Bird with One Wing.” Elliot Ackerman recounts his experience coordinating, from a distance, the extraction of a handful of Afghans during the U.S. evacuation of Kabul in summer 2021.



# The Spring 2023 issue of *Dædalus* on “Delivering Humanitarian Health Services in Violent Conflicts” features the following works:

## **Preface**

Jennifer M. Welsh, Paul H. Wise & Jaime Sepúlveda

## **Introduction**

David Miliband & Ken Sofer

## **Understanding Violent Conflict's Effects on Humanitarian Health in the Twenty-First Century**

### **Identifying Contemporary Civil Wars' Effects on Humanitarian Needs, Responses & Outcomes**

Anastasia Shesterinina

### **Humanitarian Challenges of Great Power Conflict: Signs from Ukraine**

Lawrence Freedman

### **Challenges for Ethical Humanitarian Health Responses in Contemporary Conflict Settings**

Ana Elisa Barbar

### **Humanitarian Health Responses in Urban Conflict Zones**

Keith Stanski

### **The Great Evasion: Human Mobility & Organized Crime in Mexico & Its Borders**

Sergio Aguayo

## **Evolving Challenges Confronting Humanitarian Health Responders**

### **In Their Shoes: Health Care in Armed Conflict from the Perspective of a Non-State Armed Actor**

Ann-Kristin Sjöberg & Mehmet Balci

### **Governing Data: Relationships, Trust & Ethics in Leveraging Data & Technology in Service of Humanitarian Health Delivery**

Larissa Fast

### **Talk Is Cheap: Security Council Resolution 2286 & the Protection of Health Care in Armed Conflict**

Simon Bagshaw & Emily K. M. Scott

### **Localizing Responses to Gender-Based Violence: The Case of Women-Led Community-Based Organizations in Jordan**

Dima M. Toukan

### **Localizing the NGO Delivery of Health from the Outside In**

Amanda Murdie & Morgan Barney

## **Conclusion**

Paul H. Wise, Jennifer M. Welsh & Jaime Sepúlveda

## **Poetry, Visual Art, Fiction & Creative Nonfiction**

### **Izium and June 10**

Sergiy Maidukov

### **The Morphology of War I**

Svitlana Biedarieva

### **Children from Bogdanovka inside Their Burnt-Out School Bus, Kyiv Region**

Mark Neville

### **how to write a poem about Bucha**

Nina Murray

### **A Bird with One Wing**

Bina Shah

### **Excerpt from *The Committed***

Viet Thanh Nguyen

### **Aleppo Diary**

Fouad M. Fouad

### **Swept Away**

Tariro Ndoro

### **An Evacuation**

Elliot Ackerman

### **A survival guide for exiles**

ko ko thett

### **Disbound**

Hajar Hussaini

And Nina Murray, Fouad M. Fouad, Tariro Ndoro, ko ko thett, and Hajar Hussaini contribute poetry on Bucha, Aleppo, identity, and survival.

This *Dædalus* issue is a part of the Academy's project on Rethinking the Humanitarian Health Response

to Violent Conflict. Financial support for the project was provided by Louise Henry Bryson and John E. Bryson, the Malcolm Hewitt Wiener Foundation, and The Rockefeller Foundation.



“Delivering Humanitarian Health Services in Violent Conflicts” is available on the Academy's website at [www.amacad.org/daedalus/delivering-humanitarian-health-services-violent-conflicts](http://www.amacad.org/daedalus/delivering-humanitarian-health-services-violent-conflicts). *Dædalus* is an open access publication.



The Walter Isaacson  
Center at the  
Aspen Institute

# The Higher Education Forum at the Academy

By **Lywana Dorzilor**, *Program Coordinator for Education*

The Academy's second annual convening of The Higher Education Forum was held in Aspen, CO, on June 12–15, 2023. More than one hundred higher education experts and leaders, including university presidents, provosts, and deans from many of the Academy's Affiliate institutions as well as several Academy members, engaged in discussions on topics such as lessons from Ukraine and Hungary as they relate to current attacks on higher education in the United States; the future of work and the role of higher education in preparing an educated workforce; and artificial intelligence and newly emerging technologies.

The Academy's program work was referenced and represented throughout the meeting. **Ann Fudge**, cochair of the Commission on Reimagining Our Economy, spoke about the future of the

workforce, and a few panels highlighted the work of the Commission on the Arts and the Commission on the Practice of Democratic Citizenship and its report, *Our Common Purpose*. One session focused on the importance of art to a democratic society and included a performance by violinist **Lynn Chang**. During another part of the meeting, some of the panelists proposed a few non-traditional practices that the participants might want to consider. For instance, during a session on student mental health, someone suggested that students may benefit from more personal engagement from university leaders, such as by reading bedtime stories to the students.

We extend our thanks to the speakers and attendees for their invaluable insights and robust conversations. Several of the participants noted the meeting not only inspired them but also gave them actionable

ideas that they hope to implement on their own campuses. One attendee, reflecting on the session that focused on Ukraine and Hungary, stated, "It's hard to know how to derive new solutions, but the idea of looking abroad is a really good one." Another participant shared how much they appreciated learning "about a number of initiatives related to freedom of speech and democracy."

We are grateful to our sponsors – Bank of America, Hilltop Securities, Kaplan, Inc., Lumina Foundation, TIAA, and United Educators – for their continued interest, commitment, and active participation in the Forum.



More information about The Higher Education Forum may be found at [www.amacad.org/project/higher-education-forum](http://www.amacad.org/project/higher-education-forum).



Judith Brown  
Clarke (Stony  
Brook University)



Jamie Merisotis  
(Lumina Foundation)  
speaking about  
Higher Education  
at the Crossroads.



Ted Mitchell (American Council on  
Education), Goodwin Liu (Supreme  
Court of California), and Jamie  
Merisotis (Lumina Foundation).



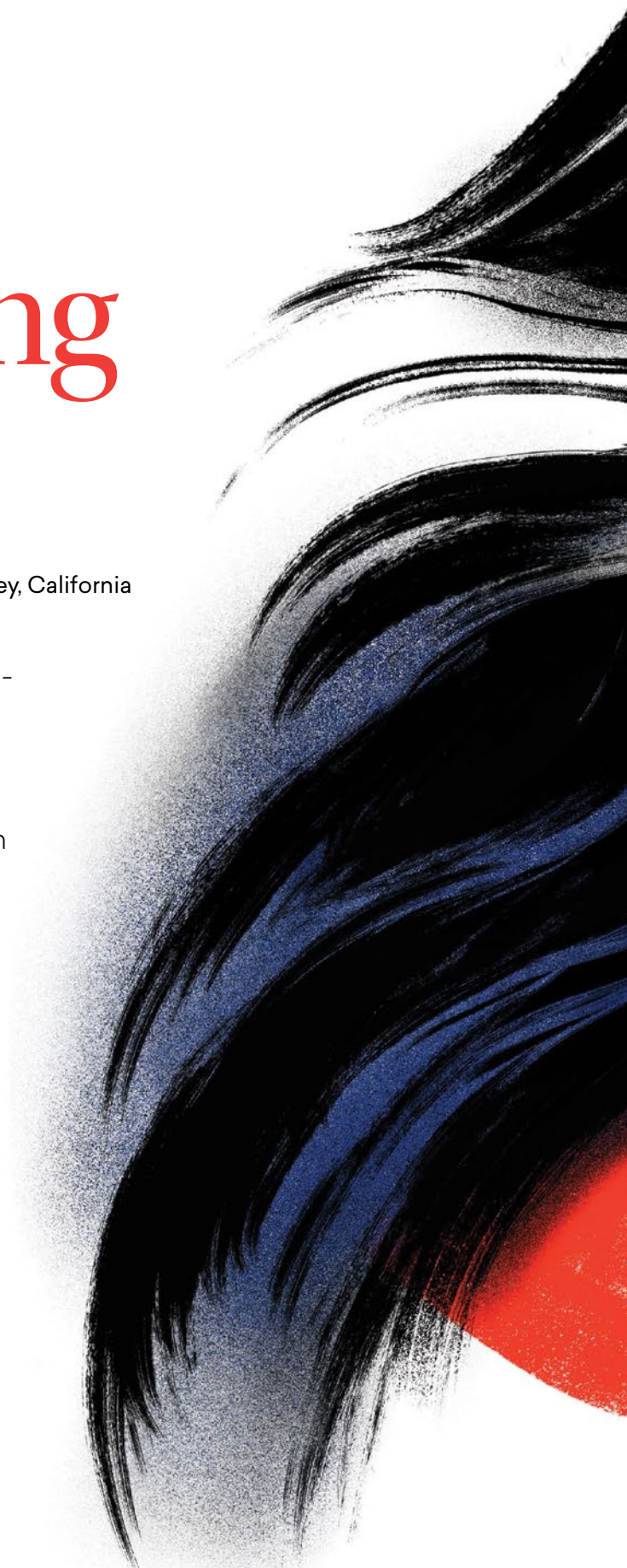
President Mark Becker (Association  
of Public and Land-grant Universities),  
Chancellor Gary S. May (University  
of California, Davis), and President  
G. Gabrielle Starr (Pomona College)  
in a panel discussion on Moving  
Forward: Equity and Higher Education.

# Honoring Maxine Hong Kingston

May 10, 2023 | 2114th Stated Meeting | In-person event in Berkeley, California

On May 10, 2023, the Academy presented its Emerson-Thoreau Medal to **Maxine Hong Kingston** for her distinguished achievement in the field of literature. The award, named after Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, was first given to Robert Frost in 1958 and has since been presented to several notable authors, including T.S. Eliot, Hannah Arendt, Norman Mailer, Toni Morrison, and Margaret Atwood.

The program featured remarks by University of California, Berkeley Chancellor **Carol T. Christ**, Academy President **David W. Oxtoby**, and **Maxine Hong Kingston**. Following the award presentation, **Viet Thanh Nguyen** joined Kingston for a conversation about her work. An edited version of the remarks and conversation follows.








## Carol T. Christ

Carol T. Christ is Chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley. She was elected to the American Academy in 2004.

**G**ood evening. I'm Carol Christ, UC Berkeley's chancellor, and it is my distinct pleasure to welcome all of you – members of the American Academy and Academy President David Oxtoby, honoree Maxine Hong Kingston and her family, friends, and fans, and my colleagues from across the campus. This is, for all of us, a very special occasion and so, without further ado, I now formally call to order the 2114th Stated Meeting of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Before anything else, on behalf of the campus community, I wish to offer our congratulations and good wishes to our distinguished alumna and professor emerita, Maxine Hong Kingston, this year's recipient of the Academy's Emerson-Thoreau Medal for distinguished achievement in literature.

At Berkeley we are proud to count among our extended family of alumni and emeriti incredibly accomplished people who have made significant contributions to their academic disciplines, to the



In so many ways, Maxine Hong Kingston's work and career, values, and interests seem to express and exemplify much of what makes UC Berkeley such a special place: disdain and disregard for conventional wisdom and the status quo, coupled with innovation and an abiding interest to make this world a better place. ”

university, to our state and country, to our society, and to the entire world. Few and far between are those who have done all that and more. Few and far between are authors, teachers, and scholars like Maxine Hong Kingston who so fully exemplify and embody this university's commitment to excellence and change-making in support of enlightenment and the greater good.

It was in 1958 that Maxine arrived at Berkeley to pursue a degree in engineering. How fortunate we are that she, like so many of her peers, was open to and influenced by the emerging counterculture, leading her to become an English major instead. And, it was here, on our campus, that Maxine met her husband Earll, who she married in 1962, the same year she graduated. This is an example of Berkeley one-stop shopping at its very best.

In 1976, Kingston published her first book, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*. It combines myth, family history, folktales, and memories of the experience of growing up within two conflicting cultures. Among *The Woman Warrior's* many layers, the reader will also find gripping and unique explorations of ethnicity, gender, and feminism. The book was an immediate critical success and a cultural phenomenon. On a personal level, as a professor of English, as an avid reader, as a citizen of this world, for me *The Woman Warrior* was an indelible, incredibly important book. Compelling throughout and beautifully written, it was a seminal work that introduced me, for the first time, to the Asian American culture and experience.

By the time Maxine joined the Berkeley faculty as a creative writing lecturer in 1990, *The Woman*

*Warrior* had become, as described by our fellow faculty member, Robert Hass, “the book by a living author most widely taught in American universities and colleges.” She was also an exceptional teacher and a generous mentor who nurtured the talent of aspiring writers until she retired from active teaching in 2003. It was, suffice it to say, simply wonderful to have her as a colleague in the English Department.

Before President Obama presented the National Medal of Arts to Maxine, the White House issued a statement that succinctly summed up her extraordinary career. “Kingston's novels and non-fiction,” it said, “have examined how the past influences our present, and her voice has strengthened our understanding of Asian American identity, helping shape our national conversation about culture, gender, and race.”

In so many ways, Maxine Hong Kingston's work and career, values, and interests seem to express and exemplify much of what makes this university such a special place: disdain and disregard for conventional wisdom and the status quo, coupled with innovation and an abiding interest to make this world a better place. As a community, as an institution, we have individually and collectively been made better by her commitments and contributions, and for that we will be forever grateful.

I am very much looking forward to hearing from Maxine, and to her conversation with Berkeley alum Viet Thanh Nguyen. Before that, however, please join me in welcoming Academy President David Oxtoby to the podium.

## David W. Oxtoby

David W. Oxtoby is President of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was elected to the Academy in 2012.

**T**hank you, Carol. We are grateful to you for being with us this evening. It is a pleasure to be back in Berkeley after so much time away. The American Academy has strong roots here. The University of California, Berkeley is an essential member of our Affiliate network, and we have more than 230 individual members affiliated with the university.

Since our founding in 1780, the American Academy has celebrated excellence in every field of human endeavor. Just last month, we had the pleasure of announcing the names of our newest members – transformative thinkers and leaders from all areas of academia, the arts, industry, and policy. We have six new members from UC Berkeley in the class of 2023, and we are glad to welcome three of you here today: Philip Gotanda, Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, and Marla Feller. Congratulations!

I also want to congratulate and thank our new Board Chair, California Supreme Court Justice Goodwin Liu, who is here this evening. We are so grateful for his service to the Academy and look forward to his term as Chair, which will begin this summer.

And finally, I must acknowledge our Berkeley Program Committee, led by Pamela Samuelson with the help of David Hollinger and Randy Schekman, for their work to build community here in California. It has been too long since we were last able to be together, and I cannot think of a better reason to reunite than to honor Maxine Hong Kingston with the Emerson-Thoreau Medal for distinguished achievement in the field of literature.

The Academy is dedicated to advancing the role of the humanities and arts in American life. We know these disciplines are essential to our individual and collective well-being, and, as a result, are central to the work of the Academy. Through our

projects like the recent Commission on the Arts and the ongoing Humanities Indicators, through the election of remarkable members, and through events like this evening's, we strive to elevate their prominence and consider their power.

For six decades, Maxine's complex writing has captivated this country, defying genres and expanding the very definition of American literature. Through her poetry, essays, novels, short stories, and memoir – to say nothing of her work leading therapeutic writing workshops for veterans, and her decades of teaching – Maxine's career reminds us of the power of the humanities to make sense of our own lives and the world around us. She was elected to the American Academy in 1992, and we are so proud to be recognizing her with this award.

The Emerson-Thoreau Medal, one of eleven Academy prizes, has been awarded only twenty times since it was first given to the poet Robert Frost in 1958. Other recipients include Hannah Arendt, Norman Mailer, Toni Morrison, and, most recently, Margaret Atwood in 2019. The prize – named for Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau – is given for a lifetime of literary achievement rather than for a specific publication.

We will hear more from Maxine about her extraordinary lifetime of work, and its ties back to these nineteenth-century transcendentalists, shortly. Maxine will be joined by a friend, colleague, and fellow Academy member Viet Thanh Nguyen for a conversation. Viet is a professor of literature at the University of Southern California and a Pulitzer Prize winning author of *The Sympathizer*. He has been a member of this Academy since 2018 and serves on our Commission on Reimagining Our Economy. Thank you, Viet, for facilitating our discussion.

But first, Maxine, would you please join me on stage for the conferring of the award?

I will read the official citation.



For six decades, Maxine’s complex writing has captivated this country, defying genres and expanding the very definition of American literature. Through her poetry, essays, novels, short stories, and memoir – to say nothing of her work leading therapeutic writing workshops for veterans, and her decades of teaching – Maxine’s career reminds us of the power of the humanities to make sense of our own lives and the world around us. ”

For her distinguished literary achievements, the American Academy confers the Emerson-Thoreau Medal on Maxine Hong Kingston.

Your contributions to the field of literature have been groundbreaking and transformative. Growing up in a community that struggled with racism and discrimination against Asian Americans, your writing explores the immigrant experience and the complex intersections of race, gender, and identity. With a body of work that includes novels, memoirs, and essays, you have garnered critical acclaim and numerous awards, including the National Medal of Arts and the National Humanities Medal, cementing your place as one of the most influential voices in contemporary literature.

Your genre-defying writing, with its innovative and experimental style, vivid storytelling, and powerful imagery, offers the reader a wonderfully unusual blend of fantasy, autobiography, and cultural folklore that makes your work both genuine and intimate.

In addition to your literary achievements, you are a prominent advocate for social justice and human rights, speaking out against war and racism, and promoting the importance of diversity and multiculturalism in society.

*Literary giant, trailblazer, and activist, you have broadened the literary canon and given a voice to underrepresented communities. An inspiration to future generations of writers and readers alike, your writing has expanded our understanding of the American experience and challenged us to think deeply about the issues of identity, justice, and the human condition.*



## Maxine Hong Kingston

Maxine Hong Kingston is Professor Emerita at the University of California, Berkeley. She was elected to the American Academy in 1992.

I am so happy to have you all here: my friends, my family, my sanghas, my neighbors, my fellow Golden Bears, colleagues, alumni, students, my dharma brothers and sisters, my readers, my people, and my beloved community.

It is truly a miracle that we are all together here at this one place in this one moment of time. Please look at one another and let's recognize ourselves as a beautiful, beloved community. Aristotle said

that this kind of recognition was the greatest jewel, anagnorisis. I'm looking at you and you all look well dressed. I was surprised at how many people phoned me up and asked, "What am I going to wear?" Henry David Thoreau would have said just come as you are.

Now, in celebrating Henry David Thoreau, I want to tell you my Thoreau adventures. I discovered him when I was a kid and it was not a school

When I got older, I understood more from Thoreau's life and his writing. What he talked about was meaningful work. You had to do work that had a good moral purpose. So I became a teacher, and I feel that that is the most worthy job on earth. ”

assignment. I discovered him for myself at a time when I read how-to books, which continue to be one of my favorite genres. From Thoreau, I learned it's okay to dress in homemade clothes, and it's okay to have a little bit of money, and it's good to raise your own food. And to this day, I am growing snow peas, and I just put in tomatoes. When I got older, I felt that I wanted to have a hut or a cabin, and so when we were kids, there was a shed in the backyard, and we turned it into a little house. We put in curtains and furniture and played house in it. But I was also thinking, what did Thoreau do in his house? He must have been writing. So I thought, I want to live like him, and I want to write like him. By the way, he didn't call it a hut or a house; he called it a box. So I wanted a box too, and I didn't want to share it with brothers and sisters. I wanted one to myself. We had a walk-in pantry. I cleaned it up, and I put in a table and a chair and my typewriter, and that became my office.

The next thing that happened was the hills fire, and our house burned down, and the neighborhood burned down. Some of those neighbors are here tonight. I thought, okay, we're going to build a new house, but instead of a garage, I'm going to build a box just like Thoreau. And it's about the same size as the box at Walden Pond. But I didn't want to call it a box, and I thought studio sounded too pretentious. So here we are in California, and it is my casita. I wanted to live like Thoreau and write like him. I saw that in his writing, there are descriptions of every little thing, right down to the ants. You write from real life, and you write from your own experiences, and you do this in detail.

Since this is the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, I should address the sciences and scientists too. Talking about Thoreau is already scientific because he was as good as Darwin. His descriptions and notes on the fauna and the flora are as observant as Darwin's writing about the finches. You heard from Carol that I started here at Berkeley as an engineering major. Not only was I going to be a scientist, I was going to be an applied scientist, and then I got an F in calculus. The only way to get my grade point average back up was to take English classes.

When I got older, I understood more from Thoreau's life and his writing. What he talked about

was meaningful work. You had to do work that had a good moral purpose. So I became a teacher, and I feel that that is the most worthy job on earth.

Thoreau talked about loving a broad margin to his life, and now I see that the word *margin* also means border. He wanted a wide, open border. Living in his box by himself, away from his neighbors, he could not escape the goings on of our world. And even in the woods, he could hear military music coming from Concord, and he knew it was his neighbors getting ready for war with little Mexico. When he refused to pay taxes for that war, that was when he went to jail. And you could see how that war, that militarism, that music reverberates to this day. Thoreau gave me inspiration and strength when I went to jail protesting shock and awe against Iraq.

I hadn't read much of Emerson, but I knew about his influence on Thoreau. When I came here to register at Berkeley, we had to fill out some forms and one of the questions asked was: What is your religion? Do you know what I put as my religion? Transcendentalism. After the fire, which burned all my books, Toni Morrison sent me the *Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. I read about "The Over-Soul," Soul written with a capital S and soul with a small s. I read about communion – that we can have an experience of the supernatural, of god, or whatever. That is what he meant by self-reliance, not just being an individual, but we can depend on ourselves to reach the great spirit. And he talked about the universal mind. And I said, wait a minute, this is the Dalai Lama. He writes just like the Dalai Lama. He also talked about form and how form appears and disappears, and again that's like the Dalai Lama. And also finding god within yourself; that's the Dalai Lama talking about Buddhature. So, I have had those experiences. I have had an experience of feeling lost in time and space and then I have to work hard to come back to this place and to this present moment in this place. I have felt the Over-Soul, and I have felt light coming into my eyes and infusing everything and everyone. I told all of this to Willis Barnstone, and I was expecting Willis to say, "Wow. That's great. You have reached satori." And you know what Willis said to me? He said, "Have you had an MRI?" So I went to Dr.

Michi and asked her, “Can you give me an MRI?” And she did, and it came out okay. Just last week, the photo images of my brain, the front, the back, the sides, were archived at the Bancroft. You can check them out. There’s nothing wrong with my brain.

Earll and I just came back from New York celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the Library of America. And knowing that we would be talking about Emerson and Thoreau tonight, we went to the Morgan Library, where there are manuscripts by Emerson and Thoreau. We saw a letter that Thoreau wrote to Emerson, and I could tell by Thoreau’s handwriting that he wrote fast. It was the flight of a feather quill, and he wrote lightly and very spontaneously. It’s hard to make out what he was saying. The writing is delicate and words were linked together (like Hawaiian when first written). You could see all of language flowing at once.

The letter starts off, “Dear Friend,” and I thought that’s very interesting. It doesn’t say Dear Ralph; it’s just Dear Friend. And it continues: “I am stealing this stationery to write you a letter,” and, well, that is so Thoreau. He doesn’t own things. He doesn’t have money. He just depends on friends to give him land to build himself a hut, and now he depends on them to give him his stationery. And the letter was a thank-you note to Emerson for a dinner party that he had had the night before. It was about how much fun it was to have Emerson’s little girl there – she’s fifteen months old. This really touched me because I’m a grandmother now, and here’s Thoreau and Emerson playing with a toddler. He’s describing her sitting on Emerson’s shoulders. And she’s talking, but she can’t pronounce things correctly; Thoreau wrote down how she pronounced baby words. And he wonders at the world from her point of view. “Edith studies the heights and depths of nature. On shoulders whirled in some eccentric orbit.” He is saying that this child is learning about the nature that Thoreau studies and loves, but it’s from a distance. Thoreau gets down to the ant level, but this girl is going to learn it from shoulder level. And please notice that he called Emerson eccentric – Edith is going to whirl in some eccentric orbit. There’s the orbit of the universe but also the orbit of Emerson’s twirling brain.

There are some things that Thoreau and Emerson did not write about that were important to their lives, that made their lives possible, and one

of them is that they had a commune, a sangha, that made their way of life transcendent. Bronson Alcott put that commune together, but it was his daughter, Louisa May, who wrote about it best. I would like to think of her as another one of the little kids who was at their dinner parties. She writes about communal living in *Little Men*, and she also writes about communal living in the *Rose in Bloom* series. And in *Work: A Story of Experience*, she wrote about working in a factory. Realistically, she helped support these men and their ideals.

I’m coming to the end of my talk and coming to an ending makes me think of my own ending, meaning the end of my life. I am eighty-two years old and while I was in New York, the Library of America introduced me as one of the last three living writers in their series. The other two are Gary Snyder and Wendell Berry. So here I am, last living, but that’s not the worst of it. *The New York Times* called me up and asked me whether I could help write my pre-obituary. And they made this phone call in the middle of the Lunar New Year of the Rabbit season. I thought, oh, this is very, very bad. I am going to die. So I told them, “Of course not, I am not going to do this. And what’s more, the way that you are going to take this curse off of me is to send me some sweets.” And so then I waited and a few weeks later, here comes a box of really expensive chocolates. The person who was going to write that pre-obituary sent it through *The New York Times* to my agent and then my agent sent me the chocolates. So, the sweets went all the way around and we’re now okay.

I told this story to Chun Yu, San Francisco Library Laureate. She is a bilingual Chinese and English poet. And Chun said, “Ah,” because she understands that you don’t do that to somebody on a New Year’s. And Chun gave me White Rabbit candy. This is the year of the Black Rabbit, but White Rabbit candy is good. And since we are talking about death, I’m going to hand these bags of candy out. Be sure that you have a piece before you leave. And one more thing. When I was talking how we’re all connected, here’s another connection. I just found out that Rebecca Chace, the woman who asked for the pre-obituary, is Jean Valentine’s daughter. Jean Valentine was a great poet. When I found out that she was her mother, I thought maybe this isn’t so bad because she’s in heaven and she’s playing a joke on me. Thank you and have a long, long, lovely life.



Viet Thanh Nguyen is a University Professor, the Aeorl Arnold Chair of English, and a Professor of English, American Studies and Ethnicity, and Comparative Literature at the University of Southern California. He was elected to the American Academy in 2018.

**C**ongratulations, Maxine. It's such an honor to be here with you. There's a lot of symmetry to this event that some people in the audience may not know about. You graduated in 1962 from Berkeley; I graduated in 1992. I had a chance to take a class with you before I graduated. You grew up in Stockton, California, the daughter of Chinese immigrants. And I grew up in San Jose as the son of Vietnamese refugees. There was nothing in my background that would have indicated that I was going to become a writer. I think you knew that when I took your class. San Jose, California, was desolate, and the only thing that really saved me was the library. Would you describe your childhood to us, growing up in Stockton, and how you think the origins of becoming a writer were formed in Stockton in the 1940s and 1950s?

**MAXINE HONG KINGSTON:** I have felt the calling that I am a writer even before I could write. And I was telling stories before I could talk. I have sometimes thought that I am a reincarnation. This lifetime is the third time I've been reincarnated as a writer.

I don't think Stockton was a desolate place. It was very rich because there were horses, and there were grandfathers. It was a city, but it was also country. We lived across from the Mormon Slough, and there was a train that would go around the Mormon Slough. There were people there we called hobos. The train goes by, and our house is bouncing up and down. As children there were these rumors that you could jump on that train and there was the ghost of a boy whose legs were cut off. And there were people coming out of the Mormon Slough who were chasing us around. All that goes into story. But I also come from a line of storytellers. My grandfather was the village storyteller. He sat in the plaza in the square and told stories. I asked my mother about those stories and she said, "They are the kind of stories that make the old ladies cry." And I thought that's what I want to do. In China, old ladies are really tough. They can take anything, and to make one of them cry is quite a feat.

Just as I was talking, a story came to me, and I would like to share it. Talking about the old days, I'm talking about a thousand years ago, and most of the stories that my mom told had to do with being refugees in a war. It seems like our whole family, generation after generation, is running from war.

