



*The National Endowment
for the Humanities
presents the
Jefferson Lecture
in the Humanities*

Th Jefferson

*Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium
Washington, D.C.
Wednesday, May 6, 1992*

Program

Welcome and Remarks

*Lynne V. Cheney
Chairman
National Endowment for
the Humanities*

Introduction

*Edwin J. Delattre
Olin Scholar and Dean
School of Education
Boston University*

*The Twenty-first
Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities*

*Bernard Knox
"The Oldest Dead White European Males"*

Special Presentation

*Reception
National Museum of
American History*



Bernard Knox

Photograph: Teresa Zabala



Bernard Knox

"It seemed to me that there was no better key to an understanding of the modern world's power struggles than this unfinished history of a war fought twenty-five hundred years ago between two states whose combined population was less than half a million," Bernard Knox writes of Athens and Sparta in Essays Ancient and Modern. "And in Greek tragedy, which became the focus of my scholarly work and teaching, I found the same modernity, the same immediacy."

Born in Bradford England, in 1914, Knox was educated at St. John's College, Cambridge University, where he graduated with a B.A. in 1936. Knox, who is a naturalized American citizen, volunteered to serve in the U.S. Army during World II and received the Bronze Star with Cluster, as well as the Croix de Guerre from France. After the war, he earned a Ph.D. in classical studies at Yale University in 1948 and joined the faculty as professor of classics.

In 1961 Knox became the first director of Harvard University's Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington, D.C. Each year the center hosts eight "junior scholars" from around the world. Knox retired as director of the center in 1985. He is married to the novelist Bianca Van Orden and is the father of one son.

The Jefferson Lecture

In 1972 the National Endowment for the Humanities established the Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities as the highest official award the federal government bestows for distinguished intellectual achievement in the humanities. The lecture provides the opportunity for an outstanding thinker to explore, in a public forum, matters of broad concern in the humanities and to affirm the relationship between the great works of the humanities and the intellectual, moral, and political traditions of our civilization. The Jefferson lecturer is chosen each year by the National Council on the Humanities.

Previous lecturers have been Lionel Trilling, Erik Erikson, Robert Penn Warren, Paul Freund, John Hope Franklin, Saul Bellow, C. Vann Woodward, Edward Shils, Barbara Tuchman, Gerald Holton, Emily Townsend Vermeule, Jaroslav Pelikan, Sidney Hook, Cleanth Brooks, Leszek Kolakowski, Forrest McDonald, Robert Nisbet, Walker Percy, Bernard Lewis, and Gertrude Himmelfarb.

*The National Endowment
for the Humanities*

The National Endowment for the Humanities is an independent grant-making agency established by Congress in 1965 to support scholarship, research, education, and public programs in the humanities.

By definition, the humanities include, but are not limited to, the study of the following disciplines: history; philosophy; languages; linguistics; literature; archaeology; jurisprudence; the history, theory, and criticism of the arts; ethics; comparative religion; and those aspects of the social sciences that employ historical or philosophical approaches.

Grants are made through six divisions— Education Programs, Fellowships and Seminars, Preservation and Access, Public Programs, Research Programs, and State Programs—and one office, the Office of Challenge Grants. Responsibility for grant awards rests by law with the Chairman of the Endowment, who is advised by the National Council on the Humanities, a board of twenty-six distinguished private citizens.

Special Presentation

The portrait of Thomas Jefferson, to be presented to the Jefferson Lecturer by Endowment Chairman Lynne V. Cheney, is a facsimile of an engraving in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery. Cornelius Tiebout (ca. 1773-1832) engraved the portrait in 1801, the first year of Jefferson's presidency, after a painting by Rembrandt Peale (1778-1860). The text underneath the portrait is from the Declaration of Independence— "We hold these truths to be self evident...."

Writings by Thomas Jefferson, edited by Jeffersonian scholar Merrill D. Peterson, will also be presented to the Jefferson Lecturer. The book is a gift of the Library of America, an effort supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities to make more widely available the works of America's foremost thinkers and writers.

"I think by far the most important bill in our whole code is that for the diffusion of knowledge among the people. No other sure foundation can be devised, for the preservation of freedom and happiness."

*Jefferson: Writings
Letter to George Wythe, 1786*

"...for as long as we may think as we will, & speak as we think, the condition of man will proceed in improvement."

*Jefferson: Writings
Letter to William Green Munford, 1799*

Acknowledgments

Demonstrating a shared commitment to excellence and achievement in education and scholarship, the following donors join the National Endowment for the Humanities in presenting the twenty-first annual Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities. The Endowment gratefully acknowledges their cooperation and generous support.

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The May/June issue of Humanities, the bimonthly magazine of the National Endowment for the Humanities, is available free at the entrance. This edition features a conversation between Bernard Knox and Chairman Lynne V. Cheney.

The Jefferson Lecture will be broadcast nationwide on National Public Radio in May. Check local listings for dates and times.