

NEBRASKA HUMANITIES

2005 Volume IX



featuring

**“War and the Modern American Presidency:
A Conversation with David Halberstam”**

and including

The 2004 NHC Annual Report



When we ask who we are and what our lives ought to mean, we are using the humanities. The Nebraska Humanities Council enhances the quality of life in communities across our state through programs that study the human race, its achievements, its creations, its dreams and aspirations, its failures and triumphs. The NHC promotes a better understanding of Nebraska—who we are and where we have been—to build a better future.

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Chris Sommerich, Development Officer

Production, Design and Editing:
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]

Published by Nebraska Humanities Council, 215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 500, Lincoln, NE 68508-1813
Phone 402/474-2131; Fax 402/474-4852; email nhc@nebraskahumanities.org

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Humanities illuminate human condition

By Peter J. Longo, Chair, Nebraska Humanities Council

As we look at this year, it would be careless not to pause and consider the serious nature of the ongoing war in Iraq. Many Nebraskans have sacrificed their lives in serving the United States during this time of conflict. War places unimaginable, yet real, stress upon humanity.



Nebraska Humanities Council speaker and storyteller Ricardo Garcia conducts a Prime Time Family Reading Time program in Omaha.

The 9th Annual Governor's Lecture featured David Halberstam, a brilliant writer and thinker, as well as a vocal critic of the current war. Indeed, Halberstam sounded a grim warning by stating: "The great danger is that all their misery will be focused on us." I left the comfortable environment of the Lied Center for Performing Arts with a not-so-comfortable feeling.

Halberstam's warning needs confronting, even if the confrontation is less than comfortable. The humanities call us all to a greater study of the human condition. The reality is that dutiful sons and daughters, husband and

wives, and fathers and mothers are risking their lives—and many are sacrificing their lives—for their country. The Nebraska Humanities Council (NHC) is committed to bringing serious issues to the public even if the lessons for humanity are not always cheery.

Yet, not all is grim as we proceed with the inquiries provided by the humanities. The humanities are concerned with illuminating of the human condition, which in turn could lead us to a better life. As the real politic makes it fashionable to speak of values, humans must wrestle with the dimensions of values. By immersing ourselves in the humanities, perception, understanding, and truth can be gained. But such gain cannot be acquired by some quick fix so accustomed by our consumer-driven passions. Instead, the discovery is like a slow read of a book. Or, in the words of Nebraskan Ted Kooser, our National Poet Laureate:

*"This evening, I sat by an open window
and read till the light was gone and the book
was no more than a part of the darkness.
I could easily have switched on a lamp,
but I wanted to ride this day down into night,
to sit alone and smooth the unreadable page
with the pale gray ghost of my hand." **

Just like a good book, the humanities linger from day to night, back to days and nights. Thoughtful contemplation is often a manifestation grown from the humanities. Accordingly, the NHC is in the business of cultivat-

** Reprinted from "Delights and Shadows," Copper Canyon Press, 2004 by permission of Ted Kooser*

ing ideas for further contemplation for the citizens of Nebraska.

Consider the extraordinary value of Prime Time Family Reading Time, a program that has forever touched the lives of participants in Omaha, Lincoln, Schuyler and Scottsbluff. This program is a family reading program involving parents and their children. The sessions are conducted in Spanish and English so as to connect to some of our newest members of the Nebraska community. This well-executed program provides an enduring appreciation of learning through reading. Reading is the vehicle to access greater awareness of literature, history and culture.

The impact is highly positive as the following example from the NHC website reveals: "An especially heart-warming story was of a father who attended with his son and daughter. The father couldn't speak English and was illiterate in his own language. The last evening of the program he got up and spoke to the group and told them how he would come to the library and use the pictures in the books to tell stories to his children. The program helped him learn how to tell the stories and discuss them. During the program, one of the other parents offered to tutor him so that he can become literate in Spanish."

Further consider an innovative program called Notable Nebraskans. This program features 40 speakers who have captured the essence of famous Nebraskans such as Willa Cather, Wright Morris, George Norris, William Jennings Bryan, Grace Abbott and many others. Since its origin less than a year ago, the staff at the Nebraska Humanities Council has received more than 100 requests for these speaker presentations, so that these



Willa Cather

notable Nebraskans continue to serve as role models for the current citizenry.

For example, Helen M. Lewis portrays Grace Abbott, the "children's crusader." The description on the NHC website reads: "Grace Abbott's Grand Island upbringing influenced her advocacy for education and social justice as director of Chicago's Immigrant Protective League. Writing and speaking for social reform—from women's suffrage to world peace—Abbott became a leader in the struggle for federal child labor legislation. As chief of the U.S. Children's Bureau, Abbott shaped public assistance programs, especially to protect children. The presentation, done in costume, conveys the continuing relevance of Abbott's work by exploring her efforts for the exploited.

This is but one example of the many lessons provided by Notable Nebraskans. The NHC assures the citizens of Nebraska that Nebraska's heritage is living, and a better life can be lived by drawing the best from notable citizens.

There are so many other programs and opportunities offered by the NHC worthy of your consideration. It is abundantly clear that the NHC is making every effort to provide the citizens of Nebraska with opportunities to gain greater insights into the human condition. The complexity of human nature is overwhelming. Yet, we can find comfort that so many share in the concern to make our community better for the next generation. Lessons from the past ought not to be lost, nor should we miss opportunities to gain new lessons.