And she talked about our ancestors, who are the Song dynasty kings, and that the kingdom has fallen. One day, I was telling this to Chun, and she told me that her ancestors were the teachers of the Song kings. So, what gets me is how it all comes around. A thousand years later, Chun and I recognize each other, and she brings the White Rabbit candy.

**NGUYEN:** A lot of your writing is about rebels, about people who are either rebelling against family structures, like parents, or against the military-industrial complex. And here we are at UC Berkeley, and you're getting the Emerson-Thoreau Medal from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. There is this interesting dynamic I think in your work in terms of criticizing the center from the margin, the margin broadly defined. You quoted Thoreau and the broad margin in one of your books – that broad margin is in its title. I'm wondering if you can reflect on what that means to you, this dynamic between the margin and the center, being rebellious as a writer, but then also now, of course, being part of the American literary tradition.

“ I have felt the calling that I am a writer even before I could write. And I was telling stories before I could talk. I have sometimes thought that I am a reincarnation. This lifetime is the third time I've been reincarnated as a writer.

**KINGSTON:** I remember being part of the Free Speech Movement, but I've always felt both in and out. I could be in the Free Speech Movement, and I can also be a teacher here. I was on peace marches while my brothers were in Vietnam or in the military. I know that I can see many points of view, and that ability to see all viewpoints and to be empathic with everyone is a talent or a quality that writers need.

**NGUYEN:** The story from *China Men* about your brother is one of my favorites. I write about it in one of my books, and it brings up for me one of the most important questions about your work. On the one hand, part of your reputation as a

writer and especially as an Asian American writer is your effort to claim America as a place where we belong, where we've always belonged, and so on. And yet part of claiming America means also claiming things like the Vietnam War. All that tension, I think, has been central to your life and to your work. You have been a protester against the Vietnam War, against other wars that we have fought, and you have talked about this in your writing. I'm wondering if you can think through that for us, the challenge of what it means to claim the United States when the United States is both a country that has given us so many opportunities but has also done things like the Vietnam War and the war in Iraq and so on. It seems like it is a huge ethical and artistic challenge but also an opportunity for a writer such as yourself.

**As a writer, somehow when we put things into words or we turn something into art, it's a way of owning and claiming.** ”

**KINGSTON:** The book *China Men* was when I consciously felt that I was claiming America. Being a minority person, especially Asian, we are seen as foreigners. And we could be citizens, we could be here for generations and still be seen and treated as foreigners. I thought it would be a feat of writing if I could tell the American story, if I could write the great American novel, and that is my way of owning America. Joan Didion visited Hawai'i a lot, and one of the things that she wrote was whoever writes the best about Hawai'i owns it. You can imagine how that went over with the Hawaiians. But as a writer, somehow when we put things into words or we turn something into art, it's a way of owning and claiming.

**NGUYEN:** You are an Asian American writer; you are also a writer. Let me just say that I am always very irritated when I'm introduced as the Vietnamese American writer. That's why I always make it a point to say things like the great white male American novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald because it's either adjectives for everybody or adjectives for nobody. So you're a writer, but you're also an American writer, and an Asian American writer, and a Chinese American writer. That's been very important to me because when I went to school at Berkeley, I read Asian American literature for the first time

and that actually gave me the motivation for writing that I didn't have before.

For me, it was very hard to think of going home to my refugee parents and saying, hey, Mom and Dad, I'd like to write a novel. Your parents had a laundry; my parents had a grocery store. And they're working twelve- to fourteen-hour days. They're not reading. And then their son, who they're sacrificing for, wants to be a writer. But reading books like yours, like *The Woman Warrior*, was important to me because the people in that book were people like my parents, and I thought, oh, if Maxine Hong Kingston can write this book, then maybe I can do something as well. When *The Woman Warrior* came out in 1976, it was a pivotal moment for something called Asian American literature. Before that, there were Asian American writers, dating from the late nineteenth century. But *The Woman Warrior* really put Asian American literature on the map in a lot of ways, and the reception for it was tremendous. In its aftermath, I remember that when an Asian American book appeared, I would get excited. David Wong Louie's book is out, I've got to run out and buy it; Chang-Rae Lee's book is out, I've got to run out and buy it. Now, there are Asian American books getting published every day of the year, and it's amazing. Hua Hsu from Berkeley just won the Pulitzer Prize for *Stay True* about Berkeley in the 1990s – my generation. And I'm reading Fae Myenne Ng's *Orphan Bachelors* right now. So, my question is, how does it feel to be, from my perspective, someone who is a foundational figure of what we could call Asian American literature? And how do you look at that story of Asian American literature from your own experience?

**KINGSTON:** I don't feel that I'm responsible for that.

**NGUYEN:** I do. I think you've been very important to opening the doors for so many people, for so many generations of Asian American writers after you.

**KINGSTON:** Well, you were my student, and I feel that you could have done that without me. And I feel the same way about other Asian American writers. I think they were already good writers; it's just that now there are opportunities to publish. I think the writers and the artists were always there, and the stories were always there. But now there's more listening. And I really don't think I'm responsible for that. In fact, there were some young

Asian American writers who told me that they got the Maxine Hong Kingston rejection slip. And what is that? They would send their book to a publisher, and the publisher would say, “We already have Maxine” or “We already have Amy Tan. We don’t need another one.”

**NGUYEN:** It’s still a struggle for a lot of Asian American writers. When your book came out, everybody was looking for the next Maxine Hong Kingston, then when *The Joy Luck Club* came out, everybody was looking for the next Amy Tan, and so on. But I think there’s a slight tipping point because now there’s a plethora of Asian American writers of different backgrounds.

You brought up teaching, and I want to talk about that because you came here as a student from 1958 to 1962, and then you come back as a teacher in 1990. Your role as a teacher has been very important, both for the students at Berkeley but also for the many other things that you do, like the writers workshops for American veterans of the war in Vietnam. Personally, your teaching influenced me very much. That’s another dimension of your life that perhaps there has been less discussion about because obviously we are all focused on you as a writer. Would you talk about that part of your life as a teacher and what that has meant to you?

**KINGSTON:** I think about my mother often, and she would say, “Well, have you finished educating America yet?” So I can’t quit until I’ve taught everybody in America. I think I have had two callings in my life: one is to be a writer; the other is to be a teacher. There was a review of *China Men*, which said that there’s just one thing wrong with this book – it’s too educational. And that was exactly what I was trying to do. I was trying to be educational, but this reviewer used the word *educational* as a pejorative.

**NGUYEN:** There are so many things that Americans need to be educated about. Another way of thinking about this is that, in writing workshops of the MFA world and so on, the mantra is often, “Show, don’t tell,” as if telling is somehow bad and showing is better. I think we need both as writers, the showing and the telling, and maybe the educational part comes in because you tell us certain things. I often quote your opening line to *The Woman Warrior*, “‘You must not tell anyone,’

my mother said, ‘what I’m about to tell you,’” and then you tell everybody what your mother tells you.

**KINGSTON:** I just blab it out, yes. But there is a way that I get around that. My mother told it to me in Chinese, and so I didn’t tell it in the way that she told it. I told it in English. Earlier when you were talking about the brother in Vietnam, I just want to say that he’s here this evening.

“What is the point of writing anything unless it is to write about something that someone else doesn’t want you to write about? Because then you know you’re writing about something important.”

**NGUYEN:** That is terrific; welcome, Joe. The reason I quote that line is because it summarizes so many things about the writer’s life and task. What is the point of writing anything unless it is to write about something that someone else doesn’t want you to write about? Because then you know you’re writing about something important. At the same time though, when you’re writing about what someone not only doesn’t want you to talk about, but has told you not to talk about, then you are suddenly enmeshed in this artistic and ethical dilemma, which is really complicated and problematic for a writer to be in. I feel that something powerful emerges out of that because you have to grapple with that dilemma.

**KINGSTON:** It is a struggle. A writer has a secret life, and that secret life has to come out. It is not enough just to cry and scream, though that is one way of letting it out. But what if you can put it into words? Even finding the words themselves is a struggle. And then there’s that ethical struggle. I can tell my secrets, but can I tell your secrets? One way I’ve dealt with this lately is I show the text to whoever I’m writing about, and I tell them, “If you don’t want this published, I won’t publish it.” Or “If you want to change it, go ahead and change it.” So that’s where I am now.



Maxine Hong Kingston  
in conversation with  
Viet Thanh Nguyen.

**NGUYEN:** I haven't reached that level of wisdom and maturity yet. Let's end with another question about the writing life because I know there are writers in the room here. You have been writing for decades now, and being a writer is not like having another kind of a job, where if you don't go to work, you get fired. Being a writer, you have to motivate yourself, you have to get up and write, whether it's every day or every week or every month. I'm wondering how you did that for so many decades? You now have the vantage point of looking backwards and seeing the ebbs and flows of your creativity and also reflecting on your reputation and reception. I would love to glean some wisdom and maturity from you, as I look back on my own writing career and as I look forward. How have you managed all those ebbs and flows of the writing impulse and the despair and hope that come with being a writer?

**KINGSTON:** Self-discipline is not easy. I make up games for myself. I say, okay, it's got to be two hours every day, and even if I just sit here and nothing comes, I have to sit for two hours. And then there's another one where I have to find just one word for the day. I discovered an old Chinese tradition. There's such a thing as a four-word poem. It doesn't have to rhyme; it doesn't have to do anything but have four words. And then there's also a tradition of seven-word poems, and then I think

there is also a one-word poem. At New Year's, you see a red paper and it has one word. Sometimes, I do a four-word poem or a one-word poem, and that's it for the day. I might have a writing revolution when I have a new idea, and I do one page and then I get to do something else.

