

## NATIONAL HUMANITIES MEDALS •

In November 2004, President Bush awarded seven individuals and one organization the National Humanities Medal for their outstanding efforts to deepen public awareness of the humanities.

### **Marva Collins**

Marva Collins has trained more than one hundred thousand teachers, principals, and administrators in a teaching methodology she developed. After fourteen years teaching in the Chicago public school system, Collins left to open Westside Preparatory School in her home in 1975. Her students were children labeled problem or learning disabled, but by the end of the first year every child had surpassed expectations. Collins developed a core curriculum that emphasizes phonics, reading, English, math, and classics, and she has received national recognition for her success. President Reagan asked her to be secretary of education, but she declined in favor of staying at Westside. CBS aired a made-for-television movie about her life called *The Marva Collins Story*, which starred Cicely Tyson and Morgan Freeman.

### **Gertrude Himmelfarb**

Gertrude Himmelfarb is one of the leading scholars of the Victorian era. Since her days as an undergraduate at Brooklyn College, where she studied history, economics, and philosophy, Himmelfarb has pursued her interest in the history of ideas by exploring topics ranging from Victorian conceptions of poverty to the connections between Victorian society and our society today. For its time, she argues, Victorian society was the least repressive society in the world and the one that had the most potential for improvement and reform. Distinguished professor emeritus of history at the Graduate School of the City University of New York and former chairman of its doctoral program in history, Himmelfarb has written eleven books, including *Victorian Minds*, for which she won a National Book Award. Himmelfarb served on the National Council for the Humanities and was named the NEH Jefferson Lecturer in the Humanities in 1991.

### **Hilton Kramer**

Hilton Kramer is one of the country's most prominent art critics. Kramer never studied art history, but he grew up surrounded by artists in Cape Ann in Gloucester, Massachusetts. Hired as a staff art critic at the *New York Times* in 1965, he became chief art critic eight years later and published articles in a number of other newspapers and magazines. The author of several books of criticism, Kramer has written critical monographs on the art of Milton Avery, Gaston Lachaise, and Richard Lindner. He has taught at Indiana University, Bennington College, the University of Colorado, and Yale University. Kramer is editor and publisher of the *New Criterion*, which he founded with Samuel Lipman in 1982.

### **Madeleine L'Engle**

Madeleine L'Engle is the author of *A Wrinkle in Time*, which won the John Newbery Medal in 1963, a surprising success for a book that had been rejected by publishers more than thirty times. In 1981, she won a second Newbery award for her novel *A Ring of Endless Light*. The daughter of a writer and a pianist, L'Engle spent her adolescent years living in France and Switzerland. She attended Smith College, where she wrote plays and published short stories. After college, she acted and continued to write in New York City. Her first book, *The Small Rain*, was published in 1945; L'Engle has gone on to publish more than sixty books, including novels, poetry, essays, memoirs, and Bible commentaries.

### **Harvey C. Mansfield**

Harvey C. Mansfield is a political philosopher who looks at contemporary politics through the lenses of past thinkers. Mansfield has written thirteen books on topics such as Edmund Burke and the nature of political parties, and Machiavelli and indirect government. In *Taming the Prince: The Ambivalence of Modern Executive Power*, he stresses the importance of a strong presidency as a crucial element in American government. He has translated works by Machiavelli and Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, which he believes remains the best book about American government today. The recipient of Guggenheim and NEH fellowships, Mansfield has been a fellow at the National Humanities Center and was a member of the National Council on the Humanities from 1991 to 1994. He is the William R. Kenan, Jr., Professor of Government at Harvard University.

**John Searle**

John Searle is one of today's most important and influential philosophers. He has devoted his career to a central problem of philosophy—how physical brain matter results in conscious thoughts and feelings. The author of sixteen books, including *The Mystery of Consciousness*, *Rationality in Action*, and most recently *Mind, a Brief Introduction*, Searle teaches at the University of California at Berkeley, where he is Mills Professor of the Philosophy of Mind and Language. Before joining the faculty at Berkeley in 1959, Searle spent seven years at Oxford University, where he was a Rhodes Scholar. From 1992 to 1996 he was a member of the National Council on the Humanities.

**Shelby Steele**

Shelby Steele applies the universal teachings of philosophers such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Thomas Jefferson to illuminate the plight of blacks in present-day America. A research fellow at the Hoover Institution in California, he is a social critic whose ideas about race and racism have been controversial. His first book, *The Content of Our Character: A New Vision of Race in America*, which won a 1990 National Book Critics Circle Award, argues that self-doubt and fear of racism in the black community have hindered advancement as much as racism itself. Steele has appeared on *Nightline* and *60 Minutes*, and he won an Emmy for his writing for the 1991 documentary *Seven Days in Bensonhurst*.

**The United States Capitol Historical Society**

The United States Capitol Historical Society was founded by Congress in 1962 to educate the public about the history of the Capitol and Congress. For forty-two years the society has used its visitor center, books, films, lectures, and tours to provide an in-depth examination of the building and the institution it houses. The society collects and displays documents and artifacts from the Capitol's history, and it sponsors fellowships and internships on the art of the Capitol, the people who built it, and the lawmakers who inhabit it. In response to security restrictions instituted after September 11, 2001, the society has adapted by developing an outdoor tour, and printing and distributing its guidebook, *We the People, the Story of the United States Capitol*, in six languages.