

The Chicago Literary Hall of Fame

Each year since its inception in 2010, the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame has inducted our best historical writers. Until the most recent class, six writers were selected each year. The number was reduced to three in order to ensure that the standards for selection would remain incredibly high. Our Chicago Literary Hall of Fame now includes 45 literary figures. The induction ceremonies take place in the year following selection.

Robert Sengstacke Abbott (2017)

Jane Addams (2012)

Nelson Algren (2010)

Margaret Anderson (2014)

Sherwood Anderson (2012)

Rane Arroyo (2015)

Margaret Ayer Barnes (2016)

L. Frank Baum (2013)

Saul Bellow (2010)

Marita Bonner (2017)

Gwendolyn Brooks (2010)

Fanny Butcher (2016)

Margaret T. Burroughs (2015)

Cyrus Colter (2011)

Floyd Dell (2015)

Theodore Dreiser (2011)

Roger Ebert (2016)

James T. Farrell (2012)

Edna Ferber (2013)

Eugene Field (2016)

Leon Forrest (2013)

Henry Blake Fuller (2017)

Lorraine Hansberry (2010)

Alice Judson Ryerson Hayes (2015)

Ben Hecht (2013)

Ernest Hemingway (2012)

David Hernandez (2014)

Langston Hughes (2012)

Fenton Johnson (2016)

John H. Johnson (2013)

Ring Lardner (2016)

Edgar Lee Masters (2014)

Harriet Monroe (2011)

Willard Motley (2014)

Carolyn Rodgers (2012)

Mike Royko (2011)

Carl Sandburg (2011)

Shel Silverstein (2014)

Upton Sinclair (2015)

Studs Terkel (2010)

Margaret Walker (2014)

Theodore Ward (2015)

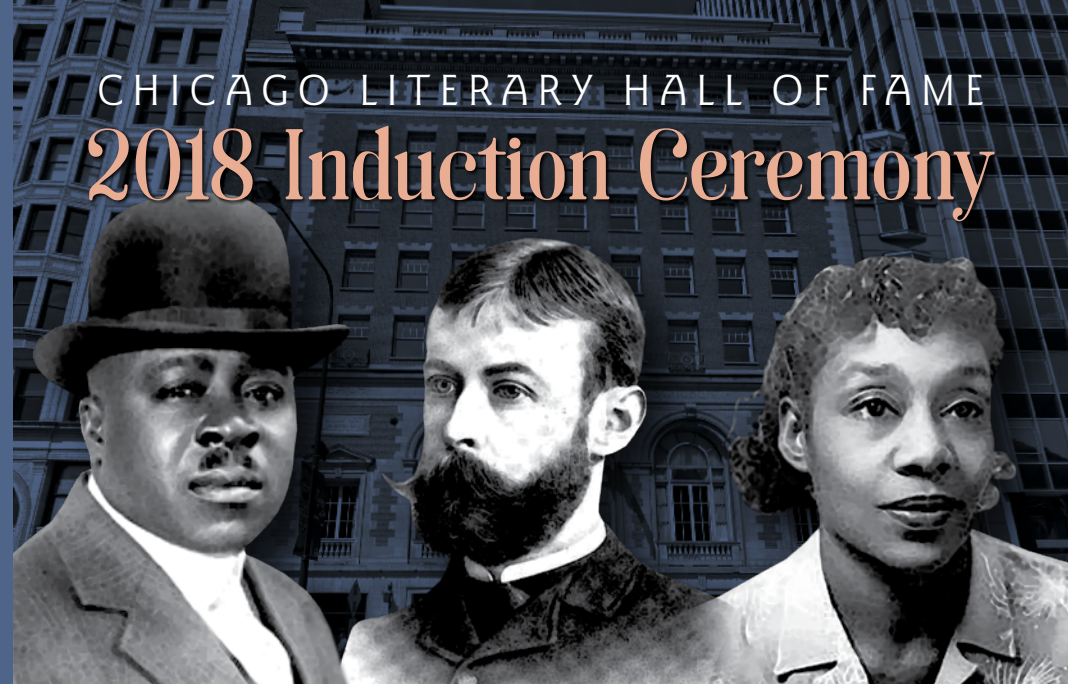
Ida B. Wells (2011)

Thornton Wilder (2013)

Richard Wright (2010)

The Chicago Literary Hall of Fame (CLHOF) honors, celebrates, preserves, and promotes the development of Chicago's great literary heritage—past, present, and future. CLHOF seeks to realize this purpose by annual inductions of selected great writers from the past, ceremonies honoring living writers whose lifetime contributions to the literary arts warrant the highest recognition, literary awards to youth, classes, panels, and other literary endeavors designed to encourage the development of writers at all ages. CLHOF also creates written materials that record the lives and works of Chicago's most important literary figures and presents these and other materials on its website, in exhibits, author events, public art installations, literary tours, and programming relevant to the organization's goal of promoting Chicago's vibrant literary tradition and culture.

