

13th Annual

BIOGRAPHERS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

MAY 19 – 21, 2023

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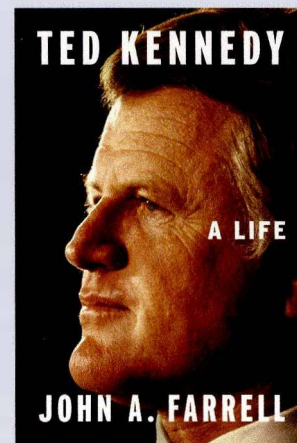
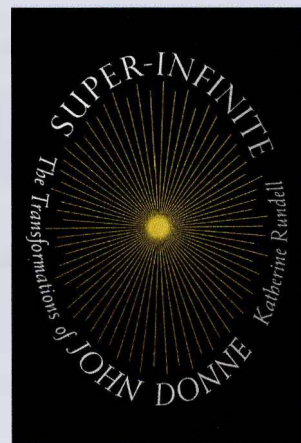
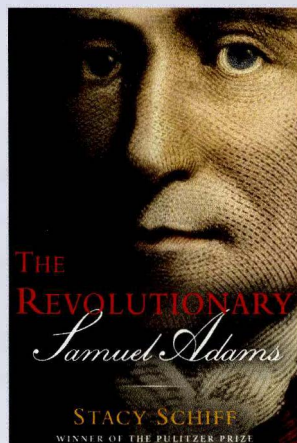
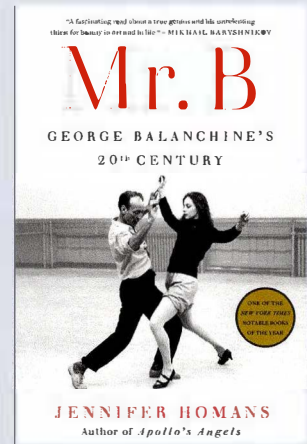
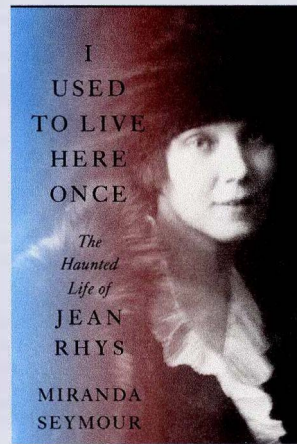
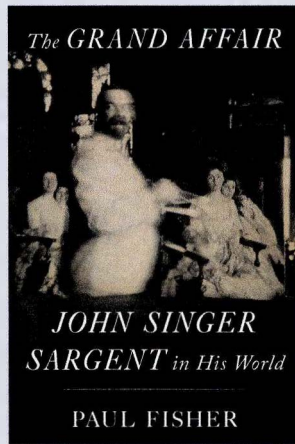
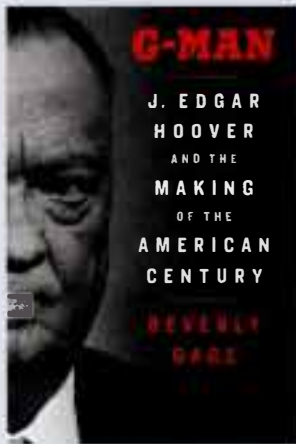
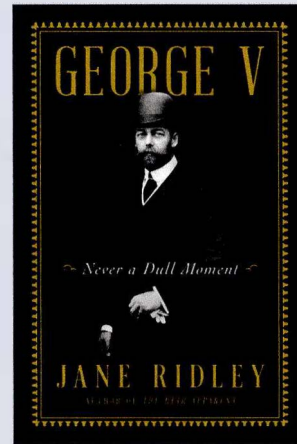
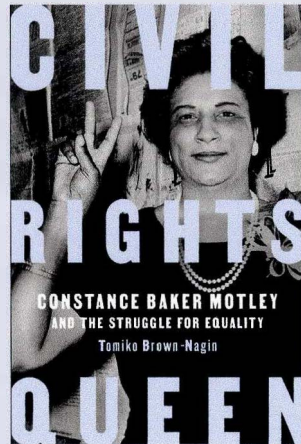
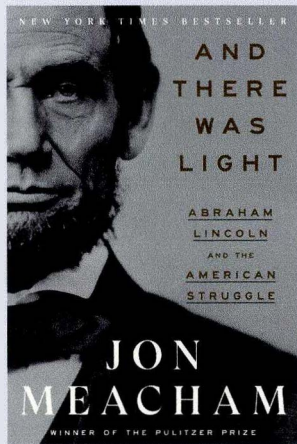
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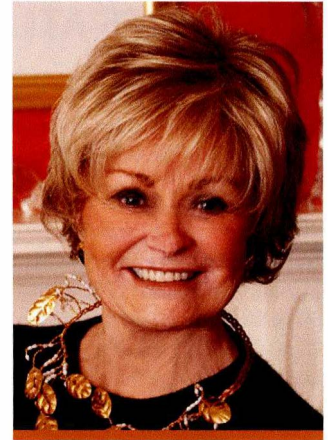
The 2023 Plutarch Award

Biographers International Organization is proud to present the Plutarch Award for the best biography of 2022.

Congratulations to those on the longlist:



The 2023 BIO Award Recipient Kitty Kelley



Kitty Kelley is the author of seven biographical works: *Oprah: A Biography* (2010), *The Family: The Real Story of the Bush Dynasty* (2004), *The Royals* (1997), *Nancy Reagan: The Unauthorized Biography* (1991), *His Way: The Unauthorized Biography of Frank Sinatra* (1986), *Elizabeth Taylor: The Last Star* (1981), and *Jackie Oh!* (1978).

Widely regarded as the foremost expert on and author of unauthorized biography, Kelley has displayed courage and deftness in writing unvarnished accounts of some of the most powerful figures in politics, media, and popular culture.

Of her art and craft, Kelley said, in *The American Scholar*, “I do not relish living in a world where information is authorized, sanitized, and homogenized. I read banned books, I applaud whistleblowers, and I reject any suppression by church or state. To me, the unauthorized biography, which requires a combination of scholarly research and investigative reporting, is best directed at those figures still alive and able to defend themselves, who exercise power over our lives....I firmly believe that unauthorized biography can be a public service and a boon to history.”

Among other honors, Kelley has received the 2005 PEN Oakland/Gary Webb Anti-Censorship Award; the 2014 Founders’ Award for Career Achievement, given by the American Society of Journalists and Authors; and, in 2016, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Washington Independent Review of Books. *Vanity Fair* named her to its Hall of Fame as part of the “Media Decade.”

Biographers International Organization bestows our BIO Award annually to a distinguished colleague who has made major contributions to the advancement of the art and craft of biography.

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THE JAMES ATLAS PLENARY >> LOCATION: PROSHANSKY AUDITORIUM >> TIME: 9:00–10:00 AM

Blanche Wiesen Cook and Beverly Gage in conversation

The plenary honors the memory of James Atlas (1949–2019), an exemplary biographer and BIO member whom his friend Anne Heller described as a “literary writer, esteemed editor, unstinting mentor, hilarious friend, and honorable combatant in the struggle to tell the story truly and well.”

Blanche Wiesen Cook is distinguished professor of history and women’s studies at John Jay College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Her definitive, three-volume biography of Eleanor Roosevelt, *The Early Years 1884–1933*, *The Defining Years 1933–1938*, and *The War Years and After 1939–1962*, published by Viking, was called “monumental and inspirational... [a] grand biography” by *The New York Times Book Review*. *Eleanor Roosevelt Volume One*, on *The New York Times* best-seller list for three months, received many awards, including the 1992 Biography Prize from the *Los Angeles Times*, and the Lambda Literary Award. *Eleanor Roosevelt Volume Two* was also a *New York Times* best seller. All three volumes are available in Penguin paperbacks and as e-books.



Eleanor Roosevelt Volume One, on *The New York Times* best-seller list for three months, received many awards, including the 1992 Biography Prize from the *Los Angeles Times*, and the Lambda Literary Award. *Eleanor Roosevelt Volume Two* was also a *New York Times* best seller. All three volumes are available in Penguin paperbacks and as e-books.



Beverly Gage is professor of 20th-century U.S. history at Yale University. Her courses focus on American politics, government, and social movements. Her book *G-Man: J. Edgar Hoover and the Making of the American Century*, a biography of former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, won the National Book Critics Circle Award for Biography and a 2023 Bancroft Prize in American

History, and was named a best book of 2022 by *The Washington Post* (Ten Best Books), *The Atlantic* (Ten Best Books), *Publishers Weekly* (Ten Best Books), *The New Yorker* (24 Essential Reads), *The New York Times* (100 Notable Books), *Smithsonian* (Ten Best History Books), and Barnes & Noble (Ten Best History Books). She is the author of *The Day Wall Street Exploded: A Story of America in Its First Age of Terror*, which examined the history of terrorism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, focusing on the 1920 Wall Street bombing. In addition to her teaching and research, Gage writes for numerous journals and magazines, including *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, and *The Washington Post*.

Saturday

PANELS >> LOCATION: CONCOURSE LEVEL OF THE GRADUATE CENTER

BASICS

Tools and Strategies for Research, Organizing, and Writing

10:15–11:15 AM

It’s a long way from index cards to 21st century software, but many biographers find themselves immersed in massive amounts of material and wondering if they have the right tools to manage it. We’ll explore tricks of the trade and useful ideas from experts. Old standbys Microsoft Word and Excel work for many people. So does Scrivener. And what about Evernote and CamScanner, or other document-scanning apps? Panelists will also share a variety of useful and reliable research resources (hello, Newspapers.com).

Moderator

Steve Paul, BIO board secretary and program committee co-chair, is the author of *Hemingway at Eighteen: The Pivotal Year That Launched an American Legend* and *Literary Alchemist: The Writing Life of Evan S. Connell*. The latter won the 2022 Bernard Brommel Award for best biography or memoir from the Society of Midland Authors. A longtime, semiretired reporter, editor, and book critic, and a former board member of the National Book Critics Circle, he is now at work on a biography of the American poet William Stafford. He also moderates a long-running online BIO roundtable on literary biography.

Panelists

Timothy Christian graduated as a Commonwealth Scholar from King’s College, Cambridge. He served as a law professor and dean at the Faculty of Law at the University of Alberta and a visiting professor in Japan and Taiwan. Christian read *A Moveable Feast* in the cafes of Aix-en-Provence when he was a young man studying French. Realizing that no one had written deeply about Mary Welsh Hemingway, Christian began researching her story—and discovered a woman vital to Hemingway’s art. *Hemingway’s Widow* was published in 2022. Christian is married to a lawyer and abstract artist, Kathryn Dykstra, and they live in a Mediterranean microclimate on Vancouver Island’s beautiful Saanich Inlet.

Caleb J. Gayle is an award-winning journalist and professor at Northeastern University who writes about the history of race and identity. His forthcoming books include *Pushahead: The Story of Edward McCabe and His Dreams of Colonization* and a children’s book, *What Was the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921?*. His first book, *We Refuse to Forget: A True Story of*

Black Creeks, American Identity, and Power, illuminated the extraordinary story of the Creek Nation, a Native tribe that both enslaved people and accepted Black people as full citizens, specifically through Cow Tom, a former Black chief of the Creek Nation, and how his descendants were divided and marginalized by white supremacy in America. Gayle holds fellowships from New America, PEN America, and Harvard’s Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study.

Carl Rollyson has published biographies of Marilyn Monroe, Lillian Hellman, Martha Gellhorn, Norman Mailer, Susan Sontag, Rebecca West, Jill Craigie, Michael Foot, Dana Andrews, Sylvia Plath, Amy Lowell, Walter Brennan, and William Faulkner. He is at work on *Ronald Colman: Hollywood’s Gentleman Hero* and *Making the American Presidency: How Biographers Shape History*. His reviews of biographies appear every Wednesday in *The New York Sun*. He has a weekly podcast, *A Life in Biography* (<https://anchor.fm/carl-rollyson>), and is the consulting editor for the Hollywood Legends series, University Press of Mississippi.

CRAFT

Graphic Biographies

10:15–11:15 AM

Inspired at least in part by the powerful and successful *Maus* books by Art Spiegelman, a new generation of artists and cartoonists has expanded the genre of narrative life stories told in visual formats. What kind of research, structuring, and writing decisions go into creating a graphic biography? What does the market look like today for this kind of work?

Moderator

Brian Jay Jones is an award-winning, *New York Times* best-selling author of four biographies of American pop culture icons, including *Jim Henson: The Biography* (Ballantine, 2013) and *Becoming Dr. Seuss* (Dutton, 2019). He is a former BIO president (2014–2016), vice president, and board member, and has served as a congressional staffer, policy wonk, speechwriter, and comic book store manager. He lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where he is writing a history of the U.S. Capitol for Dutton Books.

Panelists

Ken Krimstein is a cartoonist, author, and educator whose work appears in *The New Yorker*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New*

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York Times, and *The Chicago Tribune*. His 2021 book, *When I Grow Up: The Lost Autobiographies of Six Yiddish Teenagers*, has been named an NPR Best Book of the Year, a *Washington Post* Best Book of the Year and Top Ten Graphic Novel of 2021, and a *Chicago Tribune* Fall Best Read. His 2018 book, *The Three Escapes of Hannah Arendt*, won the Bernard J. Brommel Award for Biography and Memoir and was a finalist for the National Jewish Book Award. He teaches at DePaul University and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. His next book, *Einstein in Kafkaland*, is slated for publication this fall.

Dan Nadel is a writer and curator based in Brooklyn. His recent books include *It's Life As I See It: Black Cartoonists in Chicago, 1940-1980* and *Peter Saul: Professional Artist Correspondence, 1945-1976*. Nadel is a co-curator for a large-scale rethinking of the art history of the 1960s at the Whitney Museum of American Art (coming in March 2025). He is currently at work on a biography of cartoonist Robert Crumb, which will be published by Scribner in 2024.

BUSINESS

What Editors Want

10:15–11:15 AM

This panel will explore what top editors are looking for from biographers in the current market, where publishing tastes and trends are constantly changing. The editors will discuss how biography fits into their publishing lists, what conventional and inventive approaches work, and what subject areas and/or historical eras are most salable. They will offer biographers practical advice for setting priorities and avoiding pitfalls in writing proposals and manuscripts.

Moderator

Will Swift, a historian, biographer, and practicing clinical psychologist, is one of the founding board members of the Biographers International Organization. A former president of the organization, Swift developed BIO's well-regarded Editorial Excellence Award, which is presented each year to an exemplary editor at a mainstream or university press. Swift's first two books, *The Roosevelts and the Royals* (2004) and *The Kennedys Amidst the Gathering Storm* (2008), tell the stories of the intersections of two of America's top political dynasties and the British royal family during wartime and the intervening periods of peace. Swift's *Pat and Dick: The Nixons, An Intimate Portrait of a Marriage* illuminates the power dynamics of a misunderstood marriage.

Panelists

Amy Caldwell is editorial director at Beacon Press. Authors she has worked with include Eboo Patel, Danya Ruttenberg, Angela Saini, Jonathan Metzl, Ralph Eubanks, and many others. Books she has edited have won the Grawemeyer Award, the National Jewish Book Award, the Ruth Benedict Prize, have been named top ten books of the year by *Nature*, *Smithsonian*, and *Physics World*, and have been finalists for the *Los*

Angeles Times Book Award in science and technology and the NBCC awards. She is currently working with independent scholar Pamela Toler on a biography of the long unheralded Sigrid Schulze, one of the first reporters to warn Americans of the growing Nazi threat.

William Frucht joined Yale University Press as executive editor in 2008. Before that, he was an acquiring editor at Basic Books. Authors he has worked with include Lynn Margulis, Richard Florida, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Brent Scowcroft, Melissa Harris-Perry, Stephanie Jones-Rogers, John Mearsheimer, Anne-Marie Slaughter, Timothy Garton Ash, Barney Frank, Patrick Deneen, and Michael Walzer. Books he edited have won the *Los Angeles Times* Book Award for science, the *Los Angeles Times* Book Award for history, the Bancroft Award, and many other prizes, and been shortlisted for the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for general nonfiction.

John A. Glusman is vice president and editor-in-chief of W.W. Norton & Company. Authors he has worked with include Pulitzer Prize winner Richard Powers; *New York Times* best sellers Frans de Waal and Neil deGrasse Tyson; National Book Critics Circle Award winners Saidiya Hartman and John Lahr; *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize winner William Souder; Lyndall Gordon, long-listed for the PEN Jacqueline Bograd Weld Award for Biography; and William Taubman and Miranda Seymour, long-listed for the Plutarch Award. Glusman is the author of *Conduct Under Fire: Four American Doctors and Their Fight for Life as Prisoners of the Japanese, 1941-45*, which won the Colby Award for the best work of military nonfiction by a first-time author, and a Distinguished Alumnus of Columbia University's Graduate School of Arts & Sciences. He lives with his wife, Emily Bestler, editorial director of Emily Bestler Books/Atria, in Bedford, New York.

Hilary Redmon is a vice president and executive editor at Random House, where she edits several best-selling and award-winning authors, including Tara Westover, Ed Yong, Merlin Sheldrake, Pamela Colloff, Heidi Schreck, Kate Bowler, Kathryn Schulz, Rachel Swarns, Lauren Redniss, Jennifer Vanderbes, Margalit Fox, Zoe Chance, Kashmir Hill, Ross Andersen, Ferris Jabr, Vann Newkirk II, and Jenny Odell. She focuses on all kinds of nonfiction, particularly science, memoir, history, criticism, investigative journalism, and narrative that brings these subjects together in surprising ways.

ISSUES

Crossing Borders: Issues in Writing a Transnational Biography

10:15–11:15 AM

Many contemporary biographers cross national borders to write about subjects who live in different countries, with different cultures, religions, and languages. When an American biographer ventures into new terrains, the life and work of a subject may be seen anew, as it is placed in an international

matrix that frees the subject from cultural perspectives that may limit discussions in their own country. Some writers are welcomed for their comparative perspectives and some misunderstood or criticized for “trespassing” on cultural terrains. This panel will discuss the risks, difficulties, reception, and joys of their work in crossing borders.

Moderator

Patricia Laurence is professor emerita of English, City University of New York. She has published widely on transnational modernism, Virginia Woolf, and Bloomsbury, and women writers, including the group biography *Lily Briscoe's “Chinese” Eyes: Bloomsbury, Modernism, and China*; *Julian Bell: The Violent Pacifist*; and most recently, *Elizabeth Bowen, A Literary Life* (2021). Her literary criticism has been published in numerous collections and includes *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*.

Panelists

Rachel Brownstein is the author of *Tragic Muse: Rachel of the Comédie-Française* (Knopf, 1993; Duke University Press, 1995), winner of the 1993 George Freedley Award of the Theatre Library Association and listed as one of the Notable Books of 1993 by *The New York Times Book Review*. Recently, she has written *American Born: An Immigrant's Story, A Daughter's Memoir* (The University of Chicago Press, 2023). She is professor emerita from Brooklyn College, CUNY, and has also written about Jane Austen and life writing.

Mary Ann Caws is distinguished professor emerita of comparative literature, English, and French at the Graduate School

of the City University of New York, Officier of the Palmes Académiques, Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, recipient of Guggenheim, Rockefeller, and Getty fellowships, fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, author of *Surrealist Painters and Poets*, *Dora Maar: Picasso's Weeping Woman*, *Blaise Pascal: Miracles and Reason*, *The Modern Art Cookbook*, *Creative Gatherings: Meeting Places of Modernism*, the editor of *Yale Anthology of Twentieth-Century French Poetry*, and co-editor of *The Harper Collins World Reader*.

Celia Stahr, Ph.D., teaches art history at the University of San Francisco, where she specializes in modern, contemporary, and African art. Stahr is particularly interested in artists who cross cultural boundaries. Her book *Frida in America: The Creative Awakening of a Great Artist* was published in 2020 by St. Martin's Press. It received many positive reviews in publications such as *The New York Times* and *Art in America*. *Booklist* named it in its master list of Editors' Choice: Adult Books of 2020. Stahr will appear in a three-part BBC docuseries on Frida Kahlo that is slated to air in 2023.

BASICS

When Biography Is Not a Book

11:30 AM–12:30 PM

What does it take to tell life stories beyond the boundaries of a hardcover book? Filmed documentaries, long-form journalism, and, increasingly, the art of audio narratives and

ENJOY BIO'S FREE WEEKLY PODCAST SERIES

▶ BIO's free podcast series features insightful interviews with established as well as first-time biographers. You can listen to the series' episodes on BIO's website, or on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and Stitcher. BIO's podcast hosts, accomplished biographers and BIO members themselves, are John A. (Jack) Farrell, Kitty Kelley, Kevin McGruder, Lisa Napoli, Jennifer Skoog, Eric K. Washington, and Sonja Williams. Recent podcast guests include:

- » Candice Millard, *River of the Gods: Genius, Courage, and Betrayal in the Search for the Source of the Nile*
- » Gene Andrew Jarrett, *Paul Lawrence Dunbar: The Life and Times of a Caged Bird*
- » Mark Clague, *O Say Can You Hear: A Cultural Biography of the Star-Spangled Banner*
- » Stacy Schiff, *The Revolutionary: Samuel Adams*
- » Kostya Kennedy, *True: The Four Seasons of Jackie Robinson*
- » Susan Page, *Madam Speaker: Nancy Pelosi and the Lessons of Power*
- » Iris Jahmahl Dunkle, *Charmian Kittredge London: Trailblazer, Author, Adventurer*
- » E. Stanly Godbold, Jr., *Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter: Power and Human Rights, 1975-2020*
- » Aidan Levy, *Saxophone Colossus: The Life and Music of Sonny Rollins*
- » Li Shan Chan, *Searching for Lee Wen: A Life in 135 Parts*
- » Wanda Hendricks, *The Life of Madie Hall Xuma: Black Women's Global Activism During Jim Crow and Apartheid*
- » Carl Rollyson, *Sylvia Plath Day by Day, Volume 1, 1932-1955*

podcasts offer authors a bounty of opportunities and alternatives to book-length biography.

Moderator

Laurie Gwen Shapiro is a biographer, journalist, filmmaker, and NYU journalism professor. She writes for many publications, including *The New Yorker* and *The New York Times*. As a director, she has won the Independent Spirit Award and was nominated for an Emmy. Her unlikely *New Yorker* story, “The Improbable Journey of Dorothy Parker’s Ashes,” won a 2021 GANYC Apple Award for best article, and her *New York Times* profile of a living WWII pilot received the 2022 Silurians Press Club gold medallion as best profile. *The Stowaway*, her first nonfiction book, was an Indie Next selection and national best seller. Viking Books will publish her narrative nonfiction tale of Amelia Earhart’s marriage in 2024.

Panelists

Barbara Kopple is the producer and director of numerous documentary films, including *Harlan County, USA* and *American Dream*, both winners of the Academy Award for best documentary feature. In 1991, *Harlan County, USA* was named to the National Film Registry by the Librarian of Congress and designated an American Film Classic. Nominated for nine Emmy awards, her notable documentaries include *Miss Sharon Jones, Shut Up and Sing, Gigi Gorgeous, Woodstock: Now and Then*, and *Running From Crazy*, among many others. She has also directed and produced scripted films, episodic television, and commercials. Her Cabin Creek Films is based in New York City.

Penny Lane has been making award-winning, innovative nonfiction films for over a decade. This includes five features—most recently *Listening to Kenny G*, an HBO Original Documentary that premiered at the 2021 Toronto International Film Festival—and over a dozen short films. A 2020 Guggenheim Fellow, Lane has also received grants and awards from the Sundance Film Festival, Cinereach, Creative Capital, Chicken & Egg Pictures, Tribeca Film Institute, Wexner Center for the Arts, and many others. Lane has been honored with mid-career retrospectives at the Museum of the Moving Image, San Francisco DocFest, Open City Documentary Festival, and Cinema Moderne. She is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. And yes, Penny Lane is her real name.

Greg Young has been a co-host of The Bowery Boys: New York City History podcast since the summer of 2007, ac-

Feeling Stuck? BIO Offers Coaching

Whatever state your biography’s in—vague idea, proposal, well underway—BIO’s experienced biographers can help. BIO offers a one-hour coaching session via phone or email for the member discounted rate of \$60. (Coaches may charge more for subsequent hours.) Learn more about the program online in the Members Area of the BIO website.

claimed as a vital resource for those who love storytelling and history and winner of the 2015 GANYC Award for Outstanding Achievement in Radio Program/Podcasts (audio/spoken word). He is co-author of *Adventures in Old New York*, which won the 2016 GANYC Award for Outstanding Achievement in Nonfiction Book Writing.

Daniel Zalewski is the features director of *The New Yorker*. He edits many of the magazine’s staff writers, among them David Grann, Jane Mayer, Patrick Radden Keefe, Ian Parker, Lawrence Wright, and Rebecca Mead. Previously, he was an editor at *The New York Times Magazine* and at *Lingua Franca*. At *The New Yorker*, he has published Profiles of such figures as Ian McEwan, Guillermo del Toro, and Werner Herzog, and he has written about everything from amnesia to art restoration.

CRAFT

Trick or Treat? Can You Trust Your Subject’s Autobiography?

11:30 AM–12:30 PM

At first sight, autobiographies and memoirs seem to be veritable treasure troves for the biographer. They appear to take us directly to our subjects and provide the personal touch that can so often be missing. But how valuable are such “ego documents”? Can we be overreliant on them? Are they not frozen snapshots, reflecting just one point in time, so that they can misleadingly be taken to represent their creators’ views for once and for all? How dependable is a person’s view of her/himself? Does the autobiography/memoir perhaps hoodwink us into thinking that we “know” that person? How much do we invest in our subject, and might our biographies unwittingly become a version of our own autobiography?

Moderator

BIO Award-winning writer **James McGrath Morris** is the author of five biographies and several works of narrative nonfiction. His newest book, *Tony Hillerman: A Life*, was a finalist for the Edgar Award, given by the Mystery Writers of America, and also for the Macavity Award, given each year by Mystery Readers International, the largest mystery fan organization in the world. He makes his home in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Panelists

For many years **Angela V. John** was professor of history at the University of Greenwich, London. She is currently an honorary professor at Swansea University and president of Llafur, the Welsh People’s History Society. She has written/edited a dozen books. They include biographies of the radical English war correspondent Henry W. Nevinson, and of his wife, Evelyn Sharp, suffragette, author, and journalist, also a life of the American-born actor, Elizabeth Robins. *Rocking the Boat: Welsh Women Who Championed Equality 1840-1990* is an essay collection exploring different ways of writing biography. John is currently writing the life of Philip Burton.

