

2005

Nancy Hanks

The 18th Annual Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy

Lecturer
Ken Burns
Documentary Filmmaker

March 14, 2005
Concert Hall
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
Washington, DC

Presented by
Americans for the Arts
in partnership with
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

Sponsored by
The Richard and Hinda Rosenthal Foundation
The Robert Sterling Clark Foundation
The Betty R. Sheffer Foundation
Lockheed Martin



AMERICANS
for the ARTS

SERVING COMMUNITIES.
ENRICHING LIVES.

OPENING REMARKS BY
ROBERT L. LYNCH



Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO,
Americans for the Arts

Good evening. On behalf of the board of directors of Americans for the Arts, I welcome you to the 18th Annual Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy. This is the largest ever with more than 2,000 of you in attendance, including many of our nation's most influential cultural leaders. My name is Bob Lynch, and I am the president and CEO of Americans for the Arts, your host for this evening. We have a wonderful

evening for you, including a musical composition written especially for this occasion and performed for the first time here tonight. But first I would like to tell you a bit about who we are and what we do.

Americans for the Arts is the national organization for advancing all of the arts for all of the people. For 45 years, we have worked to create a climate in which the arts can thrive in every American community, to generate more money for the arts and for arts education, and to build more individual appreciation for the arts. And, for the last 20 of those 45 years, it has been my great privilege to lead this organization.

It has been an exciting two decades. Our organization has grown tremendously—a 2,000 percent growth in service and capacity since 1985—and yet some of our most important initiatives, ones that I believe will revolutionize the way people think about and support the arts, have happened in just the last six months.

Last fall, we launched Americans for the Arts Action Fund. Modeled to be kind of like a Sierra Club for the Arts, if you will, our goal is to recruit 100,000 citizen activists over the next five years to help make sure that arts-friendly policies and

public funding initiatives are adopted at every level of government. We've already published a *Congressional Arts Report Card*, and a postelection impact report on the arts. And I am pleased to report that in just the three months of the campaign, essentially the test phase, more than 1,300 citizen members have joined. I invite all of you to join the Arts Action Fund. I hope you will pick up one of the brochures that we'll be distributing tonight at the reception.

On the private-sector philanthropy front, we announced just last month that the 40-year-old Arts & Business Council is merging its operations into Americans for the Arts. By combining our resources and programming initiatives, this merger enables us to work more effectively to increase private-sector contributions to the arts, especially among corporations.

Our national arts research and the research studies that we do remain the cornerstone of our work. The fact is that tomorrow morning at a press conference, we will be releasing on Capitol Hill the results of our newest study, *Creative Industries 2005: The Congressional Report*, which details the formidable size and scope of arts-related businesses, for profit and many nonprofit, and the number of jobs that this industry supports in every corner and every Congressional district in America. The report will also be available online tomorrow morning at www.AmericansForTheArts.org.

Nurturing the next generation of arts leaders in America has been a primary focus of our professional development efforts. Last October, during National Arts and Humanities Month, Americans for the Arts sponsored "creative conversations" for emerging leaders, the young leaders of tomorrow in the arts. In 38 separate gatherings around the country, from New York to Los Angeles, from Independence, Kansas, to Saratoga, Wyoming, young emerging arts leaders gathered to network, to meet one another, and to discuss new ways to support the arts in their communities.

A critical component to accomplishing all of our goals is building meaningful and strategic partnerships with both arts and nonarts

organizations to help unify and elevate the voice of the arts in America. This kind of work that we are here to do cannot be done alone—it has to be done as a team. And so we have with us tonight 75 of the nation's leading arts service organizations representing thousands of cultural institutions and educational organizations in cities and states across the country. We are all here as a united force and as the national co-sponsors of Arts Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill tomorrow. So, let's give all of those folks from all across the country a hand.

We also continue to strengthen our long-time partnerships with groups like the United States Conference of Mayors, and are now working very closely with the American Bankers Association and the National School Boards Association to promote arts education and enlist their help in making our voices heard to their constituencies.

To help us broadcast our arts message to millions of Americans, I am pleased to report that the national public service campaign that we do in partnership with the Ad Council—that I've unveiled here in past years—to build awareness about the importance of arts education in a child's life has reached an all-time high. We just last month exceeded our goal of \$100 million in donated media and millions of our "Art. Ask for More." ads have reached more than 150 million households nationwide. So, keeping the message out there becomes an important backdrop to the work that we're gathered here to do today.