**NGUYEN:** Maxine, it has been an honor and a privilege to be your student, to edit your Library of America volume, and to be here talking to you today.

**KINGSTON:** Thank you, thank you.

**OXTOBY:** Congratulations, Maxine, and thank you for all that you shared with us this evening. And Viet, thank you for your wonderful moderation and interview. I would also like to thank everyone for coming this evening to celebrate such a pioneering voice. This concludes the 2114th Stated Meeting of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

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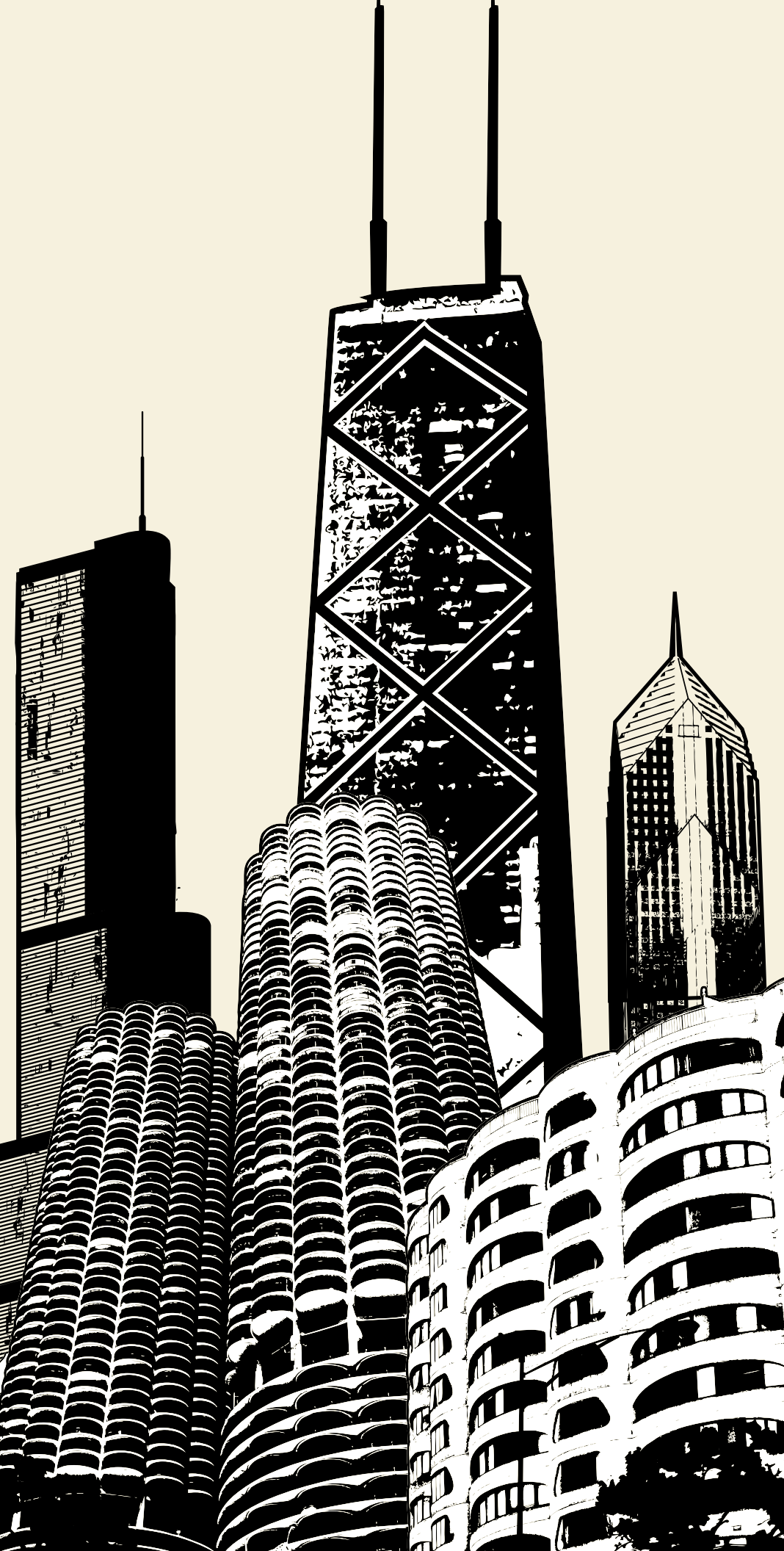
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# Chicago and Its Institutions

What is Our Responsibility  
to the City?

By **Patrick Meade**, *Membership Engagement Manager at the Academy*



The Chicago area is home to more than three hundred Academy members, who represent dozens of institutions across business, law, philanthropy, government, the arts, and education. The Academy's 2113th Stated Meeting, *Chicago and Its Institutions: What is Our Responsibility to the City?* held on April 24, 2023, was an opportunity for members from Evanston to Hyde Park to reconnect, celebrate the election of four new classes of Academy colleagues (2020–2023), and consider a city at a crossroads.



**Andrea Sáenz** (President and CEO, The Chicago Community Trust), **A. Paul Alivisatos** (President, University of Chicago), and **Michael Schill** (President, Northwestern University) in conversation.

The event, which revealed deep currents of affection, optimism, and a sense of obligation to the city, featured leaders of three of the oldest institutions in the Chicago area. Academy members **A. Paul Alivisatos** (President, University of Chicago) and **Michael H. Schill** (President, Northwestern University) joined moderator **Andrea Sáenz** (President and CEO, The Chicago Community Trust) for a wide-ranging panel conversation that covered community health, public safety, economic development, the racial wealth gap, institutional reputation, government relations, and desegregation, among other topics.

The panelists and attendees considered the scaffolding that universities provide to address problems and create opportunities in the city. The discussion focused on the role of universities as educators, employers, healthcare providers, and producers of new knowledge, reinforcing that there is a broad desire among students, staff, and faculty to apply their talent and resources to the needs of the city. In her opening remarks, Sáenz shared some of the challenges facing Chicago, including economic and population growth that lags behind its peer cities and an increase in gun violence that is concentrated almost entirely in neighborhoods with histories of disinvestment and segregation.

Sáenz encouraged the panelists and attendees to reflect on Chicago's contradictions, in which "world class institutions, a vibrant cultural community, and a thriving business sector" exist alongside communities that experience "unconscionable economic disparities" as a result of decades of divestment and unequal public and private attention. She probed into how established institutions with over one hundred years of history can update their practices and account for past failings, noting that The Chicago Community Trust has evolved its approach from "a charity mindset to a partnership mindset" that requires community-led solutions. Presidents Alivisatos and Schill agreed that, in order to build trust and have a real impact, institutions must take care to be true partners with their neighbors.

Acknowledging that there is always more to do, the panelists discussed existing institutional commitments to the city of Chicago:

- Northwestern University and the University of Chicago both have interdisciplinary labs that are focused on local issues like crime, education, health, and economic opportunity.
- As major research universities, both institutions spur economic development in the city through employment, procurement, research



**Vicky Kalogera** (Northwestern University) asks a question about STEM-focused community partnerships.

funding, and attracting visitors from around the world.

- Both universities have world class medical centers that serve the community.
- Both universities have partnerships with the Chicago Public Schools to educate the next generation.
- Both universities have prioritized building strong relationships with local government leaders.
- And both institutions foster a knowledge economy that produces evidence-based solutions to the city's and the world's most intractable problems.

The conversation revealed a culture of collaboration between Northwestern and the University of Chicago. Alivisatos and Schill recounted how they came together in the earliest days of their presidencies to discuss shared priorities for their respective schools and for the city of Chicago. They pointed to the recently announced Chan Zuckerberg Biohub and existing collaborations with Argonne National Laboratories and Fermi National Accelerator Laboratories as examples of the power of that partnership. They also expressed

a commitment to finding more opportunities for their institutions to unite in the near and long-term future.

Alivisatos, Schill, and Sáenz are new in their roles and took their respective offices amid a period of upheaval both in Chicago and nationally. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the urgency of our nation's racial reckoning, and the sense that our democracy is imperiled were mentioned over the course of the evening. But they also noted that this is an exciting period of opportunity, with many in the region grappling with their obligations to be of service and motivated to enact real change. The event took place on the eve of the inauguration of a new mayor of Chicago, further contributing to the sense that this is an inflection point for the city.

The panelists and attendees acknowledged that The Chicago Community Trust, Northwestern University, and the University of Chicago are by no means the only relevant institutions in the city. Arts organizations, public schools, libraries, the private sector, hospitals, museums, other universities, and city government all share in the responsibility to the city and need to ensure that their work is in service to the entire community.



# Honoring Robert D. Putnam

2112th Stated Meeting | April 13, 2023 | In-Person Event at  
the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and Virtual Event

On April 13, 2023, the Academy presented its Talcott Parsons Prize for distinguished and original contributions to the social sciences to **Robert D. Putnam**. First awarded in 1974, the Talcott Parsons Prize was established to honor the noted sociologist and former president of the Academy. Previous recipients of the prize include William David Labov (linguistics), Joan Wallach Scott (history), Daniel Kahneman (psychology), and William Julius Wilson (sociology).

The program included the presentation of the prize by Chair of the Board **Nancy C. Andrews** and Academy President **David W. Oxtoby**, followed by a conversation between **Antonia Hernández** and Robert D. Putnam on civic connection and its implications for American democracy today. An abridged and edited version of the remarks follows.



## David W. Oxtoby

David W. Oxtoby is President of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was elected to the Academy in 2012.