Louise (Lucy) W. Knight is a biographer and historian. She is currently a visiting scholar at Northwestern University. She has written two biographies, one on Jane Addams’s formative years, *Citizen: Jane Addams and the Struggle for Democracy* (2005) and the other a short full life, *Jane Addams: Spirit in Action* (2010). Her current project is a dual biography of the radical abolitionist-feminists Sarah and Angelina Grimké. The book, tentatively titled *American Sisters: Sarah and Angelina Grimké and the Fight for Human Rights*, is under contract with Farrar, Straus and Giroux. She is a former board member of BIO.

Judith P. Zinsser, professor emerita of history at Miami University (Ohio), wrote *Emilie Du Châtelet: Daring Genius of the Enlightenment* (2006). Her articles on the marquise have appeared in journals in both the U.S. and Europe, and in edited collections on the era. She collaborated on a translation of Du Châtelet’s writings published in 2009. Zinsser is also co-author of the two-volume classic *A History of Their Own: Women in Europe From Prehistory to the Present* (2000). Zinsser’s current project, on the third Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo (1938-62), takes readers from its origins in Europe to North America after World War II stranded the company in the U.S.

BUSINESS

Book Promotion in the Age of Social Media

11:30 AM–12:30 PM

Do you need Twitter, etc. to succeed as an author? Will a Facebook campaign land you on a best-seller list? What kind of promotion will your publisher, if you have one, engage in? It’s one sort of excruciating to research, write, and find a publisher for a book; it’s another to get it out in the world. Come hear how some others are navigating the all-encompassing, always-on world of book marketing in the age of social media.

Moderator

Lisa Napoli is the author of four books of nonfiction—one memoir, about her time in and around the Kingdom of Bhutan, and three biographies (the most recent of which is about the “founding mothers” of NPR). As a journalist, she’s worked at *The New York Times*, MSNBC, and public radio’s Marketplace. A native of Brooklyn and a graduate of Hampshire College, she’s currently working on her master’s degree in the Biography and Memoir program at CUNY. With Sonja Williams, she’s helped to create BIO’s podcast.

Panelists

Liz Dubelman is an Emmy Award winner and the founder and CEO of the book marketing and content development company VidLit Productions. She has co-edited and contributed to *What Was I Thinking? 58 Bad Boyfriend Stories* (St. Martin’s Press, 2009), based on the VidLit series of the same name. She is also a magazine writer of fiction and nonfiction. Well over 1 million people have viewed her short story, “Craziest,” on the web. She has deep experience leveraging a variety of internet

technologies, as well as film, video, and animation production, podcasting, marketing, and promotion, and has coached writers about the most effective ways of telling a story. Her digital career includes writing and producing original programming for Carrie Fisher, Bill Maher, David Foster Wallace, Cherry Lane Publishing, Microsoft Interactive, Bill Bryson, and others. She was creative director of News Corp’s internet content group, and has been a consultant to all of the major Hollywood studios in the area of digital rights and content strategy for over 20 years.

Allison Gilbert, an award-winning journalist and co-author (with writer Julia Scheeres) of *Listen, World!: How the Intrepid Elsie Robinson Became America’s Most-Read Woman*. Published by Seal Press in September 2022, this biography of William Randolph Hearst’s highest-paid woman writer has been called “broadminded, sharp-witted, fast-paced, and funny” by Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer Debby Applegate. Gilbert has authored three books on grief and loss: *Passed and Present, Always Too Soon*, and *Parentless Parents*.

Brian Jay Jones is the award-winning, *New York Times* best-selling biographer of “slightly off-center American geniuses” (*Washington Post*). His most recent book is *Becoming Dr. Seuss: Theodor Geisel and the Making of an American Imagination* (Dutton, 2019), but he is also the author of *Washington Irving* (Arcade, 2008), *Jim Henson: The Biography* (Ballantine, 2013), and *George Lucas: A Life* (Little, Brown, 2016), which means he’s officially covered a large part of your childhood. He is currently at work on a history of the U.S. Capitol.

ISSUES

Race, History, Legacies

11:30 AM–12:30 PM

The field of Black biography has expanded exponentially as historians, journalists, and biographers uncover long-hidden stories of America in archives, documents, periodicals, and material closets. Publishers have responded, especially since the social upheavals of 2020, with an increasing effort to share the stories that emanate from Black Americans, Black culture, and from the race-related tragedies that have defined the nation’s long history. But questions about the field’s future remain. How do we develop greater opportunities to tell these stories? How do we continue to demonstrate to publishers the market viability of these opportunities? How can the academy work to enhance the building up of archives to produce the next biographies which center Black lives?

Moderator

Caleb J. Gayle is an award-winning journalist and professor at Northeastern University who writes about the history of race and identity. His forthcoming books include *Pushahead: The Story of Edward McCabe and His Dreams of Colonization and a children’s book, What Was the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921?*. His first book, *We Refuse to Forget: A True Story of*

Black Creeks, American Identity, and Power, illuminated the extraordinary story of the Creek Nation, a Native tribe that both enslaved people and accepted Black people as full citizens, specifically through Cow Tom, a former Black chief of the Creek Nation, and how his descendants were divided and marginalized by white supremacy in America. Gayle holds fellowships from New America, PEN America, and Harvard's Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study.

Panelists

Gene Andrew Jarrett is dean of the faculty and William S. Tod Professor of English at Princeton University. His latest book, *Paul Laurence Dunbar: The Life and Times of a Caged Bird*, published in 2022 by Princeton University Press, examines the Gilded Age writer known as the poet laureate of

his race. Jarrett also authored *Representing the Race: A New Political History of African American Literature* and *Deans and Truants: Race and Realism in African American Literature*, and he co-edited *The Collected Novels of Paul Laurence Dunbar* and *The Complete Stories of Paul Laurence Dunbar*.

Kevin McGruder is associate professor of history at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. He is a first-time biographer and author of *Philip Payton: The Father of Black Harlem*, published by Columbia University Press in 2021. During the 1990s, McGruder served as the director of real estate development for the Abyssinian Development Corporation, a nonprofit church-based organization in Harlem, and he wrote a book about race and real estate in Harlem.

Rachel L. Swarns is a journalist, author, and professor who writes about race and race relations as a contributing writer for *The New York Times*. She has reported on immigration, presidential politics and First Lady Michelle Obama. She also has reported from Russia, Cuba, Guatemala, and southern Africa, where she served as the *Times's* Johannesburg bureau chief. She is currently an associate professor of journalism at New York University. She is the author of *American Tapestry: The Story of the Black, White, and Multiracial Ancestors of Michelle Obama* and a co-author of *Unseen: Unpublished Black History From The New York Times Photo Archives*. Her forthcoming book about Georgetown University's roots in slavery will be published by Random House.

BASICS

Popping the Questions: The Art of the Interview

3:15–4:15 PM

Biographers who are also veteran music and popular culture journalists (*Rolling Stone*, *Vanity Fair*, *New York Times*) offer insider tips on the art of the interview with a diversity of subjects, from celebrities to behind-the-scenesters. They'll share strategies for approaching difficult sources, for interviewing and writing about living subjects, and for managing such issues as conflicting memories and reconciling remembered accounts with documented facts.

Moderator

Holly George-Warren is the award-winning author of 16 books, including the biographies *Janis: Her Life and Music*, named best nonfiction book of 2019 by the Texas Institute of Letters; *A Man Called Destruction: The Life and Music of Alex Chilton*; and *Public Cowboy No. 1: The Life and Times of Gene Autry*. Her writing has appeared in *Rolling Stone*, *The New York Times*, *The (London) Times Literary Supplement*, *Oprah Daily*, *The Village Voice*, and *Entertainment Weekly*. She teaches at the State University of New York–New Paltz and New York University. George-Warren is currently at work on a biography of Jack Kerouac.

Panelists

Anthony DeCurtis is a contributing editor at *Rolling Stone* and a distinguished lecturer in creative writing at the University of Pennsylvania. He is the author, most recently, of *Lou Reed: A Life*, and co-author of Clive Davis's autobiography, *The Soundtrack of My Life*, a *New York Times* best seller. He won a Grammy Award for best album notes and holds a Ph.D. in American literature.

Sheila Weller is an author and magazine writer whose work has appeared in *Vanity Fair*, *The New York Times*, and *New York* magazine, among other publications. She is the author of the much-praised *New York Times* best seller *Girls Like Us: Carole King, Joni Mitchell, Carly Simon—and the Journey of a Generation*. She is also the author of the acclaimed family memoir *Dancing at Ciro's: A Family's Love, Loss, and Scandal on the Sunset Strip* and *The News Sorority: Diane Sawyer, Katie Couric, Christiane Amanpour—and the Triumph of Women in TV News*. Her latest book is *Carrie Fisher: A Life on the Edge*.

