

Joseph Pulitzer and The Pulitzer Prizes

In the latter years of the 19th century, Joseph Pulitzer stood out as the very embodiment of American journalism. Hungarian-born, an intense indomitable figure, Pulitzer was the most skillful of newspaper publishers, a passionate crusader against dishonest government, a fierce, hawk-like competitor who did not shrink from sensationalism in circulation struggles, and a visionary who richly endowed his profession. His innovative *New York World* and *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reshaped newspaper journalism. Pulitzer was the first to call for the training of journalists at the university level in a school of journalism. And certainly, the lasting influence of the Pulitzer Prizes on journalism, literature, music, and drama is to be attributed to his visionary acumen. In writing his 1904 will, which made provision for the establishment of the Pulitzer Prizes as an incentive to excellence, Pulitzer specified solely four awards in journalism, four in letters and drama, one for education, and four traveling scholarships. In letters, prizes were to go to an American novel, an original American play performed in New York, a book on the history of the United States, an American biography, and a history of public service by the press. But, sensitive to the dynamic progression of his society Pulitzer made provision for broad changes in the system of awards. He established an overseer advisory board and willed it "power in its discretion to suspend or to change any subject or subjects, substituting, however, others in their places, if in the judgment of the board such suspension, changes, or substitutions shall be conducive to the public good or rendered advisable by public necessities, or by reason of change of time." He also empowered the board to withhold any award where entries fell below its standards of excellence. The assignment of power to the board was such that it could also overrule the recommendations for awards made by the juries subsequently set up in each of the categories. Since the inception of the prizes in 1917, the board, later renamed the Pulitzer Prize Board, has increased the number of awards to 21 and introduced poetry, music, and photography as subjects, while adhering to the spirit of the founder's will and its intent.

by Seymour Topping

former Administrator of The Pulitzer Prizes

Fiction

1948 **Tales of the South Pacific** by James A. Michener

1949 **Guard of Honor** by James Gould Cozzens

1950 **The Way West** by A. B. Guthrie

1951 **The Town** by Conrad Richter

1952 **The Caine Mutiny** by Herman Wouk

1953 **The Old Man and the Sea** by Ernest Hemingway

1954 (No Award)

1955 **A Fable** by William Faulkner

1956 **Andersonville** by Kantor MacKinlay

1957 (No Award)

1958 **A Death in the Family** by James Agee

1959 **The Travels of Jaimie McPheeters** by Robert Lewis Taylor

1960 **Advise and Consent** by Allen Drury

1961 **To Kill a Mockingbird** by Harper Lee

1962 **The Edge of Sadness** by Edwin O'Connor

1963 **The Reivers** by William Faulkner

1964 (No Award)

1965 **The Keepers of the House** by Shirley Ann Grau

1966 **Collected Stories** by Katherine Anne Porter

1967 **The Fixer** by Bernard Malamud

1968 **The Confessions of Nat Turner** by William Styron

1969 **House Made of Dawn** by N. Scott Momaday

1970 **Collected Stories** by Jean Stafford

1971 (No Award)

1972 **Angle of Repose** by Wallace Stegner

1973 **The Optimists Daughter** by Eudora Welty

1974 (No Award)

1975 **The Killer Angels** by Michael Shaara

1976 **Humboldt's Gift** by Saul Bellow

1977 (No Award)

1978 **Elbow Room** by James Alan McPherson

1979 **The Stories of John Cheever** by John Cheever

1980 **The Executioner's Song** by Norman Mailer

1981 **A Confederacy of Dunces** by John Kennedy Toole

1982 **Rabbit is Rich** by John Updike

1983 **The Color Purple** by Alice Walker

1984 **Ironweed** by William Kennedy

1985 **Foreign Affairs** by Alison Lurie

1986 **Lonesome Dove** by Larry McMurtry

1987 **A Summons to Memphis** by Peter Taylor

1988 **Beloved** by Toni Morrison

1989 **Breathing Lessons** by Anne Tyler

1990 **The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love** by Oscar Hijuelos

- 1991 **Rabbit at Rest** by John Updike
- 1992 **A Thousand Acres** by Jane Smiley
- 1993 **A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain**
by Robert Olen Butler
- 1994 **The Shipping News** by E. Annie Proulx
- 1995 **The Stone Diaries** by Carol Shields
- 1996 **Independence Day** by Richard Ford
- 1997 **Martin Dressler: The Tale of an American
Dreamer** by Steven Millhauser
- 1998 **American Pastoral** by Philip Roth
- 1999 **The Hours** by Michael Cunningham
- 2000 **Interpreter of Maladies** by Jhumpa Lahiri
- 2001 **The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier &
Clay** by Michael Chabon
- 2002 **Empire Falls** by Richard Russo
- 2003 **Middlesex** by Jeffrey Eugenides
- 2004 **The Known World** by Edward P. Jones
- 2005 **Gilead** by Marilynne Robinson
- 2006 **March** by Geraldine Brooks
- 2007 **The Road** by Cormac McCarthy
- 2008 **The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao**
by Junot Diaz
- 2009 **Olive Kitteridge** by Elizabeth Stout

SOMERS LIBRARY

P.O. Box 443
Somers, NY 10589
Tel 914-232-5717
Web www.somerslibrary.org



LIBRARY HOURS

MON 1 P.M.- 8 P.M.

TUE 11 A.M. - 6 P.M.

WED 10 A.M.- 5 P.M.

THU 11 A.M. - 6 P.M.

FRI 10 A.M. - 5 P.M.

SAT 12 P.M. - 5 P.M.

SUN 1 P.M. - 5 P.M.

Summer Schedule
(June, July, August & September)

SAT 10 A.M.-3 P.M.

SUN CLOSED



Pulitzer Prize (Fiction)



*John Singer Sargent's portrait
of Joseph Pulitzer.*