But tonight, we are gathered here for the Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy. For those of you who are new to our lecture series, it was originally developed 18 years ago to honor the memory of the late Nancy Hanks, who served as the chairman of our board of directors before being appointed by President Nixon in 1969 to become chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. During her eight-year tenure as the NEA chair, the agency's budget grew an astounding 1,400 percent, which ultimately changed the face of public funding for the arts in this country. And tonight, we have in the audience two of our current federal cultural agency leaders, NEA Chairman Dana Gioia and the Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services Robert

Martin. I would also like to acknowledge Frank Hodsoll, one of the former chairs of the NEA, who is also here with us. I would like to ask all of these individuals to stand and be recognized tonight.

And, finally, we would like to recognize the people and the organizations that have made this evening's event possible, starting with our host. This is the 13th consecutive year that The Kennedy Center has co-hosted the presentation of this lecture series, and I thank them for their generosity. I would also like to thank Peggy Ayers and the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation for their long-standing support of the Hanks Lecture series and of our advocacy efforts in general.

"A critical component to accomplishing all of our goals is building meaningful and strategic partnerships with both arts and nonarts organizations to help unify and elevate the voice of the arts in America."

—Robert L. Lynch

Additionally, I would also like to thank Hinda Rosenthal and the Richard and Hinda Rosenthal Foundation for their fifth consecutive year of support of this lecture series, and along with them, other funding partners like Lockheed Martin, the Betty R. Sheffer Foundation, and the Madison Hotel. Thanks to all of you for your support of the arts in this country.

And now, it is my great pleasure to introduce a special performance in honor of our speaker, Ken Burns. We have commissioned the Howard University Art Ensemble, under the artistic direction of Chris Royal, to compose and perform live tonight a new piece of music entitled *Evolution* that will accompany a video that we've produced featuring a series of stirring photograph images excerpted from 12 of Ken's documentary films. And this is particularly interesting and important because Ken, I understand, is an honorary degree recipient from Howard University. I hope that you'll enjoy this. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the Howard University Art Ensemble performed *Evolution* under the direction of Chris Royal.)



From left to right: Chris Royal, Hamilton Hayes, and Charlie Young of the Howard University Art Ensemble

I just want to thank Chris Royal and the entire Howard University Art Ensemble for that beautiful composition.

It's a great way to help illustrate the range of Ken's work. We'll have an opportunity to hear more great music from these musicians as they perform upstairs in The Kennedy Center Atrium at the reception following tonight's lecture.

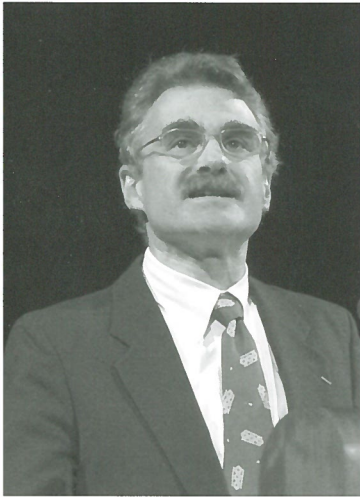
Two years ago, Robert Redford delivered the Nancy Hanks lecture, and with it launched a partnership between Americans for the Arts and the Film Foundation, which he helped to create in 1990. This partnership continues with the American Arts and Film Initiative, a joint campaign between our two organizations to raise awareness of not only the need for film preservation of this important art form, but also to help fund the arts in general. And I'm very pleased that Margaret Bodde, their executive director, is here tonight.

Our next speaker has done a great deal to bring the art of film to the Washington, DC, area. It's my job now to introduce the introducer. Since 2002, Murray Horwitz has led the American Film Institute's Silver Theatre and Cultural Center—just up the road in Silver Spring, Maryland. The AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center presents an unprecedented variety of film and video programming, as well as filmmaker interviews, panels, discussions, musical performances, and

other events that place the art on-screen in a broader cultural context, while amplifying its power to engage and affect an audience. Murray Horwitz is kind of a renaissance man—and I won't go into that—but a lot of you here know him. He's a well-known commentator on National Public Radio, where he was vice president of cultural programming for four years.

So please join me in providing a warm welcome to our introducer, Murray Horwitz, who will be formally introducing Ken Burns tonight.