CRAFT

Secrets and Lives: Ethical Dilemmas in Biography

3:15–4:15 PM

When it comes to seeking clues to our subjects' secrets, what boundaries are uncrossable? Once private matters are uncovered, are there limits to disclosure? And what about the un-recoverable, when there are powerful hints but no solid evidence? This panel expands on an issue raised in BIO's Facebook group after one member asked for feedback about software capable of removing the top layer of ink from crossed-out passages in her subject's private journals. Does our allegiance to the craft grant us permission to overrule our subject's wishes? What is our responsibility to readers? To what extent are ethical boundaries determined by content (how potentially explosive is the revelation?), or distance in time and the passage of generations? Is the biographer's internal compass a reliable guide? How should the biographer accommodate to 21st-century expectations regarding what was once taboo? Panelists will discuss the quandaries they've faced and the decisions they've reached.

Moderator

Megan Marshall is the author of *The Peabody Sisters*, winner of the Francis Parkman Prize, the Mark Lynton History Prize, the Massachusetts Book Award in nonfiction, and a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in biography; *Margaret Fuller: A New American Life*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the Massachusetts Book Award; and *Elizabeth Bishop: A Miracle for Breakfast*, a finalist for the Christian Gauss Award in literary criticism from the Phi Beta Kappa Society. A recipient of fellowships from the Radcliffe Institute, the Cullman Center of the New York Public Library, the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, she is the Charles Wesley Emerson Professor at Emerson College, a

past president of the Society of American Historians, and the recipient of the 2022 BIO Award.

Panelists

Paul Fisher is a biographer and cultural historian who has taught at Yale, Wesleyan, Boston University, and Harvard, and is currently professor of American Studies at Wellesley College. His group biography *House of Wits: An Intimate Portrait of the James Family* (Henry Holt, 2008) was designated a *Spectator* book of the year. His most recent biography, *The Grand Affair: John Singer Sargent in His World* (FSG, 2022) was named a *TLS* book of the year. He contributed to the groundbreaking exhibition catalog *Boston's Apollo* at the Gardner Museum that won a George Wittenborn award for excellence in art publishing in 2020.

Ruth Franklin's book *Shirley Jackson: A Rather Haunted Life* (2016) won numerous awards, including the National Book Critics Circle Award for Biography and BIO's Plutarch Award, and was named a *New York Times* Notable Book of 2016, a *Time* top nonfiction book of 2016, and a "best book of 2016" by *The Boston Globe*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, NPR, and others. She is also author of *A Thousand Darknests: Lies and Truth in Holocaust Fiction* (2011), a finalist for the Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature. Her criticism and essays appear in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *The New York Review of Books*, and other publications. She is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship in biography, a Cullman Fellowship at the New York Public Library, a Leon Levy Fellowship, and the Roger Shattuck Prize for Criticism. She is at work on a book about Anne Frank for the Yale Jewish Lives series.

Abigail Santamaria is the author of *Joy: Poet, Seeker, and the Woman Who Captivated C.S. Lewis* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015), and is currently at work on *I Am Meg: The Life of Madeleine L'Engle*, forthcoming from Farrar, Straus and Giroux. She is the recipient of a National Endowment for the Humanities Public Scholar grant (2022), a Sustainable Arts Foundation award (2021), and a Leon Levy Center for Biography fellowship (2019). Her essays have appeared in *Vanity Fair* and *Literary Hub*, among other publications.

BUSINESS

The Art of the Proposal

3:15–4:15 PM

Drafting and refining a book proposal has become one of the essential ingredients to selling your book and yourself to potential agents and editors. As many biographers find, it's one of the most difficult but important parts of the process and one way writers can focus their goals and convince even themselves of the necessity of their projects.

Moderator

Eric K. Washington is the author of *Boss of the Grips: The Life of James H. Williams and the Red Caps of Grand Central*

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

12:30–2:00 PM

Please serve yourself lunch from the buffet and then find your assigned table in the Concourse. The roundtable topics are arranged by number. Unnumbered tables are reserved for those not wishing to participate in a roundtable. Space is limited at each table, so please sit with the roundtable assigned to you during registration.

- 1 >> American History: Kai Bird
- 2 >> Biography as Cultural History: Penelope Rowlands
- 3 >> Biography, BIO, and Ethics: James McGrath Morris
- 4 >> Biography for Magazines and Websites: Greg Daugherty
- 5 >> Biography for Young Readers: Michael Burgan
- 6 >> First-Time Biographers: Allison Gilbert
- 7 >> Group Biography: Janice Nimura
- 8 >> How to Use FOIA: Victoria Phillips
- 9 >> International Biography: Vladimir Alexandrov
- 10 >> Literary Biography, Table 1: Ruth Franklin
- 11 >> Literary Biography, Table 2: Linda Leavell
- 12 >> Military History: Marc Leepson
- 13 >> Music and Pop Culture: Holly George-Warren
- 14 >> On Playwrights, Theater and Performing Arts: Michael Paller
- 15 >> Permissions, Fair Use, Other Legal Issues: Ellen Brown
- 16 >> Promotional Strategies: Jennifer Richards
- 17 >> Recent Political History: Louise W. Knight
- 18 >> Telling Immigrants' Stories
- 19 >> Tracing Black Lives: Tamara Payne
- 20 >> Women's Lives: Carla Kaplan

Terminal, a biography of a once influential Harlem Renaissance-era labor leader, which won the Herbert H. Lehman Prize and the GANYC Apple Award and was finalist for the Brendan Gill Prize. He was a CUNY Leon Levy Center for Biography fellow, a fellow-in-residence of the Museum of Fine Arts Houston/Brown Foundation's Dora Maar House in Ménerbes, France, and an A'Leia Bundles Community Scholar of Columbia University from 2014 to 2017. He is a board member of Biographers International Organization and of New York City's Archives, Reference, and Research Advisory Board (ARRAB). His first book, *Manhattanville: Old Heart of West Harlem*, inspired a design project awarded the 2010 MASTerworks Award from the Municipal Art Society of New York. He is the founding owner of Tagging-the-Past, a public history organization.

Panelists

Faith Childs is president of Faith Childs Literary Agency in New York and represents novelists and nonfiction writers, including biographers, historians, critics, and journalists. For three decades she has been actively engaged in efforts to increase the representation of people of color in the publishing industry. In the decade before becoming a literary agent, she was a lawyer. Among her authors are Elizabeth Alexander, Anne C. Bailey, Annette Gordon-Reed, Kerri K. Greenidge, Tamara Payne, and Eric K. Washington.

Sam Hiyate, founder and CEO of The Rights Factory, worked at the literary magazines *Blood & Aphorisms* and *The Quarterly* in the '90s. He ran the edgy micropublisher Gutter Press from 1993 to 2002, as publisher, and launched the literary division of The Lavin Agency in 2003, building a client list and completing his first deals. He's keen to discover and help new writers prepare their works for market, and to help them build lasting careers with their talent. Hiyate is also the host of the podcast *Agent Provocateur*, giving a behind-the-scenes view into publishing and agenting.

Emily Wunderlich is a senior editor at Viking, where she publishes nonfiction in a range of categories. She is drawn to strong voices; undiscovered or underappreciated histories and figures, and fresh takes on known ones; new arguments that recast our understanding of the world around us; and books on women's issues and social justice. She ran a nonfiction literary reading series in Manhattan called Big Umbrella, and prior to Viking, she worked at Gotham Books and Macmillan. She is a graduate of the University of Missouri and began her publishing career at *The Missouri Review*.

ISSUES

Biography and the Law

3:15–4:15 PM

Law and justice rather than writers' legal issues are the subjects of this panel. Panelists will share their experience and stories of how the lives of Supreme Court justices, lawyers,

lawmen, and lawmakers draw biographers and readers into the grand sweep of history.

Moderator

Kathleen Stone, as a lawyer, was a law clerk to a federal district judge, litigation partner in a law firm, and senior counsel in a financial institution. She also taught seminars on American law in six foreign countries, including as a Fulbright Senior Specialist. Her book, *They Called Us Girls: Stories of Female Ambition from Suffrage to Mad Men* (Cynren Press 2022), is a collection of biographical profiles of women who rejected the housewife paradigm of the mid-20th century and instead had careers in male-dominated professions. Her website is kathleencstone.com.

Panelists

Beverly Gage is professor of 20th-century U.S. history at Yale University. Her courses focus on American politics, government, and social movements. Her book *G-Man: J. Edgar Hoover and the Making of the American Century*, a biography of former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, won a 2023 Bancroft Prize in American History and was named a best book of 2022 by *The Washington Post* (Ten Best Books), *The Atlantic* (Ten Best Books), *Publishers Weekly* (Ten Best Books), *The New Yorker* (24 Essential Reads), *The New York Times* (100 Notable Books), *Smithsonian* (Ten Best History Books), and Barnes & Noble (Ten Best History Books). She is the author of *The Day Wall Street Exploded: A Story of America in Its First Age of Terror*, which examined the history of terrorism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, focusing on the 1920 Wall Street bombing. In addition to her teaching and research, Gage writes for numerous journals and magazines, including *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, and *The Washington Post*.

