

CONTACT:

David Spatz 203-432-3339 gilder.lehrman.center@yale.edu

Lisa Nguyen 646-366-9666 x37 nguyen@gilderlehrman.org

Kianti Roman 203-432-8055 kianti.roman@yale.edu

Marilyn Wilkes 203-432-3413 marilyn.wilkes@yale.edu

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Duke University Professor Wins the 15th Annual Frederick Douglass Book Prize

New Haven, Conn. — Sydney Nathans, Professor Emeritus of History at Duke University, has been selected as the winner of the 2013 Frederick Douglass Book Prize for his book *To Free a Family: The Journey of Mary Walker* (Harvard University Press). The Douglass Prize was created jointly by Yale University's Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. It is awarded annually by Yale's Gilder Lehrman Center for the best book written in English on slavery or abolition. The \$25,000 prize will be presented to Nathans at a reception sponsored by the Gilder Lehrman Institute in New York City in February 2014.

In addition to Nathans, the other finalists for the prize were Stephen Kantrowitz for *More than Freedom: Fighting for Black Citizenship in a White Republic, 1829-1889* (The Penguin Press), and Brett Rushforth for *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous & Atlantic Slaveries in New France* (University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture).

This year's finalists were selected from a field of nearly one hundred entries by a jury of scholars that included Gregory Downs, Chair (CUNY), Graham Hodges (Colgate University), and Stephanie Smallwood (University of Washington). The winners were selected by a review committee of representatives from the Gilder Lehrman Center, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, and Yale University.

"Sydney Nathans provides an astonishing biography of an extraordinary but little-known woman," noted Downs, the 2013 Douglass Prize Jury Chair and Associate Professor of History at the City University of New York. "Based upon painstaking work in vast public and private archives, Nathans writes an almost unbearably sensitive exploration of Walker's persistent struggles to free her children." *To Free a Family*, Downs adds, "is a triumph of the historian's and the writer's craft, a work that proves the power of the humanistic imagination, and one of the finest biographies of a slave ever written."

The Frederick Douglass Book Prize was established in 1999 to stimulate scholarship in the field of slavery and abolition by honoring outstanding books on the subject. The award is named for Frederick Douglass (1818–1895), the slave who escaped bondage to emerge as one of the great American abolitionists, reformers, writers, and orators of the 19th century.

The Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition, a part of The Whitney and Betty MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies at Yale, was established in November 1998. Its mission is to promote the study of all aspects of slavery and its

destruction. The Center seeks to foster an improved understanding of the role of slavery in the founding of the modern world by promoting interaction and exchange between scholars, teachers, and public historians through publications, educational outreach, and other programs and events. For further information on Gilder Lehrman Center events and programming, contact the center by phone (203) 432-3339, fax (203) 432-6943, or e-mail gilder.lehrman.center@yale.edu.

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, founded in 1994 by philanthropists Richard Gilder and Lewis Lehrman, is the nation's leading non-profit provider of teacher training and classroom resources in the subject of American history. Our programs span public, private, and parochial schools across the nation, reaching students of all backgrounds. Each year the Institute offers support and resources to thousands of teachers, and through them, enhances the education of hundreds of thousands of students. The Institute's programs have been recognized by awards from the White House, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Organization of American Historians. For further information, visit www.gilderlehrman.org or call (646) 366-9666.

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