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Yale's David Brion Davis Receives Two Prestigious History Awards; Lectureship Established in His Honor

May 13, 2004. New Haven, CT ♦ Professor David Brion Davis, Sterling Professor of History Emeritus at Yale, and the founding director of the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition at the Yale Center for International and Area Studies, was given the Kidger Award by the New England History Teachers Association (NEHTA) and the Bruce Catton Prize for Lifetime Achievement by the Society of American Historians (SAH).

Professor Davis was given the Kidger Award at a dinner ceremony on March 25, 2004, at the Omni Hotel in New Haven. Founded in 1897, NEHTA is the oldest organization of its kind in the U. S. Its most prestigious award is the Kidger, and it is given annually to a scholar/historian and a classroom practitioner. The award is named after the late Horace Kidger whose career covered teaching responsibilities from the Newton (Mass.) Schools to Harvard. The distinguished historians and history educators who have been singled out include: Sidney Bradshaw Fay (Harvard, 1952); Charles E. Keller (Williams, 1960); Gwendolyn Carter (Smith, 1962); Frank Freidel (Harvard, 1966); John Demos (Brandeis, 1980); Jordan Fiore (Bridgewater State, 1982); Henry Steele Commager (Amherst/Columbia, 1983); Vera Laska (Regis, 1984); Thomas O'Connor (Boston College, 1985); Christa McAuliffe (NASA, 1986 - posthumous); Daniel Boorstin (Chicago/Library of Congress, 1988); and Henry Graf (Columbia, 1990).

The Society of American Historians presented Professor Davis with the Bruce Catton Prize for Lifetime Achievement on May 10, 2004, at a dinner celebration at the Union League Club in New York City. The award is named after Bruce Catton, 1899-1978, an American historian specializing in the Civil War and Pulitzer winner for *A Stillness at Appomattox*. The prize is the SAH's highest, and is given every other year. Recipients receive an award of \$5,000. SAH is a distinguished group of historians to which one must be elected. The organization emphasizes superior writing skills, and defines its mission "To Encourage Literary Distinction in the Writing of History and Biography." Professor Davis was the eleventh historian to receive this distinguished prize. Earlier winners include Yale's Sterling Professors C. Vann Woodward and Edmund S. Morgan, as well as Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., Henry Steele Commager, Bernard Bailyn, and John Hope Franklin.

Additionally, Yale has established the David Brion Davis Lectureship in honor of Professor Davis. The Gilder Lehrman Center will co-sponsor the annual lecture series (usually three lectures) beginning in the spring semester of 2005, and Yale University Press will publish each set of lectures as a short book. Lecture topics will range over the fields of slavery, abolition, and resistance. The inaugural lecturer will be Joseph Miller of the University of Virginia on "The Problem of Slavery As History." Professor Miller is an Africanist who has written widely on the African and Atlantic slave trade, especially to Brazil.

Professor Davis is one of the pre-eminent historians of slavery in the world today. His major works include *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, for which he received the 1967 Pulitzer Prize for non-fiction, the Mass Media Award of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and the Anisfield Wolf Award in Race Relations. Professor Davis's *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, was awarded the Bancroft Prize, the American Historical Association's Albert J. Beveridge Award, and the National Book Award for History and Biography in 1976. Professor Davis is currently working on *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Emancipation*, a two-volume work that will conclude his magisterial series on slavery.

After graduating summa cum laude from Dartmouth, Davis received his Ph.D. in 1956 from Harvard's program in the History of American Civilization. He taught at Cornell from 1955 until 1969 when he joined the Yale faculty. He served as President of the Organization of American Historians for the 1988-1989 term. He has also been a recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship and multiple grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Among Professor Davis' other notable works include *Slavery and Human Progress*, *Revolutions: Reflections on American Equality and Foreign Liberations*, *In the Image of God: Religion, Moral Values, and Our Heritage of Slavery*; *Antebellum American Culture: An Interpretive Anthology*; and most recently, *Challenging the Boundaries of Slavery*.

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