Marion Orr is the Frederick Lippitt Professor of Public Policy and professor of political science at Brown University. He is the author of *The House of Diggs: The Untold Story of Congressman Charles C. Diggs, Jr.'s Activist Leadership—From Emmett Till to Anti-Apartheid—and the Scandal That Nearly Erased a Legacy of Social Justice* (University of North Carolina Press, forthcoming), the first biography of Michigan's first Black congressman and perhaps the most consequential Black federal legislator to serve in the U.S. Congress. He is the author and/or editor of seven books. Orr is the 2022 recipient of BIO's Frances "Frank" Rollin Fellowship. *The House of Diggs* is his first biography.

Brad Snyder teaches constitutional law, constitutional history, and sports law. He is the author of *Democratic Justice: Felix Frankfurter, the Supreme Court, and the Making of the Liberal Establishment* (Norton). He has published law review articles in the *Vanderbilt Law Review*, *Notre Dame Law Review*, *Law & History Review*, *UC-Davis Law Review*, and *Boston College Law Review* and is the author of *The House of Truth: A Washington Political Salon and the Foundations of American Liberalism* (Oxford University Press, 2017). Prior to law teaching, Snyder worked as an associate at Williams & Connolly LLP and wrote two critically acclaimed books about baseball, including *A Well-Paid Slave: Curt Flood's Fight for*

Free Agency in Professional Sports (Viking/Penguin, 2006). A graduate of Duke University and Yale Law School, he clerked for the Hon. Dorothy W. Nelson on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

BASICS

Back to the Archives

4:30–5:30 PM

Despite the rise in digitized databases, with historians coming to rely on them during the pandemic, the import of paper archives that demand in-person work remains. With post-pandemic budget cuts for archives, archivists, and travel budgets that enable scholars to travel, how do we navigate and justify research in traditional archives? This panel will include archivists and researchers working in the vast holdings of the New York Public Library and the United States National Archives. How to navigate both private and public collections and finding aids, as well as the particulars of government sources, including Freedom of Information Act resources, will be discussed.

Moderator

Victoria Phillips, Ph.D., is the author of *Martha Graham's Cold War: The Dance of American Diplomacy*. She is a global fellow at the Wilson Center, where she co-directs the Cold War Archival Research Institute (CWARI). At the Oxford University Centre for Life Writing she is working on a biography of Eleanor Lansing Dulles (Lexington Books/Rowman & Littlefield), while pursuing a second doctorate in theology and religion. She is co-founder of the Global Biography Working Group, serves on the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History board, and her papers are held at the Library of Congress.

Panelists

Susannah Hollister is an NEH Long-Term Fellow at the New York Public Library, where she is at work with Emily Setina on a co-authored biography of New York School poet and teaching pioneer Kenneth Koch. Their previous collaboration was a critical edition of Gertrude Stein's *Stanzas in Meditation* (Yale University Press, 2012). Hollister holds a Ph.D. in English from Yale and has taught at the University of Texas and the U.S. Military Academy. Her work on U.S. poetry, archives, and pedagogy has received support from the ACLS, NEH Summer Stipends, the American Philosophical Society, and others. She lives in Hightstown, New Jersey.

Emily Setina is an associate professor of English at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She is the author of *The Writer in the Darkroom: Photography and Biography in Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, and Marianne Moore* (forthcoming from Oxford University Press) and has published numerous essays on 20th- and 21st-century writers and artists. With Susannah Hollister, Setina is currently at work on a co-authored biography of the New York School poet and teaching pioneer Kenneth Koch. Their previous collaboration was a critical edition of Stein's *Stanzas in Meditation* (Yale University Press, 2012).

Carolyn Vega is the curator of the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature at the New York Public Library, which holds the archives and related collections of Frances Burney, Charles Dickens, Jack Kerouac, Kenneth Koch, and many others. She has organized a number of exhibitions, including on *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Emily Dickinson, Tennessee Williams, Virginia Woolf, the screenplays of James Ivory, and authors who have drawn their inspiration from the collections of the New York Public Library.

Continued >>

Join the Conversation

BIO EXPANDS VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE PROGRAM FOR MEMBERS

▶ Are you a member of the Biographers International Organization looking for exciting new benefits to enhance your experience? Look no further than the Virtual Roundtable Program!

As a response to the pandemic, the Virtual Roundtable Program was piloted to great success and is now available to all members. By filling out a simple form online, you will be matched with a new or

existing roundtable based on your interests. With roundtables ranging from Women's Biography to Pop Culture and beyond, there is sure to be a group for everyone.

Led entirely by members, the roundtables are a unique opportunity to connect with other biographers and share your passion for the craft. Whether you are interested in writing a first biography, a group biography, or exploring

a specific topic within the field, there is a roundtable waiting for you.

Most roundtables meet monthly, but some have a different cadence depending on the interests of the members. With this flexible structure, the roundtables are designed to be accessible and accommodating to all members.

By joining a virtual roundtable, you will gain access to a community of like-minded

individuals who are eager to share their knowledge and experiences. As the Virtual Roundtable Program grows, the possibilities for learning and networking within the Biographers International Organization are endless.

Don't miss out on this exciting new member benefit! For more information about the Virtual Roundtable Program and how to join, visit the Members Area of the BIO website.

CRAFT

Group Biography

4:30–5:30 PM

There's no one way to tell a life story, of course, and there's no one way to write a group biography. Many writers find that focusing on multiple subjects provides a compelling, comprehensive, and satisfying way to recount a movement or a moment in time. How do biographers select group subjects and then organize and handle those threads and interrelationships as the arc of their book unfolds?

Moderator

Sarah S. Kilborne is an acclaimed author, performer, historian, educator, and activist. She has written biographies for both children and adults. Her one-person show, "The Lavender Blues: A Showcase of Queer Music Before World War II," is the source for her current biographical work-in-progress: a group biography of three of the seminal female musicians

featured in "The Lavender Blues." Sarah is a proud member of BIO and currently serves as BIO's vice president as well as chair of its publicity and social media committee.

Panelists

Kerri Greenidge is Mellon Assistant Professor in the Department of Studies in Race, Colonialism, and Diaspora at Tufts University, where she also co-directs the African American Trail Project. She is the author of *Black Radical: The Life and Times of William Monroe Trotter* (2019). Listed by *The New York Times* as one of its top picks of 2019, the book is the first biography of Boston editor William Monroe Trotter written in nearly 50 years. The book received the Mark Lynton History Prize, the Massachusetts Book Award, the J. Anthony Lukas Award, the Sperber Award from Fordham University, and the Peter J. Gomes Book Prize from the Massachusetts Historical Society. *Black Radical* was also short-listed for the Stone Book Award from the Museum of African American History, Boston; the Cundill History Prize; and the Plutarch Award for best biography. Her most recent book, *The Grimkes: The Legacy of Slavery in an American Family* (2022), was recent-

ly listed as a best book of the year by *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Boston Globe*, among other publications. Her writings have appeared in the *Massachusetts Historical Review*, *Radical History Review*, *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, and *The Guardian*.

Justin Martin's specialty is American history, meticulously researched, but delivered in a narrative style that's akin to fiction. He's the author of five books, including *Rebel Souls: Walt Whitman and America's First Bohemians*. This group biography focuses on a colorful group of artists, regulars at Pfaff's saloon in Manhattan. Besides a young Whitman, the circle included trailblazing stand-up comic Artemus Ward, psychedelic drug pioneer Fitz-Hugh Ludlow, and the brilliant, brazen Adah Menken, who became world famous for her "Naked Lady" routine. *A Fierce Glory*, Martin's most recent book, is about Antietam, a Civil War turning point. Unlike a typical military history, Martin emphasized character development over troop movements, portraying key figures both on and off the battlefield that fateful day: Abraham Lincoln, Robert E. Lee, and Clara Barton. Martin lives in New York City.

Janice P. Nimura's second book, *The Doctors Blackwell: How Two Pioneering Sisters Brought Medicine to Women—and Women to Medicine*, was a finalist for the 2022 Pulitzer Prize in biography. She received a Public Scholar Award from the National Endowment for the Humanities in support of her research on the Blackwells. Her previous book, *Daughters of the Samurai: A Journey From East to West and Back*, was a *New York Times* Notable Book in 2015.

BUSINESS

The Trial: A Window Into the World of Publishing

4:30–5:30 PM

The federal antitrust court case brought by the Justice Department against Random House's proposed merger with Simon & Schuster riveted the publishing world over three weeks in 2022. Testimony by editors, agents, and others brought some eye-opening details about the inner workings of publishing houses and how they treat authors and their potential books. Staff members of Publishers Lunch covered the trial extensively and published their reports and testimony transcripts in *The Trial*. This panel will delve into the details and implications for aspiring and veteran authors.

Moderator

Gayle Feldman was a founding BIO board member and founding chair of the Hazel Rowley Prize Committee. She's covered the book business for *Publishers Weekly*, *The New York Times*, and *The Bookseller* (London), where she is currently U.S. correspondent. Her first book was a cancer memoir, *You Don't Have to Be Your Mother* (Norton). Her second, *Best and Worst of Times: The Changing Business of Trade Books*, was done in conjunction with a fellowship at the Columbia

Journalism School. She has just completed a biography of Random House co-founder Bennett Cerf, due to be published by Random House.