Good evening and welcome to our program honoring Robert D. Putnam with the Talcott Parsons Prize for distinguished and original contributions to the social sciences. We are excited to be joined by so many, both here in Cambridge and in our virtual audience.

I would like to begin by acknowledging that this evening's celebration is taking place on the traditional and ancestral land of the Massachusett, the original inhabitants of what is now known as Boston and Cambridge. We pay respect to the people of the Massachusett Tribe, past and present, and honor the land itself, which remains sacred to the Massachusett People.

It is my pleasure as president to call the 2112th Stated Meeting of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences to order. Tonight, we celebrate one of the most prolific and important social scientists of our time. Robert Putnam is the Peter and Isabel Malkin Professor of Public Policy at Harvard University. His research – especially on social capital and two-level game theory – has been very influential, and he is among the most cited social scientists of the last half century. Bob has been described as the “Poet Laureate of Civil Society,” and his insights into our fraying social fabric are indispensable as this country considers how to revive our American community.

Bob has been a member of the American Academy since 1980. His work on social capital, which has shaped our modern understanding of the American experiment and predicted so much of what we have seen in the last few years, began as a series of meetings here at the House of the Academy in the 1990s.

More recently, Bob's research has been essential to informing the work of the Academy's Commission on the Practice of Democratic Citizenship. The influence of his work is visible in the Commission's final report, *Our Common Purpose: Reinventing American Democracy for the 21st Century*. The report references Bob both explicitly – in the section on expanding our civic bridging capacity – and implicitly – in its overarching belief that the reinvention

of our democracy relies on creating a resilient and healthy culture of connection and association.

Later this evening, Antonia Hernández, a member of that Commission, will join Bob in conversation about his career and the future health of our civic culture. Antonia is President and CEO of the California Community Foundation and a prominent advocate for social justice. She also serves as a member of the Academy's Trust and as a member of our Committee on Anti-Racism. She was elected to the Academy in 2016. Antonia recently announced her retirement from the California Community Foundation after nearly two decades of leadership. We congratulate her on this milestone and are so grateful she could join us this evening.

“ Robert Putnam has been described as the ‘Poet Laureate of Civil Society,’ and his insights into our fraying social fabric are indispensable as this country considers how to revive our American community.

I want to thank our prize committee, led by Pauline Yu, president emerita of the American Council of Learned Societies, for their careful work and their inspired selection. The Talcott Parsons Prize is one of eleven Academy prizes, and it is named in honor of the prominent sociologist and former president of the Academy. The prize was most recently awarded in 2019 to William Labov for his work in linguistics.

Bob, we are proud to be honoring you this evening, and thrilled to welcome your friends, colleagues, and family – both here and online. I want to personally congratulate you and thank you for all of your work in service to new knowledge.

And now it is my pleasure to invite Executive Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer of Boston Children's Hospital and Chair of the Academy's Board of Directors Nancy Andrews to join me in formally conferring the award. As many of you know, Nancy is completing her term as Board Chair at the end of June. We have been so fortunate to have her steady leadership since 2017.



## Nancy C. Andrews

Nancy C. Andrews, Chair of the Academy's Board of Directors, is Executive Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer of Boston Children's Hospital. She was elected to the Academy in 2007.

It is my pleasure to read the prize citation.

For his extraordinary, original, and sustained contributions to the advancement of the social sciences, the American Academy confers the Talcott Parsons Prize on Robert D. Putnam.

Your research and studies have been both groundbreaking and transformative. Over the course of your distinguished career, you have contributed significantly to the fields of political science, sociology, and public policy, with a particular focus on the study of civic engagement and its impact on democratic participation. This work includes a major project at the Academy during the 1990s on the importance of civic engagement to issues of democratization and economic development in the United States and in developing countries.

You have inspired a generation of scholars to explore the causes and consequences of declining social capital. More specifically, your seminal work, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, has had a profound impact on the way that scholars and policy-makers understand the importance of social capital in promoting democracy.

In recognition of your extraordinary contributions to the social sciences, you are widely celebrated as one of the most important political scientists of our time. Your work has been recognized with numerous awards, including the Johan Skytte Prize in Political Science, the James Madison Award from the American Political Science Association, and the National Humanities Medal.

Beyond your academic contributions, you have been a tireless advocate for civic participation, working closely with community organizations and policy-makers to develop actionable ideas for civic renewal.

*Renowned political scientist, influential scholar, and beloved mentor, through both thought and action you have counseled and inspired us to appreciate the value of social connections and engagement in promoting a healthy and vibrant society. A true legacy.*

## Robert D. Putnam

Robert D. Putnam is the Peter and Isabel Malkin Professor of Public Policy at Harvard University. He was elected to the American Academy in 1980.

Twenty-five years ago, when we were developing these ideas, I was seeking to transgress the sharp line between theory and practice that bedevils so much of our intellectual lives. I began a collaboration that continues to this day with community foundations across the country, including the California Community Foundation, to measure social capital in places like Los Angeles, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Duluth, among other areas. ”

**T**hank you very much for this honor. My remarks embody three kinds of thanks. The first is thanks to the Academy, of course, and to its prize committee for this remarkable award. And it is especially significant because of the role the Academy played in the initial stages of my work on the idea for which I am being honored.

I returned from Europe in the mid-1990s after a quarter century of studying in Italy, where I had stumbled upon the idea of social capital. The Academy seemed at that time to be the perfect place for me to explore this idea from multiple perspectives. So, about every two months for a year and a half I convened a remarkably diverse group from across the social sciences, including both advocates and critics of the concept of social capital itself. We did not seek, nor did we achieve consensus, but I came away convinced that this idea was worthy of more study. And I remain convinced of that three decades later. So, my thanks to the Academy for initially hosting our group and then three decades later for recognizing my work on social capital.

Second, I want to thank Antonia Hernández for leading tonight’s conversation about my work. Antonia’s distinguished credentials include membership in this Academy, but what may be even more relevant though less well-known is my long collaboration with Antonia and the California Community Foundation. Twenty-five years ago, when we were developing these ideas, I was seeking to transgress the sharp line between theory and practice that bedevils so much of our intellectual lives. I began a collaboration that continues to this day with community foundations across the country, including the California Community Foundation, to measure social capital in places like Los Angeles, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Duluth, among other areas.

In 2000, these community foundations and I conducted a large survey on social capital along various dimensions, with roughly one hundred thousand subjects. It is called the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey. Working with Antonia and her colleagues and with other community foundations, we tried to enhance, in practicable and actionable terms, the best forms of social capital in each community. These communities are not identical, of course, and social capital is not just one thing. The community foundations were our collaborators.

Over the last quarter century, more than half of my time has been devoted to this activity. I have spoken with thousands of civic leaders and citizens across America, from Portland, Maine, to Portland, Oregon, to San Diego, Duluth, and Baton Rouge. I am proud of this effort, and I want to thank Antonia for representing that part of my work.

Finally, I want to say thanks to my many friends and family members who have contributed so essentially to my scholarly work, some of whom are here today. As the Beatles sang in 1968, just as I was beginning my professional life, I have gotten by “with a little help from my friends.” My first mentor was Bob Dahl, who was the first political scientist to receive the Academy’s Talcott Parsons Prize. Above all, I want to thank my lifetime partner in all things, Rosemary Putnam. On January 20, 1961 as twenty-year-olds we traveled to John F. Kennedy’s inauguration, where in a life-changing moment we heard Kennedy admonish us to ask what we could do for our country. She has accompanied and supported me in every step of my more than six-decade journey since that day.



## Antonia Hernández

Antonia Hernández is President and Chief Executive Officer of the California Community Foundation. She was elected to the American Academy in 2016 and is a member of the Academy's Trust.

There is a certain irony that has not escaped me since my work was inspired by Kennedy's appeal. Back then, America was more collaborative politically. We were connected with one another. But since then, we have become more polarized, more individualistic, and less focused on what we have in common. ”

**ANTONIA HERNÁNDEZ:** Bob, it is a pleasure to see you again.

**ROBERT D. PUTNAM:** Thank you.

**HERNÁNDEZ:** To prepare for our conversation this evening, I reread many of your books. Frankly I was a little depressed after I finished reading *Bowling Alone*. Then I read *Our Kids*, about what is happening to our children and to our society, and it was a rather gloomy story. In your new book, *Upswing*, no matter how bad the statistical evidence is, you find something positive to say. Given all the challenges in our society today, you see a reason to be optimistic about our democracy. Please share with us a little bit about where that optimism comes from.

**PUTNAM:** There is a certain irony that has not escaped me since my work was inspired by Kennedy's appeal. Back then, America was more collaborative politically. We were connected with one another. But since then, and this is consistent with the pessimism that you described, we have become more polarized, more individualistic, and less focused on what we have in common.

Jonathan Sacks, who died in 2020, was the Chief Rabbi of England from 1991 to 2013. A brilliant moral philosopher, he made a distinction between optimism and hope. He said that optimism is a passive virtue. It is a descriptive term, in which you have separated yourself from the world. Hope, he said, is an active virtue. Hope says, "I can see how things could be better and I want to make them better." I am hopeful, if not optimistic.

**HERNÁNDEZ:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen the benefits of technology, but we also know that there is a downside to technology. You touch upon this in your latest book. Could you talk a little bit about how technology is changing our society for the better and for the worse?

**PUTNAM:** Social scientists have known for a while that Facebook is not the equivalent of bowling leagues. Even great video connections, like Zoom, are not the same thing as face-to-face connections.