Please consider the Nebraska Humanities Council as a partner in your search for greater insights into the human condition.



War and the Modern American Presidency

Peter J. Longo, professor of political science at the University of Nebraska at Kearney and chairman of the Nebraska Humanities Council board of directors, recently interviewed Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, author and historian David Halberstam. In his Governor's Lecture in the Humanities September 9 at the Lied Center for Performing Arts in Lincoln, Halberstam spoke on the subject of "War and the Modern American Presidency." That lecture was the basis for this further dialogue on the world's rapidly changing events and U.S. foreign policy.



Nebraska Gov. Mike Johanns introduces David Halberstam for the Ninth Annual Governor's Lecture in the Humanities, September 9, 2004, at the Lied Center for Performing Arts in Lincoln, Nebraska

Longo: In your lecture on "War and the Modern American Presidency", you prefaced your remarks with an analysis of the main forces that you thought had profoundly changed the United States in the last decades of the 20th century—the end of the Cold War; the decline of blue-collar jobs and the development of the two-income middle class; a new, increasingly non-white America; the curious gap between a magnificent post-secondary education system and a troubled K-12 school system that loses too many kids; and finally, the rise of militant Islam. What are the political implications of those forces in the 21st century?

Halberstam: The immediate thing is how we respond to the threat of militant Islam, whether we can isolate that part of it, and not give it greater legitimacy in other parts of the Islamic world. The military intervention in Iraq was a serious miscalculation. I knew that we would do the early military part—the race to Baghdad—well, but that once we got there we would have problems because instead of a military operation it would become a political one, where we would be vulnerable. We would be at a disadvantage in terms of military intelligence. Our adversaries would know where our troops were, but we would not know where they were or what they were doing. We would have very little knowledge about them. In effect, they would have their own racial profiling.

Based on the colonial past and the Islamic world's covert rage about not keeping up with the West, I did not think we would be welcomed as liberators as we were in World War II. I thought that the people in Washington and in the Bush administration who made those comparisons were utterly out of line. I thought that the people of Iraq wanted Saddam gone, but not at our hands. I thought we would be doing some of Al Qaeda's recruiting for them, and that we would be caught in a draining, ongoing, military and political urban guerilla warfare. I suggested that the movie they were watching at the White House was "Patton," and that it should have been "The Battle of Algiers," which was about the French during the Algerian War.

I am afraid all that is true, in that we are entailed in this frustrating urban guerilla warfare, where we are operating in a terrible intelligence deficit. I don't want my country in an all-out growing confrontation—military and political—with the Islamic world. One of the things that the architects of the policy had not understood is that, for the first time, this kind of fighting was going to be broadcast throughout the Arab world on Arab television, with Arab commentators. I thought that would be an incalculably negative force, and that's happened. Now the people in Washington complain that they are not getting a fair break, but it was quite predictable. The historic importance of recruiting people who are our adversaries cannot be overestimated.

Longo: Given the extraordinarily fast routing of Saddam Hussein's troops in the initial weeks of the war in Iraq, were you surprised at how quickly it bogged down into guerilla warfare?

Halberstam: I'm not surprised that it bogged down. Our military is the best in the world. We are very, very good. Our officers are extraordinarily good; the elite units are very good. It's a small army. We've learned a lot of lessons from the past. The speed and the inten-

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sity with which the other side has created a military political dynamic—its effectiveness in penetrating our military ability—surprised me. It came faster than I thought.

My own scale is built a little on Vietnam and a little bit on Algeria. I thought it would take more time for them to create a dynamic, but clearly there are a lot of people in that part of the world who've been doing this for a while, and they're drawn like a magnet to Iraq, and clearly they find a lot of political sympathy there to go ahead. Also, in a guerilla war you need the indigenous people to warn you when something is about to happen, and that's not taking place. If we were doing well, people would be warning us when we drove tanks or Humvees over areas where bombs go off. We are not getting much warning, which is a sign that either the general population is hostile to us or too unsympathetic or intimidated to give us the warnings we need, and that is very hard to reverse. It has all happened much more quickly than I thought.

Longo: Do you agree with U.S. Senator Ted Kennedy that Iraq is President Bush's Vietnam?

Halberstam: I was profoundly affected by Vietnam. I went there in 1962, 43 years ago. I was 28 years old. I had very conventional views. We were going to help a country to

Continued next page

help itself, and I learned some very painful lessons. I had to reorient my own thinking, as did many military men and many journalists. You went expecting one thing, and when it didn't happen you had to study and try to understand why. Why had we failed? All of that traced back to the colonial era, the French

Indochina war. That started an educational process for me. When you are a very young man and something that traumatic happens in your life and you see the things you believe in not working, you have a great intensity to understand what happened in Vietnam and why. That led to the book that came out in 1972, "The Best and The Brightest."

That was a catharsis for me, but it doesn't stop with that. If something like Vietnam takes place in your life, the search for why and how these

things happen lives very large in your mind, and leads you to study the Algerian War. In some ways, it led to the book I'm working on now on the Korean War and the miscalculations by Douglas MacArthur about whether the Chinese would come into the war, ending with us being surprised near the Yalu River around Thanksgiving in 1950. We were hit in one of the worst American defeats in history, and it got us into a shooting war with the Chinese.