INTRODUCTION BY
MURRAY HORWITZ



Murray Horwitz, director and COO,
AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center

I thought it was a tribute to *George Burns*. Well, happily, I don't have much to do. You've just seen the best introduction to Ken Burns—the remarkable images he's been bringing to us and burning into our individual minds and to our collective national consciousness for the last 25 years.

He is among the greatest documentary filmmakers of all time. He has moved us Americans, amplified our understanding, and changed the way we think of ourselves.

That he is a filmmaker of immense power is proven not only by the size of his audience—as many as close to 50 million viewers, the largest on record for the Public Broadcasting System for just a single series—nor by his innumerable awards, or innumerable by me, anyway, I gave up at a certain point. There are Academy Award nominations, Emmys, Grammys, Peabodys. I was honored to be there last June in Los Angeles when he received his 22nd honorary degree, a Doctor of Fine Arts from the American Film Institute.

No, the beneficial power of Mr. Burns' art can be confirmed in a practical way that others can only envy. For years after *The Civil War* aired in 1990, public attendance at Civil War battlefields in the United States swelled by hundreds of thousands of visitors annually. I am told that only lately have things calmed down to what some at the National Park Service call “pre-Burns levels.”

The week in 2001 that his *Jazz* series dealt with the great composer and arranger Fletcher Henderson, it was estimated by one jazz magazine that nearly 10,000 Henderson CDs were sold in that one week, more than in the previous 10 years put together. Sales of classic jazz shot up, and John Coltrane's master work, *A Love Supreme*, first released in 1964, suddenly went gold.

With *Baseball*, the effect was even more dramatic. Fully one month before the series aired in September of 1994, every major league baseball player walked off the job so as not to miss a single episode.

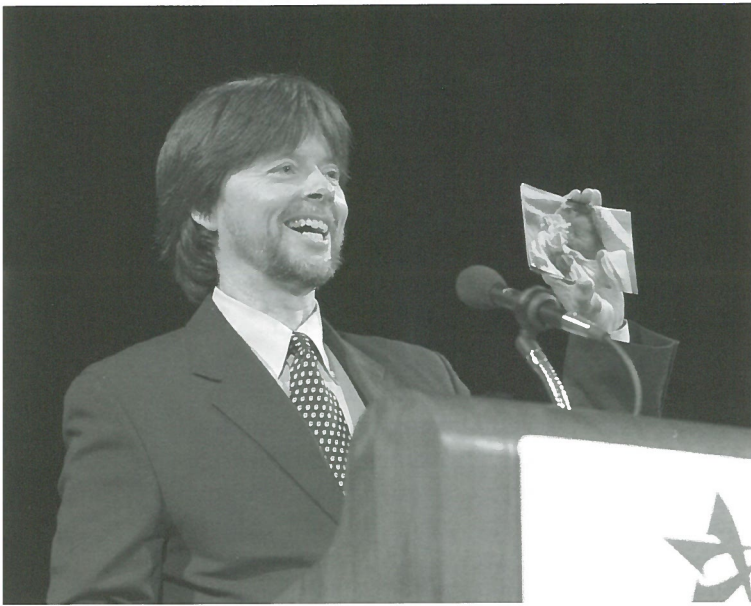
Ken Burns has done all of this with grace, with class, and with humanity. He has remained enormously loyal to his subjects, still lending his name and his public service presence to the communities of interest in Civil War studies, jazz music, Mark Twain's writing, feminist history, pardoning Jack Johnson, and his many other sizable interests. He would be the first to tell you that his work is the result of intense collaboration, and that would include his latest production, *Olivia Grace Burns*, just born five weeks ago. Yes, you can give it up for this, it is an important thing.

The late historian Stephen Ambrose once said, “More Americans get their history from Ken Burns than any other source.” He's even achieved the vaunted status of Scotch Tape and Kleenex: the producer of our documentary festival, Silver Docs, mentioned to me last week that in a very, very popular film editing software program used by professional filmmakers all over the world, there is a button called “The Ken Burns effect.” It allows you to move the frame across an image to just get the perfect still picture animation.

Mr. Burns has said that one of the themes running throughout his work is space—the expanse of our nation, the distances within it, and how we measure them by expanding our ideas about America. By giving us a fuller, more adequate appreciation of what it contains, Ken Burns has not only made this a better country, but a bigger one as well.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome American documentary films' most valuable player, Ken Burns.

