

2011 New York State Writers Hall of Fame Inductees Announced

On Friday, April 1, 2011 the Empire State Center for the Book will induct nine authors into the New York State Writers Hall of Fame. This group will include seven writers who are deceased and two living whose writings have made a lasting contribution to literature. The list includes the following:

John Ashbery (1927) Born in Rochester, NY. This American poet has published more than twenty volumes of poetry and won nearly every major American award for poetry, including a Pulitzer Prize in 1976 for his collection *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror*

Willa Cather (1873-1947) a Pulitzer Prize-winning American author who achieved recognition for her novels of frontier life on the Great Plains, works such as *O Pioneers!*, *My Ántonia*, and *The Song of the Lark*. In 1923 she was awarded the Pulitzer for *One of Ours* (1922), a novel set during World War I. Cather lived in New York for most of her adult life and writing career.

Julia DeBurgos (1914-1953) considered by many as the greatest poet to have been born in Puerto Rico. She spent her life between New York and Puerto Rico. On September 14, 2010 the US Postal Service issued a postage stamp in her honor.

Ralph Ellison (1914-1994) is best known for his novel, *Invisible Man* that won the National Book Award in 1953.

Paula Fox (1923) born in New York City she writes for both adults and children. Her novel *The Slave Dancer* (1973) received the Newbery Medal in 1974; and in 1978, she was awarded the Hans Christian Andersen Medal.

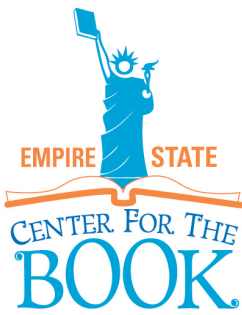
Lorraine Hansberry (1930-1965) attended the New School in New York City. She was a playwright who is best known for *A Raisin in the Sun*.

Madeleine L'Engle (1918-2007) born in New York City best known for her Young Adult fiction, particularly the Newbery Medal-winning *A Wrinkle in Time* and its sequels *A Wind in the Door*, *A Swiftly Tilting Planet*, *Many Waters*, and *An Acceptable Time*.

Herman Melville (1819-1891) born in New York City He was novelist, short story writer, essayist, and poet. He is best known for his novel *Moby-Dick* and the novella *Billy Budd*.

Dorothy Parker (1893-1967) a founding member of the Algonquin Roundtable she was a poet and satirist best known for her wit and her eye for urban foibles.

John Ashbery and **Paula Fox** are scheduled to attend the event to receive the honor in person. In 2008, John Ashbery's *Collected Poems 1956–1987* was published as part of the Library of America series. He was the first living poet to receive that honor. To coincide with the Hall of Fame induction, Paula Fox who turns 88 in April will also have a new book, *News from the World* (W.W. Norton) released that month.



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The induction ceremony into the NYS Writers Hall of Fame will be the focus of the Empire State Book Festival Gala scheduled from 6-10 p.m. on Friday, April 1, 2011 at the State Room, in Albany, New York. The ticketed event is open to the public. The gala will kickoff the state's second annual Empire State Book Festival. The Festival will bring together authors, illustrators, librarians, storytellers, publishers and booklovers to celebrate the literary heritage of New York State. It is free and open to the public. It will be held on Saturday, April 2nd from 10 am to 5:30 p.m. in Meeting Rooms 1-7 at the Empire State Plaza, where readings, author signings and special presentations will take place.

During the month of January, The Empire State Book Festival is currently competing for a \$50,000 Pepsi Refresh Challenge Grant. The grant is awarded to the ten programs receiving the most votes from the public. People can vote at <http://www.refresheverything.com/empirestatebookfestival>

The nominees into the NYS Writers Hall of Fame were chosen by a selection committee composed of Harold Augenbraum, Executive Director of the National Book Foundation; Barbara Genco, retired librarian from Brooklyn Public Library and Editor of Collection Management at Media Source , Brian Kenney, Editorial Director for Library Journal and School Library Journal; Kathleen Masterson director of the New York State Council on the Arts Literary Program, Bertha Rogers, executive director of Bright Hill Press & creator of the New York State Literary website & map; Rocco Staino, chairman of the Empire State Book Festival and Hong Yao Associate Coordinator Collection Development Queens Library.

Plans are under way to house The NYS Writers Hall of Fame at the New York State Library in Albany.

The Empire State Center for the Book is part of the Library of Congress Center for the Book and is housed at the New York Library Association.

For additional information on the Empire State Book Festival and Writers Hall of Fame visit www.empirestatebookfestival.org or contact Rocco Staino at rocco.staino@gmail.com or Michael Borges at director@nyla.org .