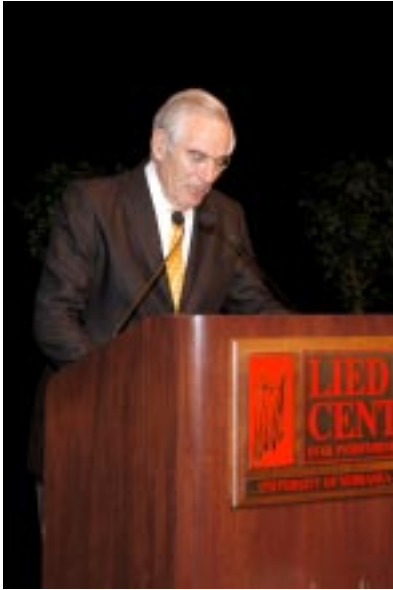
So it becomes an enormously important part of your education. I wrote a long piece this past summer about Bush and Kerry and their war records and medals. In it I said that John Kerry was not a better American or more patriotic than George Bush because he had gone to Vietnam and gotten the Silver Star and the Bronze Star. What I said was that he had a better education for the world we live in. The

education I got, however involuntarily, in Vietnam was priceless, in a hard, hard bitter way. In learning that many of the things that you believe in—the righteousness of it, American rectitude—does not necessarily apply in parts of the world where the vision is different because of the colonial era, and that these historic forces are very important.

I said that it was too bad that almost nobody in the Bush administration had served, and I noted the number of deferments. Attorney General John Ashcroft had six. Vice President Dick Cheney had five. The one person who had served in Vietnam, General Colin Powell, by then Secretary of State Powell, did two tours and was the one person who was cautious and reticent about Iraq. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and the others thought of him as a wimp. But it's a crucial part of your education. Anybody who had spent a year in Vietnam as an advisor, as a platoon leader, company commander or in any form, would have had a great wariness about doing what we did in Iraq without far more compelling evidence about the existence of weapons of mass destruction, and would have much better intelligence on it.

Longo: In your book "The Best and the Brightest" you assessed the members of the teams with which Kennedy and Johnson surrounded themselves. Who do you think are the "best and the brightest" of George Bush's first term?

Halberstam: I am uneasy with them. There is no reflection of what the world really is. Powell had some of that. He was a distinguished public servant, in both the military and as a secretary of state. He has been damaged in his career because he was pulled into this. There is a certitude in the others. Rumsfeld's confidence in military power and his ability to ride over the objections of senior military leaders like General Anthony Zinni or General Eric Shinseki reminds me a bit of Robert McNamara. I wish the others had worked in



David Halberstam

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other countries. I am intrigued by their talk of freedom throughout the world when they have not shown much sense of the pluralistic quality of freedom and oppression in other countries.

The most notable example is the vice president, who's probably the most influential member of the administration. When Nelson Mandela was in prison in South Africa, in a country ruled by a tiny minority, Cheney opposed his release.* It's very hard to sense a deep conviction that men like this understand the complexity of oppression—who is being oppressed, and on occasion, the benefits that accrue to the United States by lining up with the oppressor. A lot of people think, for ex-

** On July 30, 2000, during ABC's "This Week," Cheney defended his 1986 vote against a resolution that called for U.S. recognition of the African National Congress in South Africa and freedom for the organization's then-imprisoned leader Nelson Mandela. "The ANC was then viewed as a terrorist organization," Cheney said. "It was a step that we simply weren't prepared to take." Cheney said he believes the ANC has "mellowed" and Mandela is "a great man." "He deserves an enormous amount of credit for the transformation of South Africa, but I don't have any problems at all with the vote I cast 20 years ago."*

ample, that Pakistan is an oppressive state, and on the other hand, in terms of our struggle with al Qaeda in Afghanistan, we badly need the support of Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf. These things are all so complicated. I didn't have a sense of the ambiguity or the nuance requisite in the president's inaugural speech. It was a great, sweeping speech that could have us fighting all over the world, even though we are already overextended in Iraq.

Longo: You said in your lecture "in many ways this is a very difficult and dangerous era in which to conduct foreign policy." Why is that?

Halberstam: The simpler time of the Cold War—the bipolar struggle with the Soviets, where we had a mutual deterrent—is gone, and it's more fragmented. People don't necessarily align with you. Everybody was down on the French and down on the Germans, particularly the Germans because they didn't agree with us on some of the Iraq moves. In a way, that's what we wanted. Look back to 1945 and 1946 and 1947. At the height of the Cold War we wanted them to be strong, independent democratic states. The way that Germany is doubtful and dubious about our Iraq venture is exactly the kind of Germany we envisioned. It's unified, it's democratic and it's been a pretty good ally. We got the Germany we wanted, but when we do something they don't agree with, we're not adequately respectful of their opinion.

The other thing that makes this a difficult time is the era of modern, stateless terrorism. The great threat to us was not Saddam Hussein. The great threat to us still is something like al Qaeda, a ghost nation, a nation against which our deterrents don't work. When people can use the vulnerabilities of a democracy against us, it is a very difficult era. It's a lot easier to look at the Soviets, have a pretty good intelligence estimate of what they're up to in nuclear ability, balance it out, and know that they're probably not going to push but-

Continued next page

tons because we can push buttons. Now you have these ghost nations, and our power, which is awesome, is inapplicable against them.

