Columbia Announces 2004 Lukas Prize Project Awards for Nonfiction Books

A definitive work on the Vietnam era by David Maraniss, a biography of photographer Eadweard Muybridge by Rebecca Solnit and an examination of slavery by John Boye were recently named as the winners of this year’s J. Anthony Lukas Prize Project Awards, which are co-administered by the Columbia’s Graduate School of Journalism and the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University.

The awards recognize excellence in nonfiction writing and are named after Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists and author J. Anthony Lukas. One of the three prizes is named for Mark Lynton, whose business executive and author of Accidental Journey: A Cameraman's Memoir of the United States—is characterized as a definitive work on the most extraordinary house in recent American history, the imagery of the modern world, including the ambitions of Leland Stanford, the man who captured it much about the bracing modernity of the late 19th century, as about the man who captured it in film. River of Shadows is a stunning account of the origins of cinema, the imagery of the American West, the grandeur and corruption of the transcontinental railroad and the manic ambitions of Leland Stanford, whose speeding racetrack Muybridge froze in time.

Two finalists for the Mark Lynton History Prize were also named: Anne Applebaum, for Gulag: A History (Doubleday), which recently won a Pulitzer for general nonfiction, and Steve Carter, for A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration (Harvard University Press). Hahn’s book recently received Columbia’s Bancroft Prize for distinguished works in history and a Pulitzer for history.

Bowe was named the winner of the J. Anthony Lukas Work-in-Progress Award for Slavery Inc., to be published by Random House. The work-in-progress prize carries a $45,000 award. “John Boye’s work—an examination of slavery through the tumultuous life of the photographer Eadweard Muybridge,” the jurors said. “Playing artfully with the conventions of biography, Solnit weaves through the camera and back at the photographer himself. What she sees reveals much about the bracing modernity of the late 19th century, as much as about the man who captured it in film. River of Shadows is a stunning account of the origins of cinema, the imagery of the modern world, including the ambitions of Leland Stanford, whose speeding racetrack Muybridge froze in time.”

The Lukas Prize Project Awards were established in 1998. The dean of Columbia’s Graduate School of Journalism, Nicholas Lemann, will moderate a panel discussion with the winners following the May 4 ceremony.

Columbia has come to terms with the challenges of Continuing Education to develop courses that will appear to—and to some extent will—draw students away from our traditional programs, or confuse the public and dilute the identity of our regular programs. I think there’s far less of that than we might think, but there’s going to be some. That’s the nature of the beast here.” Acting Vice President for Arts and Sciences Ira Kaminoff called on the IDEOR department to maintain an attitude of “high self-confidence” that its programs will not be confused with the Continuing Education program, which is called Continuing Education.

The measure passed by voice vote with a few nays. Student senators showed slides to explain their Agora project, an online initiative to provide transdisciplinarity to students and to Columbia’s scholarly resources. But Sen. Colin Parsons (Stu., GSAS) said, “I’m really glad to see Columbia’s progress in this area, but there are two issues here. Perhaps they still need to focus on some of the other issues before working on this.”

Two finalists for the Work-in-Progress Award were also noted: Eyal Press, for In the Line of Fire, and Beryl Satter, for Family Properties: Coso Contracts and the Fight to Save California’s West Side, 1950-1980. Both are slated to be published by Henry Holt.

A preliminary discussion of a proposal to restore ROTC to the Columbia campus was held in a prominent position on the agenda, never took place. Columbia University President Lee C. Bollinger, the chairman, argued that such a discussion would run either too long or too short, and decided to forego discussion altogether. Student senators were sufficiently unenthusiastic about the proposal that it never made it to the agenda, nor was there a chance to study ROTC that they pressured successfully for an amendment this term among the Advisory Committee on Student Affairs, Faculty Affairs, Education, and Alumni Affairs. The task force will consist of six students, five faculty members, and one alumnus, with faculty and student co-chairs.

A Housing Policy resolution calling for clarifying documentary and legal requirements was never taken up. The task force consisted of six students, five faculty members, and one alumnus, with faculty and student co-chairs. The resolution identified a crisis in the pricing of scholarly journals and calls on scholars to combat this trend by retaining copyright to their work, and to develop a new ethos, conceiving copyright as a kind of trust that assures free circulation of ideas. But in March the reception was not so friendly. “The suggestion that somehow our knowledge is a commodity, and we should trust our moral ability work for free, I find repugnant as a broad assault on a very narrow problem,” said Sen. Richard Bulliten (Ten., A&S/SS). Sen. Samuel Silverstein (Ten. HS) suggested confining the focus of the resolution to serials and periodicals, and leaving out databases. Waldron agreed with Bollinger’s suggestion to postpone the resolution to a later date and to consider these issues for another month.

The School of Continuing Education’s M.S. in technology management encountered opposition from Engineering School representatives. Alumni senator Bradley Bloch reported that though the dean had not formally objected to the program, there had been formal objections from the school’s Department of Industrial Engineering and Operations Research (IEOR). Executive Committee chair Paul Duby (IEOR) said: “I hear from my colleagues that there is a great interest in open access in scholarly publishing, and I think there has been no consultation whatsoever with SEAS faculty.

President Bollinger said continued education is a valuable service for the University to provide to the broader community, as well as a major source of revenue. The measure passed by voice vote with a few nays. Student senators showed slides to explain their Agora project, an online initiative to provide transdisciplinarity to students and to Columbia’s scholarly resources. But Sen. Colin Parsons (Stu., GSAS) said, “I’m really glad to see Columbia’s progress in this area, but there are two issues here. Perhaps they still need to focus on some of the other issues before working on this.”

Most of these issues will be back on the agenda for this year’s final Senate meeting on April 30, at 1:15 p.m., in the Davis Auditorium in Schapiro Building. Most documents distributed at plenary meetings are available on the Web, at www.columbia.edu/cu/senate.