Panelists

Katy Hershberger is a reporter at Publishers Lunch and was a principal reporter for *The Trial*. A journalist, essayist, and critic, her work has been published in *The New York Times Book Review*, *Slate*, *Longreads*, and elsewhere. She was an in-house publicist and publicity director for adult and children's books for more than a decade, handling campaigns for Jason Reynolds, Sarah J. Maas, Jenny Han, and Nathan Lane, and has also worked as a bookseller and book review editor. She holds an M.F.A. in nonfiction writing from The New School.

Mary Rasenberger is the CEO of the Authors Guild and the Authors Guild Foundation, where she oversees all aspects of the combined organizations. Jointly the organizations work to protect the rights of authors to free speech, fair contracts, and just treatment under copyright and other laws. The Authors Guild also empowers authors with the knowledge and tools they need to succeed in the business of writing. Prior to joining the Guild in 2014, Rasenberger practiced law for over 25 years in roles that spanned private practice, the federal government, and corporate sector, as a recognized expert in copyright and media law. From 2002 to 2008 she worked for the U.S. Copyright Office and Library of Congress as senior policy advisor and program director for the National Digital Preservation Program. Prior to coming to the Guild, Rasenberger was a partner at Cowan, DeBaets, Abrahams & Sheppard, and previously counsel at Skadden Arps.

Gail Ross, as president of the Ross Yoon Agency, represents important commercial nonfiction in a variety of areas and counts top doctors, CEOs, prize-winning journalists and historians, and experts in a variety of fields among her clients. She and her team have earned a reputation in the industry for providing rigorous, enthusiastic editorial guidance at all stages of the publishing process. Ross also is a partner in the law firm of Trister, Ross, Schadler & Gold, PLLC, where she focuses on the legal aspects of publishing and media law. She writes and lectures frequently on publishing issues.

ISSUES

Complicated Icons

4:30–5:30 PM

What do you do when your subject is iconic but contradictory, legendary but also perplexing? How can famous figures be brought back to life as the full and rounded people they once were, when readers may believe they already know all that there is to know about them? This panel features eminent biographers who have struggled with complicated and difficult icons, making their characters convincing by devising critical strategies for revealing the demanding truths that enduring legends can all too easily gloss.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2022 DONORS

BIO is extremely grateful for contributions made to the organization by our members and friends in 2022. As membership dues and conference fees don't cover all our expenses, we depend on the generosity of people like you to continue to produce the stimulating and informative programs for which BIO is known. For donations that ranged from \$25 to \$50,000, we thank each and every one of the persons listed below.

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|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| >> Anonymous | >> Thomas Dunne | >> Louise Knight | >> Anne Boyd Rioux | >> Susan Ware |
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| >> Virnell Bruce | >> Peter Gethers | >> Julia Markus | >> Janet Slosberg | |
| >> Kate Buford | >> Allison Gilbert | >> Megan Marshall | >> Barbara Lehman Smith | |
| >> Holly Bundock | >> Cathy Graham | >> Ru Marshall | >> William Souder | |
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| >> Christine Cipriani | >> Gerry Howard | >> Michael Paller | >> William Taubman | |
| >> Heather Clark | >> Laurence Kadish | >> Steve Paul | >> Elizabeth Taylor | |
| >> Monica Clements | >> Eve Kahn | >> Beth Phillips | >> Ann and Tommy Thompson | |
| >> Sally Cook | >> Laura Kaiser | >> Amy Reading | >> Karen Torghele | |
| >> Greg Daugherty | >> Steven Kalvar | >> Corey Reese | >> Marlene Trestman | |
| >> Charles DeFanti | >> Carla Kaplan | >> Stephen Reidy | >> Holly Van Leuven | |
| >> N.W. Dible Foundation | >> Kitty Kelley | >> Nicholas Reynolds | >> Michael Vinson | |
| >> Dragonfly Fund | >> Diane Kiesel | >> Sally Richardson | | |
| | >> Sarah Kilborne | | | |



Don't see your name on the 2022 list? Scan this QR code now to make a contribution and be there in 2023!

Moderator

Carla Kaplan is the Davis Distinguished Professor of American Literature at Northeastern University, where, as the founding director of the university's Humanities Center, she created a conversational hub dedicated to diversity. She has held positions at Yale University, the University of Southern California, and the University of Illinois and also teaches writing through arts councils and writers' centers. Kaplan's previous books include *Zora Neale Hurston: A Life in Letters*, the first published collection of a major African-American woman's letters. This melding of biography, cultural history, and correspondence drew on nearly 50 archives and was a finalist for the NAACP Image Award, a *New York Times* Notable Book, a *New York* magazine "top five" book of the season, a Book of the Month Club pick, and the subject of feature articles in *The Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *New York Times*.

Panelists

David Maraniss is an associate editor at *The Washington Post* and a distinguished visiting professor at Vanderbilt University. He has won two Pulitzer Prizes for journalism and was a finalist three other times. Among his best-selling books are biographies of Bill Clinton, Barack Obama, Roberto Clemente, and Vince Lombardi, and a trilogy about the 1960s—*Rome 1960: The Olympics That Changed the World*, *Once in a Great City: A Detroit Story* (winner of the RFK Book Prize), and *They Marched Into Sunlight: War and Peace, Vietnam and America, October 1967* (winner of the J. Anthony Lukas Prize and a Pulitzer finalist in history). His latest biography, *Path Lit*

by *Lightning: The Life of Jim Thorpe*, was an instant *New York Times* best seller. Visit him at www.DavidMaraniss.com.

Tamara Payne worked with her late father, the award-winning and New York-based print journalist Les Payne, to co-write *The Dead Are Arising: The Life of Malcolm X*. Published in October 2020 by Liveright, this biography of the charismatic and controversial Muslim leader known as Malcolm X earned a Pulitzer Prize and a National Book Award.

Stacy Schiff is the author of *Vera (Mrs. Vladimir Nabokov)*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize; *Saint-Exupéry: A Biography*, a Pulitzer finalist; *A Great Improvisation: Franklin, France, and the Birth of America*, winner of the George Washington Book Prize; *Cleopatra: A Life* and *The Witches*, both No. 1 best sellers; and, most recently, *The Revolutionary: Samuel Adams*. Schiff has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers at the New York Public Library. A member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, she has been named a Chevalier of the French Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

Call for 2024 – 2025 Biography Fellows



The Leon Levy Center for Biography invites applications for four 2024 – 2025 Biography Fellowships and one Leon Levy/Alfred P. Sloan Fellow in science biography.

Each resident fellow receives a stipend of \$72,000, research assistance, writing space and library privileges. They also participate in monthly seminars and the intellectual life of the Graduate Center.

Application deadline: Jan. 4, 2024. For more information go to llcb.ws.gc.cuny.edu



Applications now open for a new M.A. Program in Biography and Memoir: gc.cuny.edu/bam



Sunday

WORKSHOPS >> LOCATION: CONCOURSE LEVEL OF THE GRADUATE CENTER >> TIME: 9:00–11:00 AM

For conference attendees who have registered in advance for them, these optional, in-depth workshops will be held on Sunday morning on the Concourse level of the Graduate Center.

Structuring and Revising Your Manuscript >> Diana Parsell

You've done the preliminary research, and maybe started writing your biography. This craft workshop, pitched to novice and first-time biographers, will share tips on how to shape and control the story you're telling. The session will address outline and chronology, finding your themes and subthemes, chapter development, achieving the right balance of elements (scene, context, and interpretation), and cutting/revising to meet your book's word limits. There will be time at the end for questions.

Diana Parsell is an editorial contractor and former journalist in Falls Church, Virginia. She has done writing and editing for many publications and websites, including *National Geographic* and *The Washington Post*, and for science organizations in Washington and Southeast Asia. A graduate of the University of Missouri's j-school and Johns Hopkins University's M.A. in writing program, she was one of the founding editors of the online Washington Independent Review of Books in 2011. In support of her first biography, *Eliza Scidmore, the Trailblazing Journalist Behind Washington's Cherry Trees* (Oxford University Press, March 2023), she received a Mayborn Fellowship in Biography and BIO's 2017 Hazel Rowley Prize. Visit her website at www.dianaparsell.com.

Writing Your Family's Story (or Your Own) >> Lisa Napoli

Every one of us has a story to tell. Are you ready to tell yours? How do we mine personal memorabilia and family archives to craft memoir? What's the best way to approach the story of your family, or your own personal story, to convey it to others—be it in text, on a website, in photographs, even a podcast? How do you talk to your family members about telling their story, and what do you leave out? In this overview class, we'll talk about the essence of memoir, what makes for a good one, and how to get started.