Longo: Since World War II, it seems that the United States has had less success in winning or even fighting a "good war." Why is that?

Halberstam: It's not a lack of ability. World War II was a classic old-fashioned war, a border crossing, and our strengths were applicable. We became the arsenal of democracy. We could supply the weaponry and the men to other countries, even as we were invulnerable—because of the two oceans—to the forces opposed to us.

There is the moment of Pearl Harbor where Churchill is euphoric. I think he writes in his diary, "The deed is done, the outcome is sure, only the day is uncertain." I think the phrase he uses is "Japan will be ground to powder." We would have this great basis from which to expand the armaments of democracy to be used on the two fronts, airplanes and tanks, and the enemy would be vulnerable to our bombing.

The wars since then have been distant, and they have been more political. Korea is an interesting blend of different forces. It was not very far away, and I think what we did was largely legitimate, but we hit a trip wire and brought the Chinese in, and once that happened it would be our technology, and relatively limited human resources against their limited technology and their unlimited human resources, so that we would have a "grinder" war from February or March 1951 until it was finally settled in mid-'53.

Vietnam was a tragic miscalculation, a misreading of what containment and anticommunism were, and a misreading of communism as it was blended with nationalism in a post-colonial era. For a variety of domestic and political reasons, we did not choose to see those

Vietnam was a tragic miscalculation, a misreading of what containment and anticommunism were, and a misreading of communism as it was blended with nationalism in a post-colonial era.

restraints and what would work against us, and we made a tragic miscalculation.

Longo: Why has the United States and its presidents had such a love-hate relationship with internationalism?

Halberstam: Every country is nervous about its forces being controlled by an outside authority. That's particularly true in this country. There is a historic wariness of the United Nations starting in the 1950s, when we used the U.N. as a "glove" over our policy in Korea. But the U.N. has become increasingly non-white and an instrument of anti-colonialism. As that has happened, the conservative forces in this country have increasingly opposed it.

Longo: Will historians find that in the years after World War II war has burnished the reputations of post-1940s presidents or that war has had a largely negative effect on their reputations as leaders?

Halberstam: I don't think Truman's reputation is tarnished. He did the right thing in Korea, and certainly in standing up to MacArthur in what was a constitutional crisis as to who is supreme in this country, the civilian or the military authority. He did the right thing. His presidency is judged positively, and he's on the ascent. I think Eisenhower's presidency is a very good, competent one. Being the commander of that great

force, he did not need to enhance himself. He resisted a great deal of pressure to go into Indochina in 1954. It was a solid presidency.

Kennedy's administration we really can't judge because it's a meteor of only about three years, a thousand days. He's certainly deepened the commitment to Vietnam, but he was too cool and rational a politician to ruin his second term by going to a combat commitment in the rice paddies of Indochina in the French footsteps. He had a much more sophisticated view of the political undertow that would work against us there than did Johnson. Johnson's presidency has been severely damaged by the Vietnam War. Reagan's administration is going to be a very complicated thing to estimate because the rhetoric is aggressive but the actions are limited to Salvador and Nicaragua.

The senior George Bush comes out rather well. He did the end of the Cold War with significant skill and was very sensitive to (former Soviet President Mikhail) Gorbachev's political problems. He did the first Gulf War well, nailing the Iraqi tanks in the desert, not getting involved in a political war in Baghdad, and bringing in an Arab coalition. They flubbed a couple of things afterwards, in allowing Saddam to extend power within certain borders, but that's another question. Historians are going to be very tough on the current President Bush because of the miscalculations all the way through on Iraq.

Longo: In your book "War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton and the Generals," you compared President George Bush senior very favorably, as a world leader, with President Bill Clinton. How would you compare President Bush senior with President Bush junior as world leaders?

Halberstam: The senior Bush was someone who grew up with the primacy of foreign policy, in part because of his service in World War Two. That generation, which was called to service, responded to the isolationism of

pre-war America and had a primacy of foreign policy. He had a passion for it. He had an interest in other countries, traveled over as vice president. He loved to go to foreign countries if there were funerals, and in addition to the CIA daily briefing, he would read the reports himself because he had a hunger. He didn't have a high sense of American rectitude, that we are always right. He had a very good internationalist team—James Baker, Lawrence Eagleburger, Colin Powell and Brent Scowcroft, who I think it one of the superior public men of the last 50 years.

The new President Bush came in with little interest in the rest of the world, had famously not traveled, and does not seem to do a lot of reading on these things on his own. He has a team that is much narrower of gauge and much more ideological and has far too great a faith in American rectitude and morality.

When he was asked if he consulted with his father on certain things, he said he consulted with a higher father. I find that troubling because you can go to any other country in the world, no matter what their religion and someone will have a "higher father" who confirms in them the zealotry of what they want to do. I'm made uneasy by the "higher father." I am much more comfortable with the pragmatism and the many years of experience logged by the earlier Bush team, and the fact that it was significantly less ideological.