Visit us at chicagoliteraryhof.org



Robert Sengstacke
Abbott

Henry Blake
Fuller

Marita
Bonner

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 16

6 P.M. - 9 P.M.

Cash bar begins at 4:30 p.m.

Dinner served at 6:15 p.m.

Ceremony starts at 7:15 p.m.

CLIFF DWELLERS

200 S. Michigan Ave.

Penthouse (22nd Floor)

Chicago, IL 60604



This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.



Tonight's Program

Donald G. Evans.....Emcee

Ethan Michaeli.....Presenting for Robert Sengstacke Abbott

Myiti Sengstacke-Rice ...Accepting for Robert Sengstacke Abbott

William Getzoff.....Presenting for Henry Blake Fuller

Michael Burke.....Reading from *Bertram Cope's Year*

Eve Moran.....Accepting on behalf of Cliff Dwellers
for Henry Blake Fuller

Richard Guzman.....Presenting for Marita Bonner

Our Host: The Cliff Dwellers

The Cliff Dwellers Club, founded in 1907 as the Attic Club by Hamlin Garland and Emmett Dedmon, is now known by the name it received in 1909. The Club was ultimately named after Henry Blake Fuller's novel *The Cliff Dwellers*, which offered pessimistic views about the future of the arts community in a developing Chicago.

Since its 1996 move from atop Symphony Center (formerly Orchestra Hall) next door, all the facilities of The Cliff Dwellers Club are located in the 22nd floor penthouse of the office building at the southwest corner of Michigan Avenue at Adams Street. Frank Lloyd Wright was a charter member, and Louis Sullivan, for whom the Club's library is named, wrote his memoirs at a small oak desk that remains there today. George Ade, Carl Sandburg and James Whitcomb Riley all had associations with the Club. Poet William Butler Yeats was honored at a banquet attended by around 150 people at The Cliff Dwellers on March 1, 1914. *Poetry* magazine was two years old at the time, and acted as host of the affair. Cliff Dwellers was at the time (and until 1984) an all-male club. But *Poetry* editor Harriet Monroe used this occasion to gain access to the club and its wealthy donors. Monroe teamed Yeats with Nicolas Vachel Lindsay, the Springfield poet whom caused a stirring reaction when he read (for the first time publicly) *The Congo*.

In more recent years, Chicago film critic Roger Ebert frequented the Club as a member. Honorary members include the likes of Scott Turow, Angela Jackson, and Stuart Dybek, all whom have appeared at special events. In 2014, Cliff Dwellers started hosting monthly book club meetings centered around Chicago literature. The Chicago Literary Hall of Fame has partnered with Cliff Dwellers since its inception, and frequently collaborates on talks or presentations featuring CLHOF inductees and top-tier contemporary writers.

Participants



Ethan Michaeli is the author of *The Defender: How the Legendary Black Newspaper Changed America*, which won the Best Non Fiction of 2016 prizes from the Chicago Writers Association as well as the Midland Authors Association and was named as a Notable Book by *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and Amazon, and to the short list of the Mark Lynton Prize. Ethan was a copy editor and investigative reporter at *The Chicago Daily Defender* from 1991 to 1996, after which he founded the *Residents' Journal*, an award-winning magazine written and produced by tenants of Chicago's public housing developments. Ethan's work has been published by Oxford University Press, *Atlantic Magazine*, *The Nation*, *The Forward*, *In These Times*, the *Chicago Tribune* and other venues. He is currently a senior adviser for communications and development at the Goldin Institute. Ethan's forthcoming book, *Twelve Tribes: Promise and Peril in the New Israel*, will be published by Custom House Books in 2019.



Eve Moran is president of the Cliff Dwellers. She is an attorney who has enjoyed a long and fulfilling career in government service. Serving as chair of the Greektown Arts Committee, Eve regularly produces street art projects for the community. She further selects films and provides introductory remarks for the "Saturday at the Movies" film society at The Cliff Dwellers. Next on her agenda is the development of both a travel group and a theater circle at the Club.