For many of us, our network connections are simultaneously internet-based and face-to-face. Almost everybody that you talk to online you also know in person. So, our networks are a kind of alloy.

How can we combine the advantages of the internet with the advantages of face-to-face communication? A former student of mine sought to create one such alloy. He figured out how to use the internet to make it easier to connect with your actual physical neighbors. He found a way to use the advantages of the internet to build real face-to-face connections.

**HERNÁNDEZ:** In your book *Upswing*, you highlight the importance of human interaction and balancing our sense of individualism with care for the community. You also say that we are going to reinvigorate our democracy from the ground up. French aristocrat Alexis de Tocqueville, who studied American life in the 1830s, said that being engaged in your community, in your school, in local activities, is what makes a community vibrant. Do you think we are going in that direction?

**PUTNAM:** Tocqueville was struck by how Americans cooperated with each other to solve problems. He said if you want to solve a problem in France, you look to the State. If you want to solve a public problem in England, you look to the king or to the aristocracy. If you want to solve a problem in America, you look to other people because everyone pitches in together. Americans form groups.

Tocqueville was a leading advocate of communitarianism, but he was also in favor of individualism or "self-interest rightly understood," meaning you should follow your own self-interest, but also think about the larger picture. Let me offer a

contemporary example of that. You may not want to wear a mask, but it is in your interest in the long run to wear one because it protects everybody, including you.

In our book *The Upswing*, Shaylyn Romney Garrett and I reported a striking parallel between the plight of America today – political polarization, economic inequality, social isolation, self-centeredness – and the plight of America 125 years ago at the end of the Gilded Age. We also found that during the Progressive Era, around 1900 and 1910, America emerged from those dark times and began an upswing toward political comity, economic equality, social connectedness, and altruism that would last for the first two-thirds of the twentieth century.

So were there any insights that reformers today could learn from that earlier upswing? We discovered many such lessons, but the two most important were these: First, that the leaders of the Progressive Movement were mostly young folks in their twenties. Older people then (and now) could recognize the problems, but they were not best equipped to imagine new proposals for the future. And second, the most important leading indicator of change – the one thing that if you could fix it everything else would follow – was not economics, but morality. It took a moral renewal, a sense that we have obligations to other people and can't just focus on our self-interest.

Greta Thunberg is an archetype of what we need right now, because she is young and because she frames the issue of global warming in moral terms. The fact that she has a large audience gives me hope.

**HERNÁNDEZ:** Thank you. We have some time for a question from our audience.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Town meetings began here in Massachusetts as a formal and social way of getting together to make decisions. How is this concept of small government by people reflected in your work?

**PUTNAM:** The reforms of the Progressive Era were bottom up, not top down. It was local government that first had the ideas, which then trickled up. Let me give an example. The public high school – four years of free public education for every child in town – was first invented in America in

1910. It was not invented in Boston or in Washington. Rather it was invented in tiny towns in flyover country, in Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska. The rich folks in town, who sent their children to private schools, had to agree that the kids on the other side of town were also their kids and needed their support. That's the first thing.

Second, giving a high school education to everybody in town was the source of most of the economic growth in the United States for much of the twentieth century. This example shows why you need to begin at the local level.

“ The most important leading indicator of change – the one thing that if you could fix it everything else would follow – was not economics, but morality. It took a moral renewal, a sense that we have obligations to other people and can't just focus on our self-interest.

**HERNÁNDEZ:** Thank you. We have come to the end of our program. Thank you, Bob, for our wonderful conversation this evening.

**PUTNAM:** Thank you.

**ANDREWS:** Let me offer my thanks to Bob and Antonia for a very enlightening conversation and for reminding us of the opportunities that we all have – to think about this country, to engage civically, to strengthen America, and to ask the young people to take us to a new place.

Congratulations Bob on receiving the Talcott Parsons Prize. This concludes the 2112th Stated Meeting of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

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## Select Prizes and Awards to Members

### MEMBERS ELECTED TO THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

**Carol Anderson**  
(Emory University)

**Rosina M. Bierbaum**  
(University of Michigan)

**Emery N. Brown**  
(Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Harvard University)

**Johanna Drucker**  
(University of California, Los Angeles)

**John Dupré**  
(University of Exeter)

**Jennifer L. Eberhardt**  
(Stanford University)

**Kathryn Edin**  
(Princeton University)

**Naomi Ellemers**  
(Utrecht University)

**Louise Erdrich**  
(novelist)

**James Forman, Jr.**  
(Yale Law School)

**Lene Vestergaard Hau**  
(Harvard University)

**Kellie Jones**  
(Columbia University)

**Catharine A. MacKinnon**  
(University of Michigan Law School)

**John C. Mather**  
(NASA Goddard Space Flight Center)

**Curtis T. McMullen**  
(Harvard University)

**Paul A. Offit**  
(Children's Hospital of Philadelphia; University of Pennsylvania)

**N. Geoffrey Parker**  
(The Ohio State University)

**Ardem Patapoutian**  
(Scripps Research Institute)

**Marilyn Raphael**  
(University of California, Los Angeles)

**Dorothy E. Roberts**  
(University of Pennsylvania)

**Barbara Anna Schaal**  
(Washington University in St. Louis)

**Susan Stewart**  
(Princeton University)

**David R. Walt**  
(Harvard University)

**Bruce Western**  
(Columbia University)

### OTHER PRIZES AND AWARDS TO MEMBERS

**Rolena Adorno** (Yale University) was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Rome. Professor Adorno also delivered the Josephine Waters Bennett Lecture at the Annual Meeting of the Renaissance Society of America.

**Elizabeth Anderson** (University of Michigan) received the 2023 Sage-CASBS Award.

**Jean Bennett** (University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine) is among the recipients of the Helen Keller Prize for Vision Research, given by the Helen Keller Foundation.

**David Bloom** (Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health) is the recipient of the 2023 Irene B. Taeuber Award, given by the Population Association of America.

**Dana Carroll** (University of Utah School of Medicine) is the 2023 recipient of the Rosenblatt Prize for Excellence, given by the University of Utah.

**Caroline Dean** (John Innes Centre) was awarded the 2023 Mendel Medal by the Genetics Society.

**Vladimir Drinfeld** (University of Chicago) was awarded the 2023 Shaw Prize in Mathematical Sciences. Professor Drinfeld shares the award with **Shing-Tung Yau** (Harvard University; Tsinghua University).

**Nader Engheta** (University of Pennsylvania) received a 2023 Distinguished Alumni Award from Caltech.

**Martha Finnemore** (George Washington University) was awarded the Johan Skytte Prize in Political Science.

**Wendy Freedman** (University of Chicago) was elected to the Royal Society of the United Kingdom.

**Gretchen H. Gerzina** (University of Massachusetts Amherst) was awarded a Harvard Radcliffe Institute Fellowship for 2023–2024. Professor Gerzina was also awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for 2023 by the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and the Samuel F. Conti Faculty Fellowship Award by the University of Massachusetts.

**Rhiannon Giddens** (composer, musician, singer) and composer Michael Abels won the 2023 Pulitzer Prize for Music for their opera *Omar*.

**Herbert Gleiter** (Institute of Nanotechnology) was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Lanzhou. Professor Gleiter was also elected to the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Liaoning Academy of Materials.

**Oliver Hart** (Harvard University) was made a Knight Bachelor in King Charles's Birthday Honors list for 2023.

**Larry V. Hedges** (Northwestern University) received the World Cultural Council 2023 José Vasconcelos World Award of Education.

**Sarah Blaffer Hrdy** (Citrona Farms) received the 2023 Bowlby-Ainsworth Award from the Center for Mental Health Promotion and the New York Attachment Consortium.

**Yonggang Huang** (Northwestern University) was elected a Foreign Member of the Royal Society of the United Kingdom.

**Akiko Iwasaki** (Yale School of Medicine) is the 2023 recipient of the Connecticut Medal of Science.

**Paula A. Johnson** (Wellesley College) received a 2023 Harvard Medal, given by the Harvard Alumni Association.

**Jamaica Kincaid** (Harvard University) is the recipient of the 2024 St. Louis Literary Award from the Saint Louis University Libraries.

**Hanna Kokko** (University of Mainz) was awarded an Alexander von Humboldt Professorship.

**Lewis L. Lanier** (University of California, San Francisco) was inducted into Virginia Tech's College of Science Hall of Distinction.

**Yiyun Li** (Princeton University) received the Howard T. Behrman Award for Distinguished Achievement in the Humanities from Princeton University.

**Avi Loeb** (Harvard University) was awarded the 2023 Cosmos Prize for his book *Extraterrestrial*.

**Elizabeth McNally** (Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine) is the recipient of the 2023 Martin E. and Gertrude G. Walder Award for Research Excellence from Northwestern University.

**Martha Minow** (Harvard University) is the recipient of the 2023 Freedom of the Press Career Achievement Award.

**Helen Mirren** (actor) is the recipient of the 37th American Cinematheque Award.

**Alondra Nelson** (Institute for Advanced Study) received the 2023 Sage-CASBS Award.

**Eva Nogales** (University of California, Berkeley) was awarded the 2023 Shaw Prize in Life Science and Medicine. Dr. Nogales shares the prize with Patrick Cramer (Max Planck Institute for Multidisciplinary Sciences).

**Jean Porter** (University of Notre Dame) is the inaugural recipient of the University of Notre Dame's College of Arts & Letters Graduate Student Mentorship Award.

**Anna Marie Prentiss** (University of Montana) received the 2023 Robert T. Pantzer Humanitarian Award from the University of Montana.