KEN BURNS



Ken Burns, the 2005 Nancy Hanks Lecturer on Arts and Public Policy, shows a photo of his new daughter, Olivia Grace.

Oh, my goodness, what an introduction. Thank you, Murray. I always feel compelled to inoculate myself just a little bit when I have such a generous introduction, and remind you that I live in a little village in New Hampshire that has fewer people than are in this room. And I've had on the refrigerator there for 26 years a now yellowed and fading *New Yorker* cartoon that shows two men standing in hell, the flames licking up around them, and one guy says to the other, "My, apparently over 200 screen credits didn't mean a damn thing."

Good evening. And, oh, by the way, my latest co-production.

(Here Mr. Burns showed a photograph of his new daughter Olivia Grace.)

I am honored and delighted to have this opportunity to speak with you today. That we are here in this great building dedicated to the artistic life of our sometimes distracted Republic; that we gather here under the banner of Americans for the Arts, a remarkable organization dedicated to focusing our fellow citizens' attention on the

importance of creative inquiry; that we do so, together here, invoking the name of Nancy Hanks, our great muse and protector, only compounds my gratitude that you would find what I have to say worthy of your attention on this late winter's evening.

I appear here the somewhat pale representative of institutions and individuals on whose shoulders I have stood for more than a quarter century. First, I must acknowledge PBS, my beloved network; and WETA and Sharon Rockefeller, my production partners; but also the Corporation for Public Broadcasting—they've been with me from the beginning; the National Endowments for the Humanities and Arts, of course; and corporate and foundation underwriters like General Motors, the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation, and the Pew Charitable Trusts. They have all supported and nurtured me and my partners through good times and bad, and most of all, they have allowed me to pursue my work unfettered, as I have strained to see and hear the ghosts and echoes of an almost inexpressibly wise American past. All of my life, I have been interested in listening to the voices of a true, honest, complicated past, unafraid of controversy and tragedy, but equally drawn to those voices, those stories and moments that suggest an abiding faith in the human spirit, and particularly the unique role this remarkable Republic—and sometimes dysfunctional one—seems to play in the positive progress of mankind.

The recent death of Philip Johnson got me thinking of that most permanent and subtle and everyday of art forms, architecture. Of how we Americans build things and construct the edifices, both physical and metaphysical, which we hope will commend us, artist and audience alike, to our posterity.

Even a cursory study of the giants in this field suggests that there is an often contradictory and complicated conversation going on between the artist, the architect in this case, and his life and work. These disturbances, this architectural undertow, speaks volumes about them and us, and it is at the fault line of these contradictions that I would like, for a few minutes this evening, to direct your attention. I hope by the end of my remarks to briefly introduce you—or perhaps I

should say re-introduce you—to three, to my mind, compelling architects of one kind or another, who, despite their often uncomfortable contradictions, offer us a complete artistic vision and an insight into that remarkable Republic that shaped them, and was in turn, shaped by them. As always, stories are for me the best way to begin.

Listen. Listen. Several years ago, the historian Andrew Burstein related this tale to me. It takes place in the 1810s. A clergyman stops at Ford's Tavern along a road in western Virginia, and he encounters a man he terms "a respectable stranger." The preacher engages in a conversation at some length with this stranger. First, they talk about mechanical operations and he's certain that the man is an engineer of some sort. Then they move on to matter of agriculture and he thinks this is, in his words, "a large farmer." Finally, they talk about religion and he's certain the man is a clergyman like himself.

The hour gets late and they go to bed without the preacher learning the man's name, and the next morning he arises and speaks with the innkeeper and asks for the stranger he had seen the night before. He describes him and the innkeeper says, "Why, don't you know, that was Thomas Jefferson."

Thomas Jefferson, the subject of a film I worked on for many, many years, is a kind of Rosetta Stone of the American experience, a massive, tectonic intelligence that has formed and rattled the fault lines of our history, our present moment, and, if we are lucky, ladies and gentlemen, our future. The contradictions that attend the life and actions of Thomas Jefferson are played out and made manifest in the trial—indeed the trials—of that pageant we now call American history. As a filmmaker, I began to see our pursuit of Thomas Jefferson on film as a prequel to the Civil War series, an autopsy performed to try to grasp the pathology of a nation soon to be forever traumatized in its adolescence by the unresolved questions left by its founder in its infancy.

