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**Pulitzer Prizes Awards \$45,739 to Rhode Island Council for the Humanities
for 2016 Centennial Campfires Initiative**

Providence, RI – The Pulitzer Prize Board announced the award of \$45,739 to the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities for *What is the 21st Century Essay?*, a series of programs to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Prizes in 2016 through Pulitzer’s Campfires Initiative. An exploration of the changing nature of journalism and the humanities in the digital age, *What is the 21st Century Essay?* programming will thematically focus on environmental issues because of their urgency and relevance to our health, communities, and economy. As a catalyst for the statewide humanities community, the Humanities Council will collaborate with several partners to produce the *What is the 21st Century Essay?* Pulitzer series, which will include performances, salons, conferences, multimedia interpretations, and publications.

The Humanities Council’s Pulitzer series engages a broad public audience as well as journalists, writers, musicians, artists, and scholars. Connecting important questions in civic life to scholarship and public policy, the **Story in the Public Square** program of the **Pell Center for International Relations and Public Policy at Salve Regina University** and the **Essay in Public** program, a project of **Brown University, the University of Rhode Island, and The New School**, will bring noted journalists, writers, and scholars to Rhode Island to discuss new approaches to the essay. **Aurea Ensemble, UPP Arts, and the Providence Athenaeum** will offer public programs to bring people together to experience and discuss the connections between the humanities, journalism, and the environment through music, poetry, fiction, history, film, and more.

“In Rhode Island, we wanted to take a forward-looking approach to why the disciplines represented by the Pulitzer Prizes matter so much. As the media landscape changes, we need the depth, persistence, and creativity of the humanities to shed light on the complex challenges we face,” stated **Elizabeth Francis**, executive director for the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities, “Through the tremendous opportunity presented by this grant, the Humanities Council is supporting some of the most creative and dedicated voices in the state to create meaningful and engaging experiences that will at the very least deepen and perhaps even change our understanding of the environment.”

The 2016 year of programming will include:

- **Friday, March 18:** The Essay in Public conference is a one-day exploration of approaches to long-form, humanities-rich journalism with keynotes by **Sarah Schweitzer**, *Boston Globe* reporter and 2015 Pulitzer Prize finalist for feature writing, and **Stephen Henderson**, *Detroit Free Press* reporter and 2014 Pulitzer Prize winner for Commentary. The conference will take place at the URI downtown Providence campus.

- **Throughout the spring:** A podcast series will feature interviews with program participants to provide broader access to this inquiry into journalism and the environment.
- **In June:** The Ocean State Writer's Conference at URI will include Pulitzer-related programming.
- **In the fall:** Performances, conversations, and publications presented by Aurea Ensemble, UPP Arts, Story in the Public Square, and the Providence Athenaeum will creatively explore humanities and environmental themes.

"This program offers a significant opportunity to explore the compelling intersections of the humanities and the environment," shared **Joan Abrams**, chair of the board for the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities, "By bringing together partners from universities and cultural organizations across the state, we are excited to spark new connections with history and culture to provide inspiration, ideas, and tools for the health and vitality of our local communities, economy, and environment."

For more information and to stay updated on the Pulitzer Initiative program in Rhode Island, visit rihumanities.org.

About the Campfires Initiative

To prepare for the centennial, the Pulitzer Prize Board announced the Campfires Initiative, which aims to ignite broad engagement with the journalistic, literary, and artistic values the Prizes represent. To inspire year-long programming throughout the country, the board partnered with the Federation of State Humanities Councils on the initiative. After a review of grant proposals, the Pulitzer Prize Board awarded more than \$1.5 million to forty-six state humanities councils.

The programs will feature Pulitzer Prize-winning work in journalism, arts and letters, and music. The goal of the board and the Federation of State Humanities Council is to engage American communities in discussion about the values these disciplines represent. "We look forward to bringing the centennial to life with a diverse array of council programming that reconnects Americans with the nation's amazing cultural production of the last 100 years," said Esther Mackintosh, president of the Federation of State Humanities Councils.

The Federation and the Pulitzer Prize Board, which is headquartered at Columbia University, developed this initiative together. It is supported by grants from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and the Pulitzer Prize Board.

To learn more about the Federation of State Humanities Councils, please visit www.statehumanities.org.

To learn more about the Pulitzer Prizes Campfires Initiative, please see their March 2015 [announcement](#).

About the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities

The Rhode Island Council for the Humanities seeds, supports, and strengthens public history, cultural heritage, civic education, and community engagement by and for all Rhode Islanders. As an independent, nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Council has provided over \$7.4 million in grants to support more than 550 organizations throughout the state of Rhode Island, as well as independent researchers, filmmakers, scholars, and oral historians, since its founding in 1973.

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