

Academy News

American Academy Inducts 225th Class of Members

Speaking to the over 500 members and guests assembled for the 2005 Induction Ceremony, new Fellow **Elena Kagan**, Dean of the Harvard Law School, pointed to the Academy's historic mission to bring together scholars and practitioners dedicated to the public good. "This must be," she noted, "because the Academy thinks that each can learn from the other, that those who think about the world and those who run the world both should want to make it better. And that the chances of doing so depend on the strength of their desires and the scope of their opportunities to work together."

The vision of the Academy's founders and its realization over 225 years was one of the principal themes of the Ceremony that honored 197 new Fellows and 17 Foreign Honorary Members from 26 states and 10 foreign countries. They included scholars, scientists, and artists as well as civic, corporate, and philanthropic leaders (see pages 42 – 56 for descriptors of the new members).

The daylong series of events began with an orientation session providing new members with an overview of Academy studies, the Visiting Scholars Program, and activities across the country. In welcoming remarks, President **Patricia Meyer Spacks** emphasized that the Academy looks to its members for new ideas and perspectives and urged the group to take an active part in the research program, governance, and election process. Introducing the leaders of current Academy projects, Chief Executive Officer **Leslie C. Berlowitz** noted: "Today, as 225 years ago, the Academy focuses its attention on those issues that are of deep concern to the intel-

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New members **Daniel Boyarin** (University of California, Berkeley) and **Alice Kessler-Harris** (Columbia University)

New Mellon Grant for Humanities Indicators

For over 30 years, scientists have relied on the National Science Foundation's *Science and Engineering Indicators* for comprehensive statistics and information on science, engineering, and technology in the United States. Now, thanks to a generous grant of \$701,000 from the Mellon Foundation, the Academy will produce *Humanities Indicators*, an initial effort to create a comparable picture of the state of the humanities.

The *Humanities Indicators* will bring together empirical data on all aspects of the humanities, from primary and secondary education, to university teaching and research activities, to the libraries, museums, and historical societies where so many children and adults receive significant exposure to the humanities. It will include essays describing the trends and challenges revealed by this data. The *Indicators* will be made available on the Academy website. Academy Fellow **Norman Bradburn**, a nationally recognized researcher on survey methodology at the National Opinion Research Center and the University of Chicago, is overseeing data collection and analysis. Academy President **Patricia Meyer Spacks** is the codirector of the *Humanities Indicators* Project.

"The nation lacks a broad-based, quantitative analysis of the state of the humanities in the United States," noted Chief Executive Officer **Leslie C. Berlowitz** in acknowledging the award. "We don't have sufficient empirical data about what is being taught in the humanities, how they're funded, the size of the work force, and public attitudes toward the field. This is a key goal of the Academy's humanities program. The *Indicators* Project will be an important step in closing that fundamental knowledge gap for the benefit of scholars, policymakers, and the public at large."

This grant brings to fruition several years of preliminary work on humanities data. This work, which was supported by the Rockefeller and Hewlett Foundations, included planning meetings, conferences, surveys of data resources, and two Occasional Papers, *Making the Humanities Count: The Importance of Data* (2002) and *Tracking Changes in the Humanities: Essays on Finance and Education* (2006).

Exhibit from the Academy's Archives



Every newly elected member of the Academy is asked to write a letter of acceptance. The thousands of such letters received over the past 225 years are one of the Academy's most important collections of documents. Now, visitors to the Academy's House in Cambridge can view a selection of these letters in a new exhibit in the atrium. Among the seventy-

five documents on display are the acceptance letters of Charles Darwin, Washington Irving, Mary Leakey, Martin Luther King, Jr., Marion Anderson, Willa Cather, John F. Kennedy, Abba Eban, John Cage, and Igor Stravinsky. The letters show the progress of technology, from handwritten notes to email, with telegrams, typewriters, and word

processors in between. Despite the changes in forms of communication, they are remarkably consistent in revealing how honored the new members feel and how committed they are to advancing the Academy's goals. From George Washington's acceptance, dated March 22, 1781, to the responses of recent inductees, members express their enthusiasm for the Academy's role in the life of the nation and the importance of its work to the world.

Written from a field camp during the Revolutionary War, Washington's letter states: "The Arts & Sciences essential to the prosperity of the State & to the ornament & happiness of human life have a primary claim to the encouragement of

every lover of his Country & mankind." Fifty years later, British mathematician Charles Babbage's August 1832 letter has a similar theme: "I beg you will assure the Academy how much I feel gratified at being thus connected with an institution which having for its object the discovery of truth, must have for its supporters all those who wish well to the interests of mankind." Nearly 200 years later, writing from California using a technology made possible by Babbage's work on computing machines, Quincy Jones echoes his predecessors: "The significant accomplishments and innovative approaches of the Academy are compatible with my own visions of global peace and prosperity." Silvio Micali pulls all of these sentiments together in his rousing 2003 response: "Long Live Art and Science!" ■

Induction

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lectual community and society. If the original Fellows studied subjects ranging from 'the various soils of the country' to the commerce of America, the Academy now provides analyses of security on the Internet, corporate responsibility, and the place of the humanities in the university and beyond. The goal is to advance scholarship and inform public debate." (The orientation remarks appear on pages 15 – 22.)

During the orientation, attendees also had the opportunity to view a new exhibit featuring a selection from the thousands of letters of acceptance written by Fellows and Foreign Honorary Members over the years.

At the afternoon Induction Ceremony, held at Harvard's Sanders Theatre, the Academy

acknowledged the individual accomplishments of the newly elected members. Representatives of various disciplines spoke about the challenges of contemporary society and reflected on important issues facing American science and scholarship. The natural disasters of the past year were much on the minds of those who spoke. In a series of readings, poet Susan Stewart of Princeton University reminded the audience that "in this time of extreme weather we are closer than ever to the universal claims that water and wind and fire inevitably make on our fragile human worlds." The speakers included physicist and Nobel Laureate Eric Cornell (Class I), genetics researcher Nancy Wexler (Class II), Harvard Law School Dean Elena Kagan (Class III), historian and University of Chicago Provost Richard Saller (Class



John Anderson (Case Western Reserve University) and Nicholas Donofrio (International Business Machines)

IV), and television journalist Tom Brokaw (Class V). (The full text of the speakers' presentations is printed on pages 7 – 14.)

Concluding the ceremony, President Spacks observed: "Throughout its 225-year history, members of the Academy

have worked together to advance intellectual thought and constructive action. We are confident that our newest group of members will help us fulfill that mission in new and significant ways." Given the success of the day's events, they are off to a good start. ■