In Jefferson, we had found one of the most interesting human beings I've ever tried to get to know. As the scholar Joseph Ellis commented in

an interview for our film, "He is the greatest enigma among major figures in American history. If he were a monument," Ellis said, "he would be the Sphinx. If he were a painting, he would be the *Mona Lisa*. If he were a character in a play, he would be Hamlet."

Everywhere we turn, he and his incandescent ideas are there looking over our shoulder, looming like the shadow a great building casts. When we talk about separation of church and state, prayer in the classroom, school vouchers, and federal funding for parochial education, Thomas Jefferson is there looking over our shoulders. When we debate states' rights versus big government and think about the tension between home-grown militias on the one hand and a monolithic federal government on the other, Thomas Jefferson is there looking over our shoulders.

"All of my life, I have been interested in listening to the voices of a true, honest, complicated past, unafraid of controversy and tragedy, but equally drawn to those voices, those stories and moments that suggest an abiding faith in the human spirit, and particularly the unique role this remarkable Republic ..."

—Ken Burns

When we think about the intractable problems in our country born of race—that is to say the differences between people based solely on the color of their skin and not, as Dr. King said, on the content of their character—Thomas Jefferson and his own agonizing internal contradictions are there looking over our shoulder making us who we are for better and for worse.

In nearly every national debate that we have today, Thomas Jefferson is usually on one side of the argument or the other. And sometimes, to our astonishment, he is on both sides; ennobling our discussions with some of the most stirring rhetoric ever written, frustrating our attempts to pinpoint precisely what he believed, leaving us a legacy of purpose, doubt, and promise unlike any other country in history.

Listen. He was a farmer, a violinist, a writer, a surveyor, a scientist, a lover of fine wines, and a restless architect who could never quite bring himself to finish his own house.

He was a reluctant politician with a voice so soft he could barely make himself heard from the podium, but he helped to found America's first political party.

He was a champion of bloody revolution who could not bear disorder of any kind in his own life.

He denounced the moral bankruptcy he saw in Europe, but delighted in the gilded salons of Paris.

He was a statesman who was twice elected president of the United States, but did not think his presidency worth listing among the achievements on his gravestone.

He was a life-long champion of small government who took it upon himself to more than double the size of his country.

He endured the loss of nearly everyone and everything he held dear, but somehow never lost his faith in a future he somehow knew his words, his ideas, would help to build.

He distilled a century of Enlightenment thinking into one remarkable sentence which began, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal," yet he owned more than 200 human beings and never saw the hypocrisy, never saw the contradiction, and never saw fit in his lifetime to free them.

Thomas Jefferson was a "shadow man," said John Adams, who was first his friend, then his enemy, and then his friend again. His character, Adams went on, "was like the great rivers, whose bottoms we cannot see and make no noise."

He remained a puzzle even to those who thought they knew him best, embodied contradictions common to the country whose independence it fell to him to proclaim in words whose precise meaning Americans have debated ever since.

Those last words are from the introduction of the film we finally finished on Jefferson in 1997.

To come to terms with his legacy, a legacy he built with walls high enough to conceal almost every one of those contradictions, and doors and locks strong enough to withstand all the "picklocks of biographers," it is important to tolerate the ambiguities that attend any important figure, to appreciate the emotional undertow of his life. Somehow, in our dialectically preoccupied media culture, where everything and everyone is reduced to either good or bad, we have forgotten what the Greeks taught us years ago, that a hero is not perfect; indeed, what makes a hero interesting is the inner negotiations between that person's great strengths and their obvious and inevitable weaknesses.

"... what makes a hero interesting is the inner negotiations between that person's great strengths and their obvious and inevitable weaknesses."

—Ken Burns

Thomas Jefferson clearly had both, and yet he is in many ways the author, the architect of our ability to dream the American dream of freedom and advancement, no matter what his own shortcomings might have been. When he constructed that great second sentence of the Declaration of Independence, the blueprint in many ways for our national narrative, he could have followed the British philosopher John Locke and argued for "life, liberty, and property" as the cornerstone of a free society. Instead, he included that wonderfully mysterious phrase, "the pursuit of happiness," like some unexpected and then cherished embellishment on an essentially functional building. Americans have puzzled over precisely what he meant since the beginning of the Republic.