Journalist, author and historian David Halberstam is winner of the Pulitzer Prize for his reporting on Vietnam for The New York Times. Author of 19 books and a prolific writer of magazine articles, he is a legendary figure in American journalism. His landmark trilogy of books on power in America, "The Best and the Brightest," "The Powers That Be" and "The Reckoning," helped define the latter part of the 20th century. His next book is an account of a key early battle of the Korean War, when Chinese forces struck American units near the Yalu River.



Halberstam answers questions after September 9 lecture in Lincoln

After his September 9 lecture, “War and the Modern American Presidency,” David Halberstam fielded questions from the capacity audience at the Lied Center for Performing Arts in Lincoln. Here are a few of those exchanges:

Q: What is the responsibility of a conscientious news media in reporting and analyzing modern warfare, and how has it changed since Vietnam?

Halberstam: I think the obligation is to be fair, be independent, to not be prisoner of your own myths, of your government’s myths, be respectful of them, but to be as independent as possible. There are times when journalism really matters, and this is one of them, because the government is always going to blend its version with policy and politics. The government’s view is always going to be tailored to what the government has said is going to happen, and tailored to its desire to run again. So more than anything, where young men and women’s lives are at risk, there is an obligation to be respectful of the government, but to be independent. It is much harder these days. The security is extremely limited for reporters in Iraq. It is very dangerous for them to be there.

When I was in Vietnam, we really had time to go out and do the reporting and verify, and it was dangerous, but it wasn’t as dangerous as this. The obligation is an old and an abiding one: To go out, to get it right, to be the eyes and ears of serious lay people back at home. Tell them the things that they need to know.

Q: Do you envision us giving up liberties for security?

Halberstam: I think the question is a very important one because we are anxious. There may be other moments of terrorism, and it is hard to imagine that there won’t be. We can’t make

our country air-tight. We’re already irritated if we’re held up 20 minutes longer at the airport. This is a high-speed society that wants immediate gratification.

Millions of cargo containers are coming into the country and we are vulnerable. Our drive and our energy and our openness make us vulnerable. If there are these additional incidents, there will be enormous pressures to limit freedoms, to be harsher on citizens of Arab background. I think that it is not hard to foresee a darker America if it becomes scared, more anxious. I think that’s something that it’s terribly important to understand—that our great strength is our sense of liberty.

Q: You seem to speak of and foreshadow only the negatives. What are the positive things that you are seeing from the war? For instance, women being educated, Olympic athletes training without fear of torture, and so forth?

Halberstam: I don’t see a lot of upside. I think this is going to be difficult, painful. I am not sure that we have gotten ourselves together as to what we want and whether we sent in enough people at the beginning to do what we wanted. I don’t think that we have put together an Iraqi government that is going to have great legitimacy. I don’t mean to diminish what’s good, but I think that given the price of the negative, it doesn’t really add up. I’m sure that there are good peripheral things in our modernizing, in our contact with that part of Islam, but right now it is dwarfed by the other side.

Q: How can the U.S. reconnect with its allies?

Halberstam: The great American philosopher who played center for the Los Angeles Lakers, Wilt Chamberlain, once said, "Nobody roots for Goliath." And we are a post-Cold War Goliath. We are the rich. No one has weapons systems like us. There is really no Number Two. We were significantly more sympathetic as long as we were battling the other giant and the less sympathetic and truly totalitarian force, the Soviets. When they were pulled from the map, much of the rest of the world was uneasy with an American agenda. I think the world greatly admires us and wants us to be a nation that listens and doesn't just give orders.

Q: Do you think the western press is doing its job in asking sufficiently tough questions of the administration?

Halberstam: The media in Washington tends always to reflect the givens of Washington. In Vietnam, my colleagues and I in Saigon were really very independent of events there and quite pessimistic in our reporting, but our colleagues from the same newspapers and magazines in Washington tended to reflect each institution's view. A reporter tends to take on the coloration of his or her institution, and there aren't that many reporters in Washington who are that willing to stand apart. There is a kind of overall unconscious trade-off for access. That's why your better reporting in Iraq comes from someone like John Burns, someone who is a truly distinguished and courageous reporter, someone who has been in a place like Iraq for The New York Times for the last 25 years.

Q: Do you think the embedded reporters were taken in?

Halberstam: I was interviewed at the time of the embedded reporters and The New York Times said I was sympathetic to them, that I

thought it was a good idea. And therefore, whenever anybody did embedded reporters, I was asked to go on CNN. I became Mr. Embedded Reporter authority. Embedded reports were a good idea because we had really draconian restraints in Gulf War I that were undemocratic. We've had embedded reporters before. We had them in World War II. There was Ernie Pyle, the great, legendary reporter, who was with a given unit for weeks at a time. A young very distinguished colleague of mine, Jack Lawrence, with CBS, did brilliant reporting from the central highlands in Vietnam with Charlie Company for a long time.

I thought that the embedded reporters would be there on the road to Baghdad, that their reporting would tend to show our government side and that it was working well, and that this would annoy critics of the government. All these things took place, because they covered what we did best. While I had great faith in the ability of ordinary American journalists to tell the truth, it seems that when you share the dangers, people will tell you the truth. There was some reporting, even on the way to Baghdad, that was really quite independent.

Once they got to Baghdad and the war got into its next phase, people who were criticizing the reports switched sides. The criticism no longer came from the liberal left critics of the war, but from the administration, who thought they were covering negative things. The embedded reporters were a legitimate part of it.