Lisa Napoli is the author of four books of nonfiction—one memoir, about her time in and around the Kingdom of Bhutan, and three biographies (the most recent of which is about the "founding mothers" of NPR). As a journalist, she's

worked at *The New York Times*, MSNBC, and public radio's Marketplace. A native of Brooklyn and a graduate of Hampshire College, she's currently working on her master's degree in the Biography and Memoir program at CUNY. With Sonja Williams, she's helped to create BIO's podcast.

Redefining Success as a Writer >> Liz Dubelman

- Authors have a negative view of "marketing"
- Book promotion is hard
- Tools are over-featured and difficult to learn
- Best practices are constantly changing

If you are trying to get your work out there you know how hard it is to focus on both creating the art and finding your audience. I will give you everything you need to help you promote your work without feeling like you're giving up a piece of your soul in the process. I believe that you have a story that deserves to be heard.

Liz Dubelman is an Emmy Award winner and the founder and CEO of the book marketing and content development company VidLit Productions, LLC. She has co-edited and contributed to *What Was I Thinking? 58 Bad Boyfriend Stories* (St. Martin's Press, 2009), based on the VidLit series of the same name. She is also a magazine writer of fiction and non-fiction. Well over 1 million people have viewed her short story "Craziest" on the web. She has deep experience leveraging a variety of internet technologies, as well as film, video, and animation production, podcasting, marketing, and promotion, and has coached writers about the most effective ways of telling a story. Her digital career includes writing and producing original programming for Carrie Fisher, Bill Maher, David Foster Wallace, Cherry Lane Publishing, Microsoft Interactive, Bill Bryson, and others. She was creative director of News Corp's internet content group, and has been a consultant to all of the major Hollywood studios in the area of digital rights and content strategy for over 20 years.

The 2023 Conference Coaching Program

BIO would like to thank the following biographers for their participation in our annual conference coaching program. These accomplished biographers are providing half-hour, one-on-one coaching sessions to attendees who have paid and arranged for such sessions in advance. In addition, BIO provides a year-round coaching service via email or phone. For more information, see the advertisement elsewhere in this program or visit the Members Area of the BIO website.

THE COACHES

Kate Buford is a founding partner of Biography by Design LLC, the first team of professional biographers to offer personal, nonprofit and corporate history services to the general public. Buford's *Native American Son: The Life and Sporting Legend of Jim Thorpe* (Knopf 2010; U. of Nebraska 2012) was an Editors' Choice of *The New York Times* and won awards from the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) and the Professional Football Research Association (PFRA). Best seller *Burt Lancaster: An American Life* (Knopf/Da Capo/Aurum UK) was named one of the best books of 2000 by *The New York Times* and many other publications. Buford was a commentator on NPR's Morning Edition and APM's Marketplace. She lives in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Cathy Curtis is a former *Los Angeles Times* staff writer. She is the author of three recent biographies of 20th-century artists (Oxford University Press), *A Splendid Intelligence: The Life of Elizabeth Hardwick* (W.W. Norton), and *Edna O'Brien: The Passionate Life of a Fearless Irish Writer* (forthcoming). Curtis has mentored dozens of biographers working on a wide range of subjects, including artists, writers, a U.S. president, religious leaders, a history-making attorney, a famous comedian, a porn star, and a clinical pathologist. She can help you with all aspects of conceptualizing, researching, and writing your biography, including: writing your proposal, interviewing sources, using your time wisely at archives, finding the throughline for your book, selecting and honing your sample chapter(s), and fine-tuning your manuscript.

Lisa Napoli is the author of four books of nonfiction—one memoir, about her time in and around the Kingdom of Bhutan, and three biographies (the most recent of which is about the “founding mothers” of NPR). As a journalist, she's worked at *The New York Times*, MSNBC, and public radio's Marketplace. A native of Brooklyn and a graduate of Hampshire College, she's currently working on her master's degree in the Biography and Memoir program at CUNY. With Sonja Williams, she helped create BIO's podcast.

Carl Rollyson, professor emeritus of journalism at Baruch College, CUNY, has published 14 biographies, including in 2020, *The Life of William Faulkner* and *The Last Days of Sylvia Plath*. Forthcoming: *Sylvia Plath Day by Day, Volumes 1 and 2*, *The Making of Sylvia Plath*, and *William Faulkner on and off the Page: Essays in Biographical Criticism*. Work in Progress: *Ronald Colman: Hollywood's Gentleman Hero*. Rollyson's podcast, *A Life in Biography*, is available at <https://anchor.fm/carl-rollyson>, and his website is carlrollyson.com.

THIS YEAR'S BIO CONFERENCE IS
DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
ANNE C. HELLER
(1951-2022)



As BIO is now a thriving organization, it can be easy to forget, or be unaware of, the many start-up snafus and the dedicated core of people who ensured that BIO would survive.

Anne Heller was one of those foundational stalwarts. When she died last fall from cancer, the BIO family lost one who cannot be replaced. Not least she had the institutional memory essential for an organization that serves the history of human lives and endeavors. She immersed herself in almost every facet of BIO—the BIO board, conference program and site committees, officers, awards, membership, fundraising—as it was all being created from scratch. She did it with a thoughtful grace and the soft voice Kitty Kelley has called “mesmerizing.”

Prior to BIO, Anne had a distinguished career as a magazine editor and journalist: managing editor of *The Antioch Review*; a fiction editor of *Esquire* and *Redbook*; features editor of *Lear's*; and executive editor of the magazine development group at Condé Nast Publications, with a special emphasis on money and finance. She also wrote for magazines including *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*.

When Anne made the shift to writing trade biographies, this complicated and formidably talented woman chose two such women as her subjects—*Ayn Rand and the World She Made* (Nan A. Talese, 2009) and *Hannah Arendt: A Life in Dark Times* (New Harvest, 2015). Doing justice to these lives required a rigorous intelligence and a certain fearlessness. *The New York Times* found that Anne's telling of Rand's life was “far more interesting than anything in Rand's novels... because Heller is dealing with a human being, and one with more than her share of human failings and contradictions.” Published as one of James Atlas's Penguin Lives series of short biographies, the slim Arendt volume encapsulated the life in 144 pages, a feat in itself.

In addition to BIO, Anne made key contributions to other biographers' groups, such as the Leon Levy Center at CUNY and the NYU Biography Seminar. However, her first love was to serve for several years as chair of the BIO conference program committee. A task that has been likened to herding cats, it required endless patience, judgment, and a fastidious attention to detail. She was chair of the 2022 program committee, her last, and it was accomplished as she was undergoing cancer treatments. To Anne's delight, BIO 2022 was considered to have had the best program ever.

BIO 2023 is gratefully dedicated to her memory. —Kate Buford

2023 SCHEDULE

All Saturday panels will take place on the Concourse level of the Graduate Center.

FRIDAY MAY 19

12:45 PM	Registration Opens CONCOURSE
1:15– 3:30 PM	“Turn Every Page – The Adventures of Robert Caro and Robert Gottlieb” Screening and Q&A With Director Lizzie Gottlieb PROSHANSKY AUDITORIUM
4:00– 4:45 PM	Member Readings PROSHANSKY AUDITORIUM
4:45– 5:30 PM	Awards Presentation Presentation of the Biblio Award, the Robert and Ina Caro Research/Travel Fellowship, the Frances “Frank” Rollin Fellowship, the Hazel Rowley Prize, and the Ray A. Shepard Service Award PROSHANSKY AUDITORIUM
5:30– 7:00 PM	Opening Reception CONCOURSE

SATURDAY MAY 20

8:00– 8:40 AM	Registration and Breakfast CONCOURSE			
8:40– 9:00 AM	Welcome from Kai Bird and Linda Leavell PROSHANSKY AUDITORIUM			
9:00– 10:00 AM	James Atlas Plenary Blanche Wiesen Cook and Beverly Gage in conversation PROSHANSKY AUDITORIUM			
10:15– 11:15 AM	Tools and Strategies for Research, Organizing, and Writing B	Graphic Biographies C	What Editors Want BZ	Crossing Borders: Issues in Writing a Transnational Biography I
11:30 AM– 12:30 PM	When Biography Is Not a Book B	Trick or Treat? Can You Trust Your Subject’s Autobiography? C	Book Promotion in the Age of Social Media BZ	Race, History, Legacies I
12:30– 2:00 PM	Lunch and Roundtable Discussions CONCOURSE			
2:00– 3:00 PM	Presentation of Plutarch Award & Presentation of the BIO Award and Keynote by 2023 honoree, Kitty Kelley PROSHANSKY AUDITORIUM			
3:15– 4:15 PM	Popping the Questions: The Art of the Interview B	Secrets and Lives: Ethical Dilemmas in Biography C	The Art of the Proposal BZ	Biography and the Law I
4:30– 5:30 PM	Back to the Archives B	Group Biography C	The Trial: A Window Into the World of Publishing BZ	Complicated Icons I
5:30– 7:00 PM	Closing Reception CONCOURSE			

TRACKS >> **B** Basics >> **C** Craft >> **BZ** Business >> **I** Issues

SUNDAY MAY 21

9:00– 11:00 AM	Workshops ROOMS 9205, 9206, 9207
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