I think what Jefferson meant was that merely living, merely surviving, was not enough. It is not enough to be assured the God-given rights of life and liberty, we must put them to use, we must explore ourselves. Happiness for Jefferson was not a hedonistic pursuit of pleasure in the marketplace

of things, but a lifelong involvement with the perfection of oneself in a marketplace of ideas. In lifelong learning, in the sciences, and in the arts—especially the arts, for it was in their pursuit that even the cloistered, frightful Jefferson saw that mankind could be released from the tribal absurdities, the religious intolerance, and the stultifying miasma of tyranny that had kept us, and still keeps us, imprisoned. And the key to that inscrutable phrase of his is not even the word happiness itself, but the pursuit. We weren't meant to achieve happiness, only search our whole lives for it. What was important to Thomas Jefferson was the process, the plans, and not the final thing.

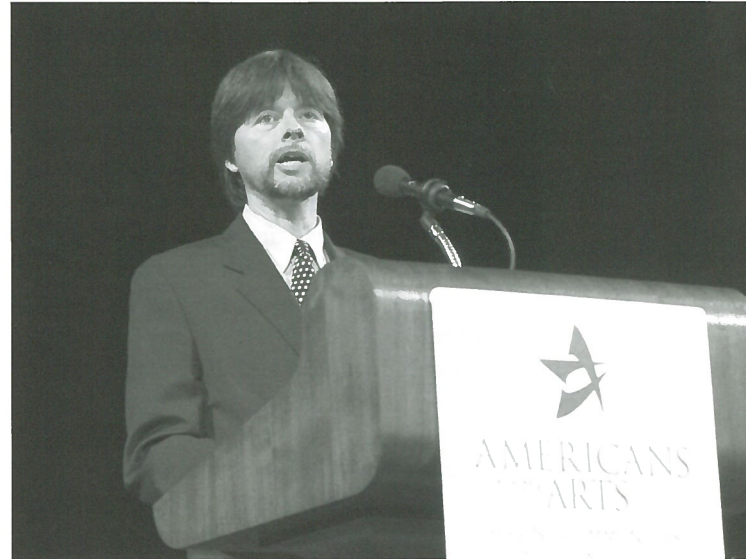
To me, that simple distinction has made all the difference in the world. More than anything it has helped to ensure our future by making us Americans, at least up till now, unusually curious and unsatisfied. Most other societies have seen themselves as an end in and of themselves. We Americans still quest and build, relentlessly. We see our growth as a country, in all areas of inquiry, as central to its survival. We are saying to all who would listen that we are corrigible, willing to learn. We are forever a nation becoming. Nowhere is this sense of creative incompleteness more on display than at Jefferson's own home, his beloved Monticello. It is a perfect metaphor for this imperfect man.

"Monticello house," his own slave Isaac said, "was pulled down in part and built up again some six or seven times. They was 40 years at work upon that house before Mr. Jefferson stopped building," he said. And Jefferson never really stopped. Even at the end of his life, he was always changing something.

"Come," he told a friend who hoped to visit, "with your ears stuffed full of cotton to fortify them against the noise of hammers, saws, planes, et cetera, which assail us in every direction."

He was a tireless and ingenious tinkerer, devising or adapting apparatus to add to the efficiency and comfort of nearly every aspect of his daily life: a dumb-waiter, a four-sided stand that could accommodate several open books at once; an elaborate and improbable calendar clock that marked off the days of the week with cannon

balls; and a machine called a polygraph that made a copy of every letter as he wrote it, so very impressive and inspiring.



Ken Burns delivers the 2005 Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy.

But his beautiful home also remains what it always was: a disguised plantation house, entirely dependent on slave labor to make it work—that dumb-waiter kept his chattel from contact with his “enlightened” guests—intrinsic contradictions Thomas Jefferson, the articulate champion of personal freedom for all, would never try to reconcile in his lifetime.

