

**FOR RELEASE
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**ADRIENNE RICH TO RECEIVE THE MEDAL FOR
DISTINGUISHED CONTRIBUTION TO AMERICAN LETTERS
FROM THE NATIONAL BOOK FOUNDATION**

**ROBERT SILVERS AND, POSTHUMOUSLY, BARBARA EPSTEIN,
CO-FOUNDERS OF *THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS*,
TO RECEIVE THE LITERARIAN AWARD FOR OUSTANDING SERVICE
TO THE AMERICAN LITERARY COMMUNITY**

**To Be Honored on November 15 at the 2006
National Book Awards Ceremony hosted by Fran Lebowitz**

*Lawrence Ferlinghetti to Announce National Book Award Finalists
from his bookstore, City Lights, in San Francisco on October 11*

New York, New York – The National Book Foundation, presenter of the National Book Awards, will bestow its 2006 Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters on **Adrienne Rich** in recognition of her incomparable influence and achievement as a poet and essayist. For more than fifty years, her eloquent and visionary writings have shaped the world of poetry as well as feminist and political thought. She won the National Book Award in 1974. Poet **Mark Doty** will present the Medal at the 57th National Book Awards Ceremony and Benefit Dinner in New York City on Wednesday, November 15. The evening will be hosted by writer and humorist **Fran Lebowitz**.

Also that evening, the National Book Foundation will award **Robert Silvers** and, posthumously, **Barbara Epstein**, co-founders of *The New York Review of Books*, with

In making the announcements, Harold Augenbraum, executive director of the Foundation, said, “Adrienne Rich, Robert Silvers, and Barbara Epstein have been major forces in the literary world for decades, mavericks and visionaries who have held all of us who love books and writing to the highest possible standard. They remind us that books have the power to enrich our world. Our Board of Directors is honored that they will accept these awards.”

This is the second year that the National Book Foundation has presented the Literarian Award, which was established to recognize individuals whose life’s work has enhanced the literary world as a whole (Lawrence Ferlinghetti was the 2005 recipient). “With *The New York Review of Books*, Robert Silvers and Barbara Epstein raised book reviewing to an art and made the discussion of books a lively, provocative and intellectual activity,” said Augenbraum. “From Mary McCarthy and Edmund Wilson to Gore Vidal and Joan Didion, *The New York Review of Books* has consistently employed the liveliest minds in America to think about, write about, and debate books and the issues they raise.” Robert Silvers will accept the award on behalf of himself and Epstein, who died earlier this year. *Note: more detailed biographies of Adrienne Rich, Robert Silvers, Barbara Epstein, Fran Lebowitz, Mark Doty and David Remnick follow at the end of the release.*

Lawrence Ferlinghetti to Announce Finalists on October 11

The eagerly-awaited announcement of the twenty Finalists for the 2006 National Book Awards will take place on October 11 at City Lights Books in San Francisco. Poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti, a co-founder of the store, will make the announcement. “The Foundation is excited to announce our Finalists from one of the country’s great bookstores in the heart of a city long associated with a passion for literature,” said Augenbraum, who will co-host the announcement at City Lights.

For more information about the Finalists Announcement and the invitation-only Awards dinner, please contact Camille McDuffie at Goldberg McDuffie Communications (212)446-5106

The National Book Foundation was established in 1989 to expand the impact of the National Book Awards – sponsored every year in Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry, and Young People’s Literature – beyond the single focus of literary recognition. The non-profit Foundation is well-known for its sponsorship of the Awards, which have been in existence since 1950, and is also known for the free educational programs, readings and other literary events it presents nationwide. The annual Awards ceremony serves as a benefit for the Foundation’s charitable efforts.

Adrienne Rich

Adrienne Rich was born in 1929 in Baltimore, MD and is the author of nearly twenty volumes of poetry, including *Diving into the Wreck*, which won the National Book Award for poetry in 1974. She was a Finalist an additional three times, in 1956, 1967 and 1991, and is also the author of several books of nonfiction prose.

Her first book, *A Change of World*, was published through the Yale Younger Poets series, as selected by W.H. Auden. She moved to New York in 1966 and began teaching a remedial English class for poor and third world students entering college. Her involvement in social justice movements has played into her work, but it was the feminist movement that most heavily influenced her.

Her poetry has won her two Guggenheim Fellowships, the first Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, a MacArthur Fellowship, lifetime achievement awards from the Lannan Foundation and the William Whitehead Award, among others. In 1997 she refused a National Medal for the Arts, saying “*I could not accept such an award from President Clinton or this White House because the very meaning of art, as I understand it, is incompatible with the cynical politics of this administration.*” In 2003 she refused to attend the White House symposium on “Poetry and the American Voice” along with fellow poets in protest of the Iraq war.

Robert Silvers and Barbara Epstein

Robert Silvers and Barbara Epstein were co-founders of the *New York Review of Books*, which they edited for over 40 years until her death earlier this year. Robert Silvers continues to edit the magazine.

Barbara Epstein worked in publishing and at *The Partisan Review* before becoming editor of *The New York Review of Books* in 1963. She began her publishing career at Doubleday & Co., where she served as junior editor after graduating from Radcliffe College in 1949.

Fran Lebowitz

Fran Lebowitz is the author of two critically acclaimed books of comic essays, *Metropolitan Life* (E.P Dutton) and *Social Studies* (Random House), both of which were *New York Times* bestsellers and which are currently available in *The Fran Lebowitz Reader*, published by Vintage Books. She is also the author of a children's book, illustrated by Michael Graves, *Mr. Chas and Lisa Sue Meet the Pandas* (Knopf) and has written for a number of publications including *Interview*, *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair* and *The New York Times*. Her next book, *Progress*, will be published by Knopf.

Mark Doty

Born in 1953 in Maryville, TN, Mark Doty is the author of seven books of poetry and three memoirs, including *My Alexandria*, which was a National Book Award Finalist, was chosen by Philip Levine for the National Poetry Series, and won both the National Book Critics Circle Award and Britain's T. S. Eliot Prize. He has also published *Heaven's Coast: A Memoir* (1996), which won the PEN/Martha Albrand Award for First Nonfiction. He has received fellowships from the Guggenheim, Ingram Merrill, Rockefeller, Whiting and Lila Wallace/Readers Digest Foundations as well as from the National Endowment for the Arts. He teaches in the graduate program at the University of Houston.

David Remnick

David Remnick began his career at *The New Yorker* as a staff writer in 1992. Since being named editor of *The New Yorker* in July, 1998, the magazine has won twenty-two National Magazine Awards. Before joining *The New Yorker*, he worked as a staff writer at the *Washington Post* and did a four-year stint as a correspondent in Moscow.

His nonfiction books include *Lenin's Tomb* (1993), which received both the Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction and a George Polk Award for excellence in journalism, *Resurrection* (1997), the first book to cover elections in Russia, *King of the World* (1998) on