Myiti Sengstacke-Rice, Ed. D is the President and CEO of the Chicago Defender Charities, which produces the 90-year-old Bud Billiken Parade and Festival. She is author of *Chicago Defender*, a volume in Arcadia Publishing's *Images of America* series. She is also a contributing author to *Building the Black Metropolis: African American Entrepreneurship in Chicago*. Myiti's father, Bobby Sengstacke, is a celebrated photographer; her grandfather, John H. Sengstacke, was the publisher of the *Chicago Defender*, as well as a prominent civil rights advocate and critical negotiator for the White House; her great granduncle, Robert Sengstacke Abbott, founded the *Chicago Defender* and the Bud Billiken Parade. Myiti also began her career as a reporter for the *Chicago Defender* and later became Associate Editor of the newspaper. She is the founding editor-in-chief of the award-winning magazine *UPTOWN* out of New York City. Myiti assisted the University of Chicago, *Mapping the Stacks* archival team in organizing her family archives. She is a professor of African American Studies and Literature at Kennedy-King College.

Participants



Michael Burke is the author of the short story collection, *What You Don't Know About Men* and the plays, *Wama-Wama Zing Bing* and *Let's Spend Money*. Mike occasionally appears as a guest lecturer in English and Fiction Writing classes (at Columbia College Chicago, College of DuPage, Northeastern Illinois University and elsewhere.) He was born in Chicago's Jefferson Park neighborhood and now lives in Edgewater with his husband, magician Robert Charles.



Donald G. Evans is the Founding Executive Director of the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame, author of the novel *Good Money After Bad*, and editor of a Chicago Cubs anthology *Cubbie Blues: 100 Years of Waiting Till Next Year*. His most recent book, the short story collection, *An Off-White Christmas*, came out last month. He's been listed four times in the *Newcity Lit 50: Who Really Books in Chicago* feature, and received the Chicago Writers Association's Spirit Award for lifetime achievement. He serves on various boards and committees, including as a program committee member of the American Writers Museum, and a selector for the annual Harold Washington Literary Award.



William Getzoff has been a member of Cliff Dwellers since 1985, and served as its president from 2002-2003. He earned a BA at Oberlin College, where he majored in religion and art history, before going on to get his JD at the University of Illinois College of Law. He practiced law with his father, and focused, during his long career, on corporate and association law.



Richard R. Guzman is a professor at North Central College in Naperville, where he teaches courses in writing and literature, sacred texts, music, film, urban & suburban studies, race & ethnicity, and leadership for social change. He has published essays, poetry, and music, and performs poetry and music. His first book, *Voices and Freedoms: A History of Jazz*, was made into a nationally syndicated radio series, and one of his more recent books, *Black Writing from Chicago*, has been called "a work of great importance...and a sheer delight." He led in establishing the college's Cultural Events Program, its Honors Program, and masters programs in Liberal Studies, Leadership Studies, and Social Entrepreneurship. He has twice won awards for outstanding teaching and leadership, and helped establish the CODE diversity initiative, the Film Studies Minor, and such events as the Fall Festival of Independent Film, and the Gospel Extravaganza, which celebrated its 25th anniversary in January 2013. He has long been involved in social change and social service work.



Robert Sengstacke Abbott (Nov. 24, 1868 - Feb. 29, 1940)

No greater glory, no greater honor, is the lot of man departing than a feeling possessed deep in his heart that the world is a better place for his having lived.

From errand boy to lawyer to publisher, as founder of one of the most read African American newspapers in the United States, Robert Sengstacke Abbott gave voice to a African American point of view that had been rendered mute in the early twentieth century.

Born in Georgia to a couple whose parents had been slaves, Abbott was still a baby when his father, Thomas Abbott, died of leukemia. His mother, Flora, later married John Sengstacke, a mulatto of German descent who promptly added Sengstacke to Robert's name.

Abbott graduated from Hampton Institute in Virginia. After college he moved to Chicago, a city to which he had been exposed while singing with the Hampton College Quartet at the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893. He graduated from Chicago's Kent College of Law in 1898, but because of racial prejudice was unable to practice law. Armed with a printing background and academic credentials, he converted a \$25 investment into *The Chicago Defender* newspaper. With the assistance of J. Hockley Smiley, *The Chicago Defender* became the literary domain for racial advancement. *The Chicago Defender* actively promoted the northward migration of African American Southerners, particularly to Chicago. Its columns not only reported on the movement, but helped to bring about 1917's "Great Northern Drive," a term coined by Abbott himself. By the early 20s, *The Chicago Defender's* circulation reached more than 200,000 people. Distribution of the paper was facilitated by African American railroad porters who both read and shared *The Chicago Defender*. *The Chicago Defender* wrote of injustices but also of a spirit that represented unapologetic African American pride, dignity and assertiveness.

The newspaper also fostered literary careers. At 17, Gwendolyn Brooks started submitting her work to "Lights and Shadows," the newspaper's poetry column, and eventually published almost a hundred poems there. Willard Motley and Langston Hughes were just a few of the other big names for whom *The Chicago Defender* was a literary home.