Toward the end of that long lifetime, Jefferson began writing letters to his old friend John Adams. For many years they had not spoken, their friendship strained by the partisan politics that afflicted, as it has our own time, the early days of the Republic. But now in the sunset of their lives, these two old men, destined, as you all know, to die within hours of each other, 50 years to the day since the signing of the Declaration, they began a beautiful and elegiac correspondence, the greatest correspondence between public figures in American history, where they discussed so movingly their invention, their creation, their magnificent construction site—the United States of America. In one letter Jefferson wrote to Adams this wonderful passage: “And so we have gone on and so we shall go on, puzzled and prospering beyond example in the history of man. And I do

believe we shall continue to grow, to multiply and prosper until we exhibit an association, powerful, wise, and happy, beyond what has yet been seen. I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past, so good night. I will dream on, always fancying that Mrs. Adams and yourself are by my side marking our progress.” It is a great phrase, isn’t it—“puzzled and prospering beyond example in the history of man”—that’s us for sure.

In another letter, Adams wrote back to Jefferson and said, “We ought not to die before we have explained ourselves to each other.”

We Americans ought not to die either before we have tried to explain Thomas Jefferson to each other, before we have come to terms with the protean genius and completely human man who wrote the words that form the foundation, the very building blocks of our great nation.

“In lifelong learning, in the sciences, and in the arts—especially the arts, for it was in their pursuit that even the cloistered, frightful Jefferson saw that mankind could be released from the tribal absurdities, the religious intolerance, and the stultifying miasma of tyranny that had kept us, and still keeps us, imprisoned.”

—Ken Burns

Listen. Though it certainly occupies a respectable place in the pantheon of celebrated human endeavor, its greatest practitioners subjected to star treatment and society-page notice, its best work given full critical attention in the media of the day, architecture is hardly the best known or most respected of the fine or lively arts. It may, however, be possible to argue that despite its relatively second-class status, architecture is the most important and influential of all art forms simply because it works on us at all times.

Where we choose to attend the ballet or theater or opera, where we choose to go to an art museum, or cinema, or even watch a television program—

architecture, whether we know it or not, is working on us nearly every moment of our waking and sleeping lives, for better and for worse.

We notice our surroundings, sometimes, but usually fail to understand the combination of oppressive and exhilarating forces that speak to us, influence us, and change us daily through the choices architects, past and present, have made. If we care to pay attention to the back-stage drama of the form, and the vast majority of us don’t, it’s also clear that most, if not all, architects build for money, prestige, and some place in posterity’s rankings. Frank Lloyd Wright, without a doubt our greatest architect, was no different.

But unlike most of the others, he had an idea—arrogant at times, overreaching, too, but always passionately held—that architecture could teach, enlighten, and even transform the lives of everyone who came in contact with it. From the humblest of private homes to the grandest of public spaces, he worked all his life, sometimes successfully and sometimes not, to achieve in his work the tangible manifestation of his continually developing ideas, ideas that ask as much about where our place is in the grand scheme of things as where we want our closets. It was, of course, for the most part, a startlingly naive view, but one Wright got away with for 75 years.

“Every house is a missionary,” Frank Lloyd Wright proclaimed one day, “I don’t build a house without predicting the end of the present social order.”

Listen. The story has taken on an aura of mythology, spoken of in almost reverential tones by the still disturbingly devoted apprentices more than 40 years after his death and nearly 70 years after he did it, yet it’s all true, amazingly so. After years of being on the ropes, on the verge of professional collapse and failure, at the age of 66, when most of his modernist rivals, who openly disdained what they saw as his hopelessly antiquated ideas, assumed he was safely out of the picture—perhaps even dead—Frank Lloyd Wright landed a relatively small commission in the mid-1930s to build a small summer home for a wealthy Pittsburgh department store owner

named Edgar J. Kaufmann on a beautiful piece of land deep in the western Pennsylvania woods along a little creek called Bear Run.

He might never have even gotten that job had Kaufmann's son not attended the architecture school that Wright and his third wife Olgivanna had recently set up to rescue his career and help pay the bills in the midst of the Great Depression.

Kaufmann's son didn't stay with architecture long, but the father was irresistibly drawn to Wright's charming personality and mesmerizing sermons about buildings. In the summer of 1935, the architect visited the site of the proposed home, with its stunning waterfall and dramatic vistas, and supervised the production of what is called in architecture a "plot plan," showing the topography of the land and the precise location of trees and rocks. But Wright, in typical fashion, did nothing for several months, ignoring the cautious inquiries of the apprentices who worried that even this modest commission might slip through their hands if the design was not completed. Still, Frank Lloyd Wright did nothing.

