



## The English-Speaking Union of the United States

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*Education. Scholarship. Understanding.*



### English-Speaking Union 2011 Ambassador Book Awards Presented

New York, NY -- The English-Speaking Union of the United States presented its 2011 **Ambassador Book Awards** for works best depicting American life and culture at its headquarters in New York City on Tuesday, September 13<sup>th</sup> to:

- **Rebecca Skloot** for *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (Crown);
- **Alan Brinkley** for *The Publisher: Henry Luce and His American Century* (Alfred A. Knopf);
- **Christian Wiman** for *Every Riven Thing* (Farrar Straus Giroux); and
- **Deborah Eisenberg** for *Collected Stories of Deborah Eisenberg* (Picador).

In addition, an Award for a Book of Special Distinction was given posthumously to **Tony Judt** for *The Memory Chalet* (The Penguin Press) and was accepted by his widow, Jennifer Homans. A Lifetime Achievement award was given to nonfiction writer and journalist **Janet Malcolm**.

The Ambassador Book Awards are granted annually to honor authors who illuminate the American experience, in the categories of American studies, biography, poetry and fiction, as selected by a distinguished independent panel of authors, editors and educators, chaired by poet and literary critic Adam Kirsch.

Presiding at the Ambassador Book Awards ceremony was English-Speaking Union Chair, the **Hon. Patricia S. Schroeder**, former President and CEO of the Association of American Publishers. Ambassador Book Awards Committee Chair **Adam Kirsch**, a senior editor at *The New Republic* and a columnist for *Tablet* magazine, introduced the winning authors. Selection committee members were: prolific award-winning author and professor **Maureen Howard**; author and literary critic **Brooke Allen**; author, editor and teacher **Ed Park** and award-winning author **Benjamin Taylor**.

The Ambassador Book Awards are the highlight of the English-Speaking Union's Books-Across-the-Sea program, founded in 1947 with T. S. Eliot as its first chairman. They are presented annually to authors whose books make an exceptional contribution to the interpretation of life and culture in the United States. Sets of the books are distributed through ESU Branches in the United States to ESUs around the world for placement in libraries and educational centers in more than thirty countries and cities as far flung as New Zealand, Hungary, Malaysia, Moldova, Madagascar, the Philippines, Poland, Brazil, Georgia, Mauritius and Mongolia. Previous Ambassador Book Award winners include W.E.B. DuBois, Archibald MacLeish, Jane Smiley, Richard Price, Arnold Rampersad, Grace Paley, John Updike, Doris Kearns Goodwin, Robert Pinsky, Tom Wolfe, David McCullough and Toni Morrison.

The English-Speaking Union of the United States is a non-profit, non-political educational organization whose mission is to celebrate English as a shared language to foster global understanding and good will by providing educational and cultural opportunities for students, educators, and members. The ESU carries out its work through a network of 70 U.S. Branches, sponsoring a variety of language and international education programs.



English-Speaking Union 2011 Ambassador Book Award winners with committee members:  
(l to r) Adam Kirsch, Ambassador Book Awards Committee Chair; Jennifer Homans accepting on behalf of Tony Judt, for *The Memory Chalet* (The Penguin Press); Molly Stern of Crown Publishing accepting on behalf of Rebecca Skloot for *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (Crown); Alan Brinkley for *The Publisher: Henry Luce and His American Century* (Alfred A. Knopf); Deborah Eisenberg for *Collected*

*Stories of Deborah Eisenberg* (Picador); Committee member Benjamin Taylor; Lifetime Achievement Award winner Janet Malcolm; Committee members Ed Park and Maureen Howard.

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For more information, please contact: Dorothy Fiedler at 212-818-1200, Ext. 221, [dfiedler@esuus.org](mailto:dfiedler@esuus.org).

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144 East 39<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10016

212-818-1200 212-867-4177 fax [info@esuus.org](mailto:info@esuus.org) [www.esuus.org](http://www.esuus.org)