



## CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

It is my privilege to present to you the 2006 annual report of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

In its 40th year, the Endowment continued to bring the wisdom and benefits of the humanities to all Americans—both through our core programs and through the ongoing work of the *We the People* initiative, which seeks to strengthen the teaching, study, and understanding of American history and culture.

This year *We the People* offered its third annual Bookshelf grants to libraries across the country, featuring fifteen classic books for young readers on the theme of “Becoming American.” A generous gift from the McCormick Tribune Foundation allowed NEH to once again double the number of Bookshelf awards, to 2,000 libraries in 2006. We also expanded our *We the People* Landmarks of American History summer workshops this year to twenty-six historic and cultural sites across the United States, where more than 2,200 K-12 and community college teachers learned about significant American people and events.

Also in 2006, recognizing the profound effect that digital technology is having on humanities scholarship, programming, and access, the Endowment has taken a leadership role in exploring the new frontier of the digital humanities. Digital technology offers us an unprecedented chance to make the world of the humanities more accessible and more collaborative—so we launched an agency-wide Digital Humanities Initiative, or DHI, to focus our digital efforts and ensure their effectiveness.

In the short period since its launch, the initiative has moved forward rapidly, establishing five new grant programs. One such program is our Digital Humanities Start-up Grants. These grants are encouraging scholars with bright new ideas, and providing the seed money to help promising digital humanities projects get off the ground. For the first round of these Start-up grants, the Endowment was pleased to see that more than 70 percent of the applications came from institutions or individuals who had never before applied for an NEH grant—which tells us that DHI is reaching a whole new audience in the humanities.

Through these and many other initiatives and grant programs, the NEH is meeting its mandate to help all Americans explore the human condition and acquire the “wisdom and vision” essential to our democracy.

**BRUCE COLE**

*Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities*