



From left to right: Jüri Kivimäe, Helga Merits, Arnis Kuksis, Piret Noorhani, Andris Kesteris, Marika Mayfield and Andrejs Kulnieks. Photo: Taavi Tamtik

THE STORY OF THE BALTIC UNIVERSITY

On Saturday, February 13th the Estonian Studies Centre/VEMU hosted a conference at Tartu College dedicated to the Baltic University (BU). The conference was held in honour of the 70th anniversary since the establishment of the BU, which only existed in Germany for three years. The extensive conference came to a close with Helga Merits' documentary "The Story of the Baltic University".

Five lecturers gave presentations at the English language conference; one of whom is directly associated with the BU and two of whom are more indirectly connected. In the first session Helga Merits, Jüri Kivimäe, and Andrejs Kulnieks gave lectures, followed by Tiina Kirss' and Arnis Kuksis' lectures in the second session. The Chief Archivist of VEMU, Piret Noorhani, acted as the moderator.

Helga Merits, whose father studied Theology at BU, emphasised the importance of the short-lived three year university as well as the extraordinary effort of the professors and lecturers, who were both brave and venturesome. Helga also needed to use these same qualities to access the materials to create her documentary. She had to search in archives all over the world: in the United States, Australia, Canada, and Sweden. The search was not easy; in some instances Helga was met with negativity or complete opposition. The biggest achievement was discovering the BU archives at Uppsala University, the existence of which was a surprise to even the archives employees.

Jüri Kivimäe began by presenting some interesting demographic statistics. At the end of the war, about 8 million refugees remained in Germany: 200,000 of the refugees were Baltic, 40,000 of them Estonian. In October 1945, 1329 students began their studies at the Baltic University in Pinneberg under the direction of 168 faculty members; thus, creating an 8 to 1 ratio of students to faculty members. There were eight faculties headed by the president and three rectors, one for each represented country.

BU was founded by four professors: Öpik (Estonia), Gulbis and Dunsdorfs (Latvia), and Stanka (Lithuania). This was a great achievement and impressive start considering the post-war conditions. Kivimäe also introduced a number

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A note from the Editor: The Baltic Heritage Newsletter is distributed quarterly, on-line. The newsletter is compiled and edited by Kristina Lupp. The submission deadline for the next issue is 15 May 2016. We welcome news articles, conference information, calls for papers, new publication information, and images. Please send articles in English with high quality images to: kristinailupp@gmail.com

The Non-Profit Association Baltic Heritage Network was founded in Tartu on January 11, 2008. NPA BaltHerNet was established to foster cooperation between national and private archives, museums, libraries, and institutions of research, public associations and organizations collecting and studying the cultural heritage of the Baltic diaspora. It aims to facilitate the preservation and research of the historically valuable cultural property of the Baltic diaspora, as well as to ensure accessibility of these materials to the public.

NPA BaltHerNet is also committed to the organising of conferences, seminars and workshops, and to developing and administrating the electronic information website Baltic Heritage Network, a multilingual electronic gateway for information on the cultural heritage of the Baltic diaspora.

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of lesser known professors, although apologising beforehand, as according to the information he had access to, he may also be missing the names of some equally noteworthy individuals.

Andrejs Kulnieks focused on the importance of national culture and the continuation of tradition through the BU. Song and dance festivals are an important means for preserving national identity. A number of students who studied abroad either returned to their own homeland or that of their parents or alternatively, strengthened ties with the homeland.

In the second session, Tiina Kirss gave her lecture via Skype from Estonia. She discussed her family memories connected to the BU, where her mother studied medicine and her father was dean of the chemistry faculty. Kirss' parents met in this excellent intellectual atmosphere, the curiosity of which has been passed on and preserved in their children.

The final speaker, Arnis Kuksis, graduated from the Latvian University in Oldenburg and continued his studies in Agriculture at BU. He remembered the strong sense of belonging he felt, as the class sizes were small (about 10-15 students). There were no textbooks, so the students had to rely on their own notes. Exams were oral and in German. Kuksis later continued his studies in the United States at Iowa State University, where he was given two years of credit for his 14 months spent studying at the BU. He switched faculties and graduated with a degree in biochemistry. Kuksis emphasised his appreciation of the efforts of the BU professors, many of whom established academic careers in other countries after the BU closed its doors.

Despite the lengthy conference programme, the interested audience asked every lecturer a number of questions following their presentations. Active discussions also took place during the coffee breaks as well as at the reception following the opening of the BU exhibit. The exhibit was completed

as a collaborative project between Helga Merits and VEMU. It exhibits a selection of historical photos that tell the unique story of BU.

The conference concluded with the screening of Helga Merits' documentary. Andris Kesteris introduced the film's author and led the discussion.

In March, the Holland embassy will be organising screenings of the documentary in all three of the Baltic countries, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as a continuation of the celebrations of the 70th anniversary since the Baltic University opened its doors.

Eerik Purje (First published in Eesti Elu, February 19, 2016)

Translated by Marika Mayfield

LITHUANIAN DIASPORA EXHIBITION BACK IN LITHUANIA



Opening remarks were delivered by Jolanta Budriūnienė.

After the successful presentations in Norway, Switzerland, and Italy, the travelling exhibition "Lithuanian Publishing in Post-WWII Europe" is back in Lithuania. On 27 January 2016 it was opened at Pasvalys Marius Katiliškis Public Library as part of a day-long event "The Library and the 21st Century Society".

Opening remarks were delivered by Jolanta Budriūnienė, head of the Lithuanian Studies Research Department (former Lituania Department) of the National Library of Lithuania, who noted that the collection of Lithuanian DP publishing, 1945-1952, housed at the National Library of Lithuania, is of particular value for its unique content, produced under extremely difficult conditions. In 2011, it was

recognized by UNESCO -- the collection was included in UNESCO's "World Memory" programme for the Lithuanian National Register.

Pasvalys M. Katiliškis Public Library is only the first stop for this exhibition. Its organizer, the National Library of Lithuania, is planning to take it to all major public libraries in the country.

VERA OINETS RECEIVES ESTONIAN STATE DECORATION



On 23 February 2016, the President of the Republic of Estonia Toomas Hendrik Ilves bestowed national decorations. Vera Oinets was one of those to receive the Order of the White Star, fifth class. Vera is the head of the Krasnoyarsk Estonian Society; for 25 years, she has kept Estonian culture and traditions alive and developed cultural ties far away from the homeland.

The Baltic Heritage Network would like to congratulate its good friend and cooperation partner on being granted this honorary decoration, and we wish her all the best in her continued work!

AN EVENT IN WARSAW DEDICATED TO LITHUANIAN AND POLISH RELATIONS



Giedrė Milerytė-Japertienė (middle) talks about Lithuanian and Polish relations in exile. Photo by Dominik Wilczewski

On March 2, 2016, Dr Giedrė Milerytė-Japertienė, a senior researcher at the Lithuanian Studies Research Department of the National Library of Lithuania, participated in a discussion organised by the Lithuanian Embassy in Warsaw together with Vytautas Magnus University and Warsaw University Eastern Europe Studies Centre. The discussion, based on two newly published books, *Lithuanian and Polish Relations in Exile, 1945-1990* (ed. Giedrė Milerytė-Japertienė) and *The Dynamics of Relations Between Lithuania and Poland: From Historical Experience to Contemporary Situations* (ed. Mindaugas Norkevičius, Gintarė Lukoševičiūtė, and Ieva Masiliūnaitė), was attended by the Warsaw academic community.

The discussion also covered Jurgis Giedraitis' (Jerzy Giedroyc) intellectual legacy and influence on the present day Lithuanian and Polish relations. The discussion was led by Jan Malicki, the director of Warsaw University Eastern Europe Studies Centre.

AUDIO RECORDING OF K. PÄTS' LAST SPEECH

Film Archives of the Estonian National Archives presented rare finds from the Swedish Estonian Association film and audio collection on 4 February 2016 at the Tallinn University SuperNova cinema. Among these finds, was an audio recording of Konstantin Päts' last public speech on 21 June 1940; colour film clips of Konstantin Päts at his residence in Oru, and some film chronicles of Swedish-Estonians departing from the Haapsalu harbour.

The recording of Konstantin Päts' speech and the coup on June 21st are the only audio recordings that remain of these events. Until now the primary sources of information regarding the events that occurred on June 21st in Kadrioru, were newspaper articles and poorly written memories from that time. The audio recordings done by national broadcasters had been proclaimed unusable decades ago. In the presented recording, which had also been deemed damaged years ago, the President attempts to create a dialogue with the people who had gathered at Kadrioru. However, due to the outspoken opinions and interruptions made by the audience, the President had no choice but to leave the castle's balcony podium.

There are many more interesting materials that remain unknown to the public in the Swedish Estonian Association's collection. The film clips show President Konstantin Päts with his confidants at the Oru residence and Toila beach in the summer of 1939. There are also some clips captured of what remained of the Tallinn cityscape following the bombings of March 1944. The tragic maze of historical events continue to be reflected in the film material of Swedish-Estonians departing from the Haapsalu harbour and clips of the conditions in which Estonians lived in refugee camps in southern Sweden. Film clips also show important life events that took place in exile, such as the Stockholm Estonian Secondary School final exams and graduation ceremonies.

In addition to the films, rare audio recordings were released from

the years 1940-1953. The opening remarks for the release of the second print of the Estonian Students Association in Sweden were given by the well-known theological and educational figure, Johan Köpp. "Be certain in your hope and actions", was emphasised by the national political figure, August Rei at the 32nd Estonian Independence Day speech at the Stockholm Concert Hall in 1950. The audio recording titled "The Stories from Siuru" make it possible to listen to Marie Under performing her own ballad "Kotermann".

The author of many of the described films and audio recordings is Harald Perten. Harald Perten (8 April 1913, Tallinn - May 5, 1992, St. Gallen, Switzerland) was an Estonian agricultural scholar and grain chemist. Aside from his work, Harald was interested in film and photography and has recorded a significant amount of important cultural material. Harald Perten's film and audio archives were organised in collaboration with the Swedish Estonian Association.

The Compatriate Program supported the digitisation of the films. The Swedish Estonian Association audiovisual collection will be kept at the Film Archives of the Estonian National Archives and will be made accessible to the public on the National Archives database, FIS.

Historian Dr Ago Pajur; the directing consultant of the Film Archives, Pearu Tramberg, and audio archivist, Paavo Annus spoke at the event on February 4th. The representative of the Swedish Estonian Association, Jüri-Karl Seim, was also in attendance. Postimees.ee has made film clips of the event available online. <http://www.postimees.ee/3574137/konstantin-pats-riigipoorajatele-mina-ei-saa-teist-ule-karjuda>

ENA/RA



AMONG THE FINALISTS – THREE LITHUANIAN ÉMIGRÉ AUTHORS

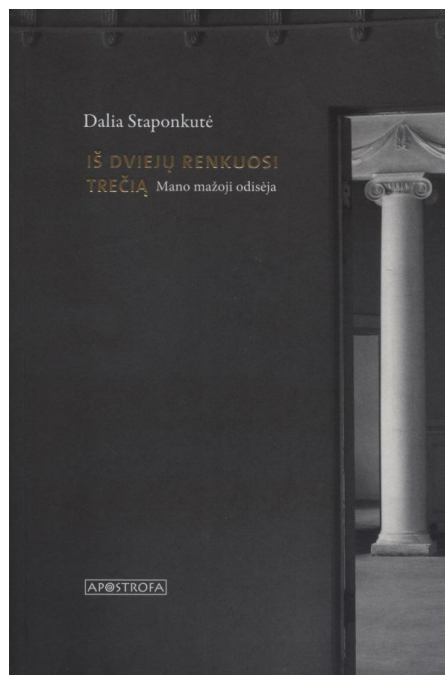
For many, the final list of the contestants (in the category “Adult Literature”) to win the best Lithuanian book of 2015 came as no surprise. Three out of five finalists were Lithuanian authors living abroad.



The novel *Odilė, arba Oro uostų vienatvė* (*Odile or the Loneliness of Airports*) is written by Valdas Papievis, who has been living between Paris and Vilnius for more than a decade. His newest book tells a story about the loneliness of an independent human being and the everyday life of a French aristocrat in Paris.



The second finalist, *Buying on Time*, by Canadian-Lithuanian author, Antanas Šileika, consists of thirteen interrelated short stories about Lithuanian emigrant family life in Canada told with plenty of humour and gentle irony. Although it seems that the author tells his own story, in fact, this book is not autobiographical. Šileika's book has received considerable attention in Canada and has won several awards.



The author of the third contestant and the winner of the Best Lithuanian Book-2015, *Iš dviejų renkuosi trečią: mano mažoji odisėja* (*Out of the Two I Prefer the Third: My Little Odyssey*), Dalia Staponkutė, is a Lithuanian writer, philosopher and translator currently living in Cyprus. In her second book, Staponkutė continues to tell the story about her journey as a Lithuanian, a woman and a mother abroad, only this time, from cultural and philosophical reflections she turns toward intimacy. The book also won the prize for the most creative book of the year in Lithuania.

SYLVIA THOMPSON AND MICHAEL KELLER RECEIVE ESTONIAN STATE DECORATIONS

At the end of February in California, CA, Eerik Marmei, Estonia's Ambassador to the United States, presented Orders of the Cross

of Terra Mariana to Sylvia K. Thompson, President of the Kistler-Ritso Foundation and Michael A. Keller, University Librarian at Stanford University, on behalf of Toomas Hendrik Ilves, President of the Republic of Estonia. The ceremony took place at the annual Estonian Independence Day celebration in Sunnyvale, hosted by the local Estonian Society and bringing together more than 200 Estonians and friends of Estonia.

Each year, the President of Estonia bestows 99 state decorations to people who have significantly contributed to the country's development, among them a handful of non-citizens. Sylvia Thompson and Michael Keller received the awards for their exceptional work with the Estonia's Museum of Occupations (soon to be renamed the Museum of Freedom, Vabamu) and building the Baltic studies program at Stanford University.

“I am honoured and delighted to present the Orders of the Cross of Terra Mariana to Michael Keller and Sylvia Thompson for their dedication and service to the state and people of Estonia”, said Marmei. “Their commitment to cultural and academic exchange between the United States and Estonia is highly valued and appreciated”.

Dedicated advocates and stewards of cultural heritage

Sylvia Thompson has an active role as a leader of nonprofit organizations. She is the President of the Kistler-Ritso Foundation, a non-profit foundation founded by her mother Olga Ritso Kistler, an Estonian refugee who, like tens of thousands of her compatriots, fled her homeland in the fear of the returning Soviet Army in 1944. The foundation focuses on educating the public regarding the occupation, resistance, freedom, and recovery of the Republic of Estonia.

In addition to building and running the Museum of Occupations in Tallinn, Estonia, the Kistler-Ritso Foundation supported numerous Estonian and Baltic events, films



and projects. In 2011, it gave an endowment to Stanford Libraries, making it possible for Stanford to hire a curator for Baltic studies and begin building its Baltic program. This year, Sylvia Thompson supported the museum with additional 260,000 EUR, which is likely the single largest private donation in Estonia in 2016.

In her speech on Saturday, Sylvia Thompson stressed the importance of not only focusing on Estonia's tragic history but also on its remarkable recovery during the past 25 years and the importance of maintaining the country's independence and freedom.

"Estonia is remarkable not for its victimhood—sadly, there are far too many victims of evil in this world. Estonia is unique for its non-violent "singing revolution" and its quick ascent to one of the most successful democracies in the world today", said Thompson. "Freedom and democracy are fragile, and require constant vigilance—we must all work together to ensure that Estonians never again have to endure the horrors of occupation".

"We are proud that Sylvia Thompson has continued the work of her mother Olga Ritso Kistler at the Museum of Occupations (Vabamu)", said Merilin Piipuu, the director of the museum. "Her support, input and warm heart help the museum to reach the next, more focused development level. It is just unbelievable how much Sylvia has helped the museum. She is a role

model to all Estonians in Estonia and abroad!"

Michael Keller is Stanford's University Librarian and serves as a member of the Supervisory Council of the Kistler-Ritso Foundation. He has been the driving force behind the creation of Stanford's Baltic program, and an active supporter of the development of the Museum of Occupations. Last year, Keller also became Estonian e-resident.

Under Keller's leadership and with donor support from Kistler-Ritso Foundation Stanford Libraries has established a growing Baltic studies program, which includes resources on Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian, as well as on Finnish history, literature and culture. In addition, Stanford Libraries actively collaborates with Baltic institutions and organizations by conducting projects and organizing seminars, conferences and other events to support collection development.

"I am delighted to be the first of many Stanford officers to be closely involved and supporting the Museum of Occupations that we now call the Museum of Freedom, Vabamu", said Keller in his speech.

Keller made note that the Stanford Libraries, particularly through the curatorial expertise of Liisi Esse, has amassed a rich collection including published works about Estonia, testimonies of Estonians surviving the occupations, Estonian

government documents, Estonian movies and music, and records of Estonian ex-patriots, and has developed working relationships with Estonian libraries and archives.

"We will help Stanford students and professors study Estonian history, literature, science, technology, and culture. And in doing that for Stanford, we will draw other universities into this field. We seek always to help you and your countrymen preserve Estonian freedom and to celebrate Estonia's success", said Keller as he concluded his speech.

"Estonia is extremely fortunate to have Mike as a true friend and a strong advocate of everything Estonian", said Liisi Esse, Stanford's Curator for Baltic studies.

"It is because of Mike's keen interest towards Estonia and the other Baltic states and his ability to recognize important developments in the present and in the future that Stanford Libraries is the first academic library in the U.S. to have a Baltic curator on staff, and has one of the strongest Baltic collections in the continent. It is a great pleasure to see him being rewarded for his ongoing support", said Esse.

Estonian ceremony

The official ceremony of presenting the state decorations took place on 23 February in Tallinn, Estonia. The President of Estonia Toomas Hendrik Ilves addressed the recipients of the decorations by thanking them for the services they have provided to Estonia.

"You are all visible and stand in the spotlight, either through your professional work or as a supporter of your community. There are also more faraway friends and supporters of Estonia, whose acts have made Estonia more visible, audible, safer and more secure", said President Ilves.

"You have put your soul into your work and the efforts you have made for your home and Estonia in general will help propel us forward. These are efforts that drive Estonia onwards. You will make our country and each

and every one of us much bigger.
Stronger, better”.

“RESEARCHING DIASPORA AND MIGRATION: THEORETICAL CHALLENGES”

The VMU Lithuanian Emigration Institute and the Department of Lithuanian Literature are organizing a conference “Researching Diaspora and Migration: Theoretical Challenges” and invite historians, political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists, journalists, linguists, cultural and literature researchers, studying the history of Lithuanian diaspora and migration processes and looking for interdisciplinary research opportunities, to participate in it.

The organisers invite proposals on the following topics and issues:

- Theoretical and methodological aspects of migration phenomenon and diaspora studies, the terminology and its use-related problems.
- Baltic diaspora, historical research, its specificity, comparative research opportunities.
- Fundamental and comparative research of and interdisciplinary cultural studies approaches to Lithuanian literature, art, music and culture in exile.
- International migration processes analysis, their relevance in a global society, interdisciplinary aspects.

The conference will take place at the VMU Lithuanian Emigration Institute (S. Daukanto g. 25, Kaunas) on 14 April 2016. The final date to submit proposals is 21 March 2016. Contact person: Dr Dalia Kuiziniene; email: d.kuiziniene@hmf.vdu.lt

LIFE STORIES COMPETITION CELEBRATING THE REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

Call for life stories

We invite you to participate in a new life stories competition:

The Republic of Estonia is 100. My love and life!

Every person is an expert in at least this one field - one's life story. Every person is history, initially for one's children and grandchildren, but also for all future generations. A life story is an imprint, a trail of life left behind in the form of memories.

We invite you to write down your life stories in Estonia and abroad. Authors who have already written their stories may also write a new version of their story to enter in this competition. Pseudonyms are also accepted. Please write your story in 10-20 pages.

The chosen life stories will be published for the Republic of Estonia's 100th Anniversary of Independence in the book “Eesti rahva elulood” (Life Stories of Estonians) published by Tänapäev. There will be awards for the best life stories! All life stories will be preserved at the Estonian Literary Museum in the Estonian Cultural History Archives, as well as with our Canadian-Estonian collaborators at the Estonian Studies Centre/VEMU Archives in Toronto, Canada.

Poet, Kristiina Ehin, is the spokesperson for this competition.

Some questions to focus your thoughts:

Think about your life now and in the past. Write down how the changing world had affected you and your loved one's lives.

How important have the people around you, love and the emotional world been to you?

What has the Republic of Estonia given to you and your loved ones? What has the country taken?

What memories do you and your loved ones have of the events that occurred during the transitional periods in Estonia?

What types of roles have you had to play in your lifetime?

What kinds of choices have you faced? How have you tolerated a double life?

What fears have you faced?

What do you live for?

Write about your experiences and do not hesitate to intertwine the past with the present. Discuss the good and the bad times in your life and the world around you.

Please send in your submissions by
December 1, 2016.

By post: ELULOOD, Eesti
Kirjandusmuuseum, Vanemuise 42, Tartu
51003

E-mail: elulood@kirmus.ee

Canadian Estonians may send their
submissions to:

By post: Estonian Studies Centre/VEMU,
310 Bloor St. W., Toronto ON M5S 1W4

E-mail: piret.noorhani@vemu.ca

Estonian Literary Museum / Estonian
Cultural History Archives and Estonian
Folklore Archives

Estonian Life Stories Association

Estonian Studies Centre/VEMU



Kristina Ehin in Toronto in September 2014.
Photo: P. Noorhani

THE BALTHERNET SUMMER SCHOOL 'Estonian Cultural Heritage Abroad 7: From Repository to Exhibition' to be held in Haapsalu between the 4th and 7th of July 2016

This time around, we will be discussing the usage of archival records, printed matter and museum objects in exhibitions.

Exhibitions are an important help in introducing and popularising our history and its sources. Exhibitions and other events focusing on history and culture help a community explain and remember the importance of collecting source material and acknowledge the value of the archival records, printed matter and objects in their possession.

What kinds of exhibitions are possible? How does one go from idea to exhibition? How is an exhibition planned? How do we connect the making of an exhibition with curating? How do we use the curated sources and materials in an exhibition? What should we keep in mind when we use original materials in an exhibition? Specialists from Estonian archives, museums and libraries will speak about these topics and many others. Representatives from Estonian archives abroad will share their experiences. There will be lectures and workshops, and we will visit some of Haapsalu's museums.

The working language of the summer school will be Estonian.

If requested, it will be possible to partake in archival and library courses in Tallinn before or after the days in Haapsalu.

We kindly ask participants to pre-register by the 15th of April 2016 via e-mail to [karin.kiisk\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:karin.kiisk[at]gmail.com) or by phone +372 55544269

GRANT-IN-AID AWARDS

The Immigration History Research Center Archives (IHRCA) offers Grant-in-Aid Awards to support a visit in order to conduct research in our collections. This award is open to scholars of all levels, including independent scholars, and supports a research visit of 5 days or more. Typically, awards are for \$1,000, and four awards are given each year. The application is due June 1 of each year and the research visit is to occur within the next 13 months.

The Immigration History Research Center and Archives (IHRC/A) is an internationally known migration studies center with expansive archives documenting immigration to the United States from the latter 19th century to current refugee

migrations.

Who May Apply?

Students and scholars who live outside the Minneapolis -

St. Paul (MN) metro area and who need to do research in the IHRCA collections.

Selection Criteria:

- Demonstrated connection between research needs and specific collections at the IHRCA.
- Language proficiency (for projects requiring sources in languages other than English; please consult an archivist).

Application Materials:

- Application letter of approximately two pages including estimated dates of residency; description of research project including goals, framework and preliminary thesis; collections to be consulted; and estimated budget.
- Current curriculum vitae.
- Names and contact information for two references.

Send by June 1st to ihrca@umn.edu, Attn: Grant-in-Aid Committee OR to the following postal address:

IHRCA Grant-in-Aid Committee
Immigration History Research Center Archives
University of Minnesota
311 Andersen Library
222 - 21st Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Details and Availability & Terms of Award:

Prior to submitting an application, consult the IHRCA website at <https://www.lib.umn.edu/ihrca> to learn about collections and consult with staff via ihrca@umn.edu to confirm material availability and relevance to proposed projects; pertinent IHRCA holdings are a required element of the application.

Researchers receiving an IHRCA Grant-in-Aid Award will be expected to be in residence for 5 working days or more; acknowledge the IHRCA and receipt of the award in any resulting publication; donate resulting print publications; and participate in the IHRC/A Global REM (Race, Ethnicity and Migration) and Research in Progress lecture series if able to visit during the academic year. (A brief biography and talk description will be required upon acceptance of the award.)

The award is for travel and research-related expenses, for research in any IHRCA collection/s, and must be used in the next University fiscal year.

We aim to inform all applicants of their application status by July 30th of same year.

We are not able to provide visa assistance to our international applicants.

Please note that the award is payable in US funds only; funds are distributed post-visit based upon receipts provided.