Married twice, Abbott had no children. *The Chicago Defender* was left in the capable hands of his nephew John H.H. Sengstacke III. Abbott lived at 4742 S. Martin Luther King Drive, Chicago--now a historic landmark known as Robert S. Abbott House.



Marita Bonner

(June 16, 1898 - Dec. 6, 1971)

And then you can, when Time is ripe, swoop to your feet—at your full height—at a single gesture. Ready to go where? Why...Wherever God motions.

Marita Bonner, an accomplished short story writer, playwright and essayist, was a African American woman who left Boston for Chicago in the thirties and lived there until her death in 1971. At Radcliffe College, despite being barred from living in the college's dormitories, she majored in English and Comparative Literature, also studying German and musical composition. From 1924-1941, Bonner published short stories and essays in African American journals such as *Opportunity*, *The Crisis*, and *Black Life*, illuminating the lives and struggles of urban African American women as they fought to improve the lot of themselves and their families in Harlem and Chicago. These included her landmark 1925 essay *On Being Young-A Woman-And Colored*, which was published in *The Crisis* and which exemplified her ferocious exploration of the enormous prejudices—class, race, and gender—barring opportunity. In 1930, Bonner married William Almy Occomy and moved to Chicago, where she raised three children and later taught school, first at Phillips High School and then Dolittle School, which served educationally deprived students. Her best-known works are her plays *The Purple Flower* (1928) and *The Pot Maker* (1927), as well as her Frye Street stories, set in a multi-ethnic, strife-torn Chicago. Distinguished Chicago literary scholar Richard Guzman notes that her 1926 short story, “Nothing New,” introduced her fictional street as one not only of hardship, but promise. He also credits Bonner for influencing writers such as Alice Browning and Era Bell Thompson. A collection of her work was published in 1987 as *Frye Street and Environs: The Collected Works of Marita Bonner*.

LITERARY TOURS OF CHICAGO

The Chicago Literary Hall of Fame has developed walking and bus tours focused on the sites associated with our city's most important authors and literary moments. One of our three tour guides will accommodate any group of at least eight people. To schedule a tour or for more information, contact Don Evans (dgevans@chicagoliteraryhof.org).

DOWNTOWN
CHICAGO JOURNALISTS
OAK PARK
BLACK LITERARY RENAISSANCE
THE GOLD COAST
WICKER PARK
PILSEN



Henry Blake Fuller

(Jan. 9, 1857 - July 28, 1929)

There are a good many ways to skin a cat, and the realistic way, I dare say, is as good a way as any.

Henry Blake Fuller was a third generation Chicagoan born in a house that sat on the lot that is now LaSalle Street Station. He wrote a score of novels and stories set in the city, including: *The Cliff-Dwellers* (1893), *With the Procession* (1895), *Under the Skylights* (1901), and *On the Stairs* (1918). His play *At St. Judas's* (1896) is considered the first published literary work exploring homosexual themes, and his novel *Bertram Cope's Year* (1919), set at a fictionalized Northwestern University, was the first mainstream novel depicting a homosexual relationship. Fuller had failed to find a commercial publisher and eventually a friend published the novel at his tiny Chicago-based Alderbrink Press.

Fuller was one of the earliest and best Chicago writers; in fact, upon the publication of his first book, East Coast reviewers, enamored with the story, expressed surprise that something so good had come out of Chicago. Fuller's first Chicago novel, coming after two successful novels based on his European travels, came out the year of the Columbian Exposition, 1893, and was critical of the city's crass commercialism. *The Cliff-Dwellers* is probably the first realistic Chicago novel, in that it explored the social and economic trends changing the face of Chicago; in it, Fuller applied the term “cliff-dwellers” to the people occupying the fictitious Clifton Building, modeled after the Monadnock Building. H.L. Mencken, in reference to the work, claimed that Fuller had “launched realism in America.”

Adam Morgan, editor of the *Chicago Review of Books*, quotes Dr. Joseph Dimuro of UCLA as calling *The Cliff-Dwellers* “arguably the first important novel of the American city.”

In fact, during and just after his life, Fuller was widely praised by critics and peers, including Theodore Dreiser, Thornton Wilder, Booth Tarkington, and Carl Van Vechten. William Dean Howells called *The Cliff-Dwellers* “a work of very great power.”

Fuller was one of the founding members of the Eagle's Nest Art Colony (Oregon, Illinois), sat on an advisory board for Harriet Monroe's upstart *Poetry* magazine, and was a preeminent member of the literary club called *The Little Room*. Hamlin Garland took from his friend Fuller's novel the name for the new club, The Cliff Dwellers, he helped form.