You're in a war, and you're in an age of modern communications and thousands of people want to go abroad. How do you control it? How do you keep them from getting killed and wandering off the reservation and being among our worst enemies? I thought that that was absolutely legitimate use for the military on something like this. I had no problems with it.

Governor's lecture contributors gather at pre-lecture benefit

Supporters of the Governor's Lecture in the Humanities attended a benefit, co-chaired by Kit Dimon, Martha Richardson, Trixie Schmidt and Judy Wilcox, in honor of author, political commentator and Pulitzer Prize winner David Halberstam. Gathering September 9 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Lincoln, they shared an appreciation for the humanities. *Photos by Susan Ranta.*



Jack Campbell, David Halberstam, Jane Renner Hood and Sally Campbell



La Von Crosby, Jack Campbell and David Halberstam



*David Halberstam
and Charles Thone*



Rodney Poskochil and Donald Dillon



*Marian Andersen, David Halberstam
and Pam Thompson*



Dorothy Hayes, Mark Hesser and Kim Dinsdale



Carol and Tom Waring and Ellan and Andrew Hove



David Halberstam and Candy and Tom Henning



June and Don Pederson and David Halberstam



Harvey Perlman, David Halberstam and Diane Oldfather



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David Halberstam and Martha Richardson



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Allen J. Beermann and Roger Lempke



David Halberstam and James B. Millikan



Stephanie and Gov. Mike Johanns, Don Welch, Jane Renner Hood and Kit Dimon

When Memory Gives Dust a Face

Don Welch made the following remarks on receiving the 2004 Sower Award in the Humanities September 9, 2004, at the Lied Center for Performing Arts in Lincoln.



*Sower Award
winner Don Welch*

The humanities always begins with humane people, those who in one way or another give resonance to their voices, extending their wisdom and compassion into our lives.

Two such people came together in the music room or our house 50-some years ago. A Metropolitan Opera soprano, denied a room in our community's hotel because she was an African-American, not only stayed with our family; every morning she sang with my mother, who was herself a magnificent contralto.

It was a moment in which the ghosts of worth found expression in two wonderful voices, and it would eventually teach me that no matter the place, the Met in New York City or a music room in a small house in Kearney, Nebraska, there are those who, in singing, tune and re-tune our lives.

I would also learn that the humanities consist of the kinds of acts which magnify themselves, which give off a radiance in excess of what we might expect, then go on as victories in worlds of loss; and that because of this, the business of the humanities is, and has always been, the business of spirit-lifting. In worlds gone wrong, humanists are the ones who sing our counter-songs.

Because we are in the fifth year of drought in central and western Nebraska, let me try to relate the humanities to the 1930s, a decade when the faces of farm families were as gaunt as their eroded land. Late one afternoon, after milking her two cows, my grandmother, who was widowed in 1934, and who had no horse or car, took me on an eight-mile walk down the railroad tracks to Ansley, Nebraska, where, sitting in the weeds, we watched a movie projected onto

the wall of the post office building. In the Great Depression no movie could have been more spirit-lifting. It was called "Pennies from Heaven."

Then, after the movie, we went to the grocery store where she spent one barely affordable penny on a stick of candy which, licked slowly, lasted me almost all the way home. It was a moment in which first she, then I, shaped the acrid air of the "dirty '30s" into an original kind of love.

Because most of my life has been spent in trying to grow up to what I felt I knew, and to record it in the kind of words which put their hands on thoughts, I would like to conclude by reading a short poem I wrote for my grandmother. But I would hope the poem is as much about the humanities as it is about a woman who was as sensitive as she was tough.

When Memory Gives Dust a Face (for Vallie Welch)

*When dust like flour sifted the road,
and weeds were skeletal corsages,*

*when horses broke their hooves, unshod,
with careless grass their only forage,*

*she sang high songs. And we listened
as we walked to town. No throat*

*was more enriched by pain. Her tongue
cleaved to love to make it new.*

*In loss the dust assumed her songs.
And clods assumed they had been sung to.*



Council deemed peerless in funding partnerships with organizations

By Jane Renner Hood, Executive Director, Nebraska Humanities Council

For 30 years, the Nebraska Humanities Council has formed partnerships with organizations to strengthen humanities education in communities statewide. The Mid-American Arts Alliance released a 2004 study of museums and libraries demonstrating the value of this collaboration. The Nebraska Humanities Council was the third most frequently cited source of support for all organizations (behind city and county funding) and the single most important funding source for non-library organizations in Nebraska. In the experience of the consultants doing similar state, regional, and national assessments, the "NHC outperformed its peers" in funding partnerships with museums and libraries.

The oldest of the NHC's programmatic partnerships, the Great Plains Chautauqua, brought the "From Sea to Shining Sea" Chautauqua to Neligh and Beatrice in July in its five-state tour funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) through its special "We The People" initiative. Scholars portraying William Clark, his slave York, and Sacagawea from the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Dolley Madison, Tecumseh, and John Jacob Astor engaged audiences totaling nearly 10,000 people in an examination of the impact of the Expedition.