**Roberta Cooper Ramo** (Modrall Spering) received the Distinguished Service Award from the American Law Institute.

**Faith Ringgold** (University of California, San Diego) was awarded the Gold Medal for Painting by the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

**Salman Rushdie** (novelist) is the recipient of the British Book Award for Freedom to Publish.

**Frederick Schauer** (University of Virginia) won the 2023 Scribes Book Award for *The Proof: Uses of Evidence in Law, Politics, and Everything Else*.

**Michael Smith** (Princeton University) received the Howard T. Behrman Award for Distinguished Achievement in the Humanities from Princeton University.

**Moshe Vardi** (Rice University) was elected a Foreign Member of the Royal Society of the United Kingdom.

**Helen Hennessy Vendler** (Harvard University) was awarded the Gold Medal for Belles Lettres and Criticism by the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

**Abraham Verghese** (Stanford University) was awarded the 2023 Writer in the World Prize from the Sun Valley Writers' Conference.

**Elke Weber** (Princeton University) received the 2023 Patrick Suppes Prize in Psychology from the American Philosophical Society.

**Jonathan F. Wendel** (Iowa State University) was elected to the National Academy of Sciences.

**Shing-Tung Yau** (Harvard University; Tsinghua University) was awarded the 2023 Shaw Prize in Mathematical Sciences. Professor Yau shares the award with **Vladimir Drinfeld** (University of Chicago).

**Viviana Zelizer** (Princeton University) received the W.E.B. Du Bois Career of Distinguished Scholarship Award from the American Sociological Association.

**Xiaowei Zhuang** (Harvard University) is the recipient of the 2023 Dreyfus Prize in the Chemical Sciences.

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## New Appointments

**T. Alexander Aleinikoff** (The New School) was appointed Dean of The New School for Social Research.

**Abdullah Antepi** (Duke University) was named Associate Vice President/Associate Vice Provost for Community-Engaged Research and Teaching at Duke University.

**Allan Basbaum** (University of California, San Francisco) was appointed to the Scientific Advisory Board of Rapport Therapeutics, Inc.

**Joanne Berger-Sweeney** (Trinity College) was appointed Chair of the Hartford HealthCare Board of Directors.

**David Clapham** (Harvard Medical School) was appointed to the Scientific Advisory Board of Rapport Therapeutics, Inc.

**Jennifer H. Elisseff** (Johns Hopkins University) was appointed to the Scientific Advisory Board of Cartesian Therapeutics.

**Bernard A. Harris, Jr.** (National Math and Science Initiative) was appointed to the Business Advisory Board of Predictive Oncology Inc.

**Hopi Hoekstra** (Harvard University) was appointed Dean of Harvard University's Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

**Charles Lee Isbell Jr.** (Georgia Institute of Technology) was named Provost of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

**David Julius** (University of California, San Francisco) was appointed to the Scientific Advisory Board of Rapport Therapeutics, Inc.

**Lewis Lanier** (University of California, San Francisco) was appointed to the Scientific Advisory Board of Mendus AB.

**David MacMillan** (Princeton University) was appointed to the Scientific Advisory Board of Rapport Therapeutics, Inc.

**Susan Marqusee** (University of California, Berkeley) was selected to lead the Directorate for Biological Sciences of the National Science Foundation.

**Susan Quaggin** (Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine) was named Chair of Medicine of Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.

**Andrew Read** (Pennsylvania State University) was named Interim Senior Vice President for Research at Pennsylvania State University.

**Paul B. Rothman** (Johns Hopkins University) was appointed to the USC Health System Board.

**Sean Solomon** (Columbia University) was elected to the Board of Trustees of Universities Space Research Association.

**Patty Stonesifer** (Martha's Table) was named interim CEO of *The Washington Post*.



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## Select Publications

### POETRY

**Jorie Graham** (Harvard University). *To 2040*. Copper Canyon Press, April 2023

**Eileen Myles** (poet). A "Working Life." Grove Press, April 2023

### FICTION

**Ann Beattie** (University of Virginia). *Onlookers: Stories*. Scribner, July 2023

**Emma Donoghue** (novelist). *Learned by Heart*. Little, Brown and Company, August 2023

**James McBride** (New York University). *The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store: A Novel*. Riverhead Books, August 2023

**Lorrie Moore** (Vanderbilt University). *I Am Homeless If This Is Not My Home*. Knopf, June 2023

**Ann Patchett** (Parnassus Books). *Tom Lake: A Novel*. Harper, August 2023

### NONFICTION

**Catherine L. Albanese** (University of California, Santa Barbara). *The Delight Makers: Anglo-American Metaphysical Religion and the Pursuit of Happiness*. University of Chicago Press, January 2023

**Martin Baron** (*The Washington Post*). *Collision of Power: Trump, Bezos, and The Washington Post*. Flatiron Books, October 2023

**Tom Brokaw** (NBC News). *Never Give Up: A Prairie Family's Story*. Random House, June 2023

**Jericho Brown** (Emory University), ed. *How We Do It: Black Writers on Craft, Practice, and Skill*. Amistad, July 2023

**William H. Chafe** (Duke University). *Lifting the Chains: The Black Freedom Struggle Since Reconstruction*. Oxford University Press, August 2023

**Drew Gilpin Faust** (Harvard University). *Necessary Trouble: Growing Up at Midcentury*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, August 2023

**Kay Redfield Jamison** (Johns Hopkins University). *Fires in the Dark: Healing the Unquiet Mind*. Knopf, May 2023

**Evelyn Fox Keller** (Massachusetts Institute of Technology). *Making Sense of My Life in Science: A Memoir*. Modern Memoirs, March 2023

**Michèle Lamont** (Harvard University). *Seeing Others: How Recognition Works—And How It Can Heal a Divided World*. Atria/One Signal Publishers, September 2023

**Jackson Lears** (Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey). *Animal Spirits: The American Pursuit of Vitality from Camp Meeting to Wall Street*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, June 2023

**Michael Lewis** (author, columnist). *Going Infinite: The Rise and Fall of a New Tycoon*. W.W. Norton & Company, October 2023

**Avi Loeb** (Harvard University). *Interstellar: The Search for Extraterrestrial Life and Our Future in the Stars*. Mariner Books, August 2023

We invite all Fellows and International Honorary Members to send notices about their recent and forthcoming publications, new appointments, exhibitions and performances, films and documentaries, and honors and prizes to [bulletin@amacad.org](mailto:bulletin@amacad.org).



Conference presenters, photographer unknown, May 1956. Left to right: Gerald Holton, Charles Morris, Nathan Pusey, I. I. Rabi, Robert Oppenheimer, Detlev Bronk, John E. Burchard, P. W. Bridgman, Perry Miller, Philipp Frank, Howard Mumford Jones, W. V. Quine, Harcourt Brown, and Giorgio de Santillana. Archives, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

## Conference on Science and the Modern World View, 1956

By **Maggie Boyd**, Archivist

**O**n May 5–6, 1956, the Academy hosted a conference on “Science and the Modern World View – Toward a Common Understanding of the Sciences and the Humanities.” The conference, funded by the National Science Foundation, was held in honor of physicist Percy Williams Bridgman and mathematician and physicist Philipp G. Frank. At their request, the meeting was not a celebration of their individual work. Rather, it highlighted the discipline of the philosophy of science, which they both advanced. Specifically, the conference examined the history of a scientific worldview and its intersection with the humanities in the mid-twentieth century.

The presenters included Robert Oppenheimer, Harcourt Brown, and Howard Mumford Jones, among others. In his presentation, Oppenheimer emphasized two aspects uniting the humanities and the sciences.<sup>1</sup> First,

his belief that the “terrifyingly, inhumanly rapid rate” of scientific advancement followed an order, however inadequate. “The second is simply this: we can have each other to dinner. We ourselves, and with each other by our converse, can create, not an architecture of global scope, but an immense, intricate network of intimacy, illumination, and understanding. Everything cannot be connected with everything in the world we live in. Everything can be connected with anything.”

The conference papers were published in the Winter 1958 issue of *Dædalus*, “Science and the Modern World View,” and as a book, *Science and the Modern Mind*, by Beacon Press in 1958. The papers of the conference’s organizing committee have been processed, and a finding aid is available on the Academy Archives website at [www.amacad.org/archives/rg-xxi-conference-science-and-modern-world-view](http://www.amacad.org/archives/rg-xxi-conference-science-and-modern-world-view).

1. Robert Oppenheimer, “The Growth of Science and the Structure of Culture: Comments on Dr. Frank’s Paper,” *Dædalus* 87 (1) (Winter 1958): 76.

# Bulletin

## of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

136 Irving Street, Cambridge, MA 02138  
617-576-5000 • [bulletin@amacad.org](mailto:bulletin@amacad.org) • [www.amacad.org](http://www.amacad.org)

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The views expressed in the *Bulletin* are those held by each contributor and are not necessarily those of the Board of Directors and Members of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences.

# ONLINE



A recent Academy event about artificial intelligence and the law explored how AI tools like ChatGPT and Bing Chat might impact the accessibility, reliability, and regulation of legal and other professional services. The event was part of the work of the Academy's **Making Justice Accessible** project.

A video of the event – featuring (clockwise from top left) **Jason Barnwell** (Microsoft), **Andrew M. Perlman** (Suffolk University Law School), and **Margaret Hagen** (Stanford Law School) – is available on YouTube ([www.youtube.com/americanacad](http://www.youtube.com/americanacad)).

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Norton's Woods  
136 Irving Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138-1996 USA  
[www.amacad.org](http://www.amacad.org)