A new partnership among the state humanities councils in Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, and Nebraska funded by another NEH "We The People" grant brought a lecture series on Lewis and Clark to 10 communities in each state within 100 miles of the Missouri River in-

cluding Fort Calhoun, Nebraska City, Louisville, Wayne, Crofton, Decatur, Wisner, Falls City, Plainview and Creighton.

Capitol Forum brought 96 high school students from the 800 who participated in 18 schools to the State Capitol on March 29 to debate U.S. foreign policy and discuss such international issues as trade and terrorism with U.S. Sen. Chuck Hagel and U.S. Rep. Lee Terry. Capitol Forum is a partnership among the Nebraska Secretary of State's Office, Brown University, and the NHC that counters students' political apathy and cynicism while introducing high school juniors and seniors to complex international issues.

A partnership with the Omaha World-Herald enabled the council to launch Notable Nebraskans, a speakers bureau focused on Nebraskans who have made a significant contribution to our state or our country. In addition to printing the mini-catalog, the World-Herald gave the NHC a generous three-year grant to fund speaker programs. Notable Nebraskans is part of the council's new Humanities Resource Center catalog, which was printed by First National Bank and contains 286 speaker programs. During 2004, the



Scholar Selene Phillips portrays Sacagawea in Great Plains Chautauqua, part of the NEH's "We The People" initiative.

Continued next page

NHC funded 549 speakers bureau programs. A partnership with the Kitty M. Perkins Foundation helped support speakers bureau programs in rural Nebraska.

EducationQuest enabled the council to pilot a family reading program, Prime Time Family Reading Time, for low-literacy Latino families in partnership with public libraries in Omaha and Schuyler. Prime Time was so popular at the South Branch of the Omaha Public Library that a second session was offered with funding from Qwest and ConAgra. Support from Platte Valley National Bank, Valley Bank and Trust, and the Lockwood Foundation helped inaugurate a Panhandle Prime Time Family Reading Time at the Scottsbluff Public Library in November.

The Nebraska Book Festival, a partnership of the NHC, the Nebraska Center for the Book, the Nebraska Library Commission, and the University of Nebraska at Kearney, attracted audiences totaling over 400 in September to UNK's campus for a lively two-day celebration of Nebraska's best contemporary writers featured in a 2004 anthology published by the University of Nebraska Press, "A Different Plain." Funded by the Theodore G. Baldwin Foundation, the 2004 Nebraska Book Festival also featured a student writing festival.

NHC grants to community projects ranged from the Buffalo Commons Storytelling Festival, which has helped incubate a Young Writer's Enrichment Camp at the McCook Community College for middle school students; to "Harlem Nights," a celebration of writers and artists associated with the Harlem Renaissance sponsored by the Omaha Chapter of the LINKS, which included the development of a curriculum based on the writers that was used in North High School classes.

The 150th anniversary of the Kansas-Nebraska Act was the focus of two major grants. A summer institute sponsored by Peru State College offered teachers the opportunity to travel to

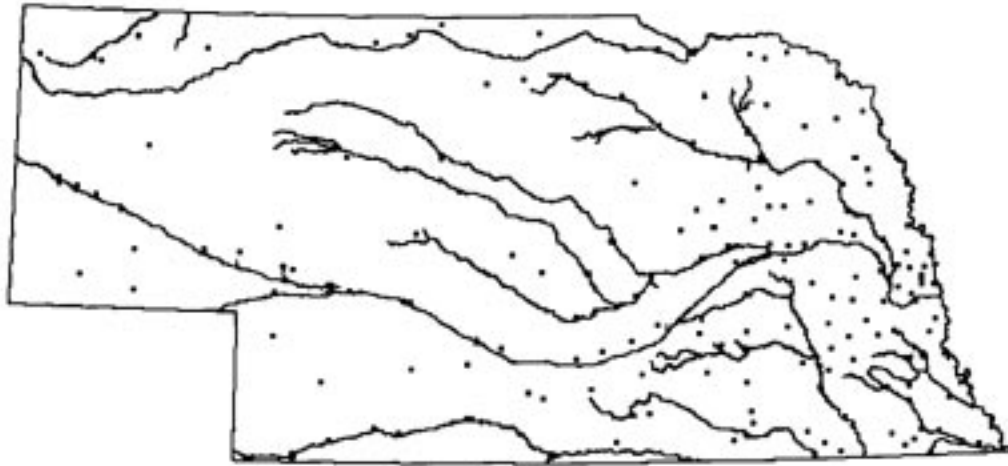
the major sites of "Bleeding Kansas" and study the impact of the landmark 1854 legislation on the Great Plains. A fall public lecture series sponsored by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln at the State Capitol featured historians on the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the coming of the Civil War (see cover).

In partnership with the Thompson Forum on World Issues, the University of Nebraska, and the Lincoln Journal Star, the NHC presented its 9th Annual Governor's Lecture in the Humanities with Pulitzer Prize-winning historian David Halberstam speaking on "War and the Modern American Presidency" to an audience of 2,200 at the Lied Center for Performing Arts. The lecture was broadcast statewide on Nebraska Public Radio, which also produces "Humanities Desk" Saturdays and Sundays during "Morning Edition" in partnership with the NHC.

The Nebraska Humanities Council and the Nebraska Foundation for the Humanities are very grateful to the Cooper Foundation and the Woods Charitable Trust for their support of the council's core programming during 2004 and to the Dillon Foundation for its grant to upgrade our technology systems. Finally, the NHC and the Nebraska Foundation for the Humanities thank all of the generous foundations, businesses and individuals who annually make a gift to our work.

We also offer special thanks to you who have made additional gifts to the Nebraska Cultural Endowment to help raise the \$1.35 million match needed by July 31, 2005, for the \$450,000 challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. You are insuring the future partnerships that will enable Nebraskans to benefit from the best of our history and culture.





In 2004, the Nebraska Humanities Council funded programs in the following 173 communities:

Albion, Allen, Alliance, Alma, Arapahoe, Arcadia, Arlington, Arnold, Ashland, Atkinson, Auburn, Aurora, Ayr, Bancroft, Bartlett, Bassett, Battle Creek, Beatrice, Bellevue, Bellwood, Blair, Blue Hill, Broadwater, Broken Bow, Brownville, Burning, Cairo, Cambridge, Central City, Chadron, Chappell, Clarkson, Cody, Columbus, Cordova, Cozad, Crawford, Creighton, Creston, Crete, Curtis, Davenport, David City, Denton, De Witt, Eagle, Elkhorn, Elmwood, Elsie, Emerson, Eustis, Fairbury, Falls City, Farnam, Fort Calhoun, Franklin, Fremont, Friend, Funk, Genoa, Gering, Grand Island, Grant, Gretna, Halsey, Hampton, Harrisburg, Hartington, Harvard, Hastings, Hayes Center, Hazard, Hebron, Herman, Hildreth, Holdrege, Homer, Hooper, Hordville, Howells, Humboldt, Kearney, Kennard, Kimball, Laurel, LaVista, Lawrence, Leigh, Lewellen, Lexington, Lincoln, Lindsay, Louisville, Loup City, Lynch, Lyons, Madison, Manley, Mason City, Maxwell, Maywood, McCook, Milford, Milligan, Minatare, Minden, Naper, Nebraska City, Neligh, Newman, Niobrara, Norfolk, North Bend, North Platte, O'Neill, Oakland, Odell, Ogallala, Omaha, Orchard, Ord, Osmond, Papillion, Pawnee City, Paxton, Peru, Pierce, Plainview, Plattsmouth, Ponca, Ralston, Randolph, Red Cloud, Republican City, Rising City, Rushville, Santee, Sargent, Schuyler, Scottsbluff, Seward, Shelby, Sidney, South Sioux City, Spalding, Spencer, Springfield, St. Paul, Stanton, Stella, Sterling, Stromsburg, Superior, Syracuse, Table Rock, Tecumseh, Thedford, Utica, Valentine, Valparaiso, Wakefield, Walthill, Wausa, Waverly, Wayne, Weeping Water, West Point, Wilber, Wolbach, Wood River, Wynot, York, Yutan.

2004 Financial Overview

Our Dollars Working in Communities Across Nebraska

Support

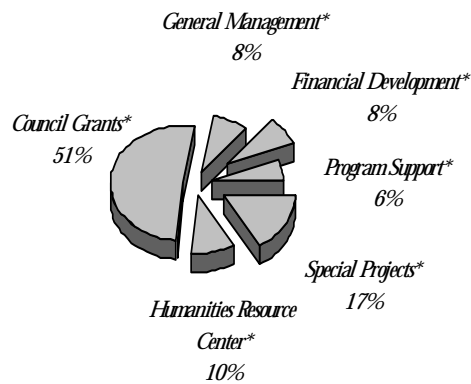
National Endowment for the Humanities Grant.....	\$487,589
Other Federal Grants.....	\$22,500
State Appropriations.....	\$83,700
Nebraska Cultural Endowment.....	\$167,529
Private Cash contributions.....	\$312,013
Earned Income.....	\$33,625
Miscellaneous Income.....	\$375
Interest Income.....	\$5,515
Cost Share, Cash and In-kind.....	\$722,655
Total revenue.....	\$1,835,501

Expenses

General Management.....	\$130,452
Financial Development.....	\$136,521
Program Support.....	\$99,468
Special Projects.....	\$280,274
Resource Center/Speaker Bureau Programs.....	\$161,047
Council Regrants.....	\$145,837
Cost Share by Grantees and Volunteers.....	\$722,655
Total expenses.....	\$1,676,254

Excess (deficit) of support and revenue over expenses \$159,247

Summary of Expenses - 2004



*Includes cost share

Audited financial statements from Dana F. Cole and Co.
are available for inspection at the NHC office.

Contributors January through December 2004

The Nebraska Humanities Council and the Nebraska Foundation for the Humanities thank the following donors for their contributions during the 2004 calendar year. We extend special thanks to those who are members of the Vision Circle^ (\$1,000 a year), the Silver Sower Club+ (\$250 a year), and the Sower Club* (\$100 a year). We also appreciate those who donated \$44 or less to support the NHC in 2004. If we have not reported your gift correctly, please let us know so that we can correct our mistake.

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We invite you to join the Vision Circle of donors to the Nebraska Humanities Council. Your contribution of \$1,000 or more will honor more than three decades of vital humanities programming made possible by generous Nebraskans, and will help ensure continued statewide access to these programs now and in the future.

We are grateful to the following individuals for supporting current programs by joining the Vision Circle in the past year:

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