Then in the fall, Wright got a telephone call from Kaufmann senior. He was in Milwaukee, just 140 miles from Wright's home, studio, and fellowship, called Taliesin, in Spring Green, Wisconsin. Kaufmann said he was on his way, and he wanted to see the designs for his house. Though Wright had as yet committed absolutely nothing to paper, he remained completely calm. "Come along, E.J.," he said, "we're waiting for you. Your house is finished." And he hung up.

The communal work at the fellowship came to a halt and a hush descended on the cavernous drafting studio as word went out among the students that Wright had begun, at last, to draw. For more than two hours, anxious apprentices handed him pencil after pencil, quieted those acolytes who walked in unaware on the unfolding drama, and watched transfixed as the Great Master, focusing as only Frank Lloyd Wright could focus, summoned up, in a remarkable moment of architectural alchemy, the design he had obviously been thinking about for some time.

"He draws the first floor plan," Edgar Tafel, an architect and student at the time said to us in an

interview, remembering the scene as if it was happening now, "and he draws a second floor plan and he shows how the balconies are, and Mr. Wright says, 'And we'll have a bridge across, so that E.J. and Lillian'—that was her name—'can walk out from the bedroom and have a picnic up above.'" The apprentices are amazed as Wright then quickly draws what Tafel called a "section through the building," then a huge elevation, twice the normal size of preliminary drawings. "And he's putting the trees in," Tafel exclaimed to us, "he knows where every damn tree is."

A few minutes later, a secretary announced that Kaufmann had arrived. Wright dramatically ushered him in. "Welcome, E.J.," he said expansively, "we've been waiting for you."

Frank Lloyd Wright named the home he had designed for Edgar Kaufmann Falling Water. It would of course eventually become the most famous modern house in the world—and he had drawn it all in less than three hours. But to do it, to make the drawings, he had again brought himself to the edge, forced himself into a nearly impossible situation. It was something he had done since his earliest days, something he would do until the end of his life.

Eight years ago, we completed a film on the controversial, unusually influential, and utterly American architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright came out of an era of big ideas and grand ambition and he somehow managed to survive well into an age when both those things had long fallen out of fashion. The buildings he left, still among the greatest of all American architecture, bear witness to the true genius of a man who thought it his duty to convert all of humanity to his way of building things; who tried passionately and wholeheartedly to do so; offering his compelling Prairie House, Usonian buildings, and other works as evidence of a new "organic architecture" that would awaken people as well as provide shelter; and who believed until the day he died that he had accomplished what he set out to do.

"Early in life," Wright himself once admitted, "I had to choose between honest arrogance and hypocritical humility. I choose honest arrogance."

“Trying to find the genius of a man like that, that you realize is a genius when you’re talking to him, and more of a genius as you get to know his work, is one of those things that probably doesn’t go into words,” the architect Philip Johnson, sitting in his own modernist masterpiece, The Glass House, told us for our film. “It’s probably a matter of how moved you are by his words and by his personality. In this case, both,” he went on. “He—I hated him, of course,” Johnson admitted, “but that’s only normal when a man is so great. It’s a combination of hatred, it’s a combination of envy, and contempt, and misunderstanding, all of which gets mixed up with his genius.”

During his more than 70-year career, Frank Lloyd Wright designed everything: banks and businesses, resorts and churches, a filling station and a synagogue, a beer garden and an art museum; nearly 800 works in all, a staggering and prodigious output even for a man of his remarkable stamina, perseverance, and childlike energy. Wright was never satisfied; all his life, he was looking, searching constantly for his own way to build. It was a uniquely American style that he was after, based not on models imported from the Old World, but growing naturally, out of local conditions in the New. “Every great country as it emerges into greatness, develops its own architectures,” the late critic Brendan Gill told us just before his death. “It goes beyond style; it goes beyond fashion, which are common places of change. But in principle, there ought to be something autochthonous, there ought to be something coming out of the ground that says, ‘This is the way we build in this particular culture.’ Frank Lloyd Wright was trying to say, ‘We deserve an American architecture.’” Like Jefferson before him, Wright heroically tried to distill an essence, a way of seeing things and building things that was ours.

Frank Lloyd Wright was celebrated, then ridiculed and forgotten, then celebrated again, as no other American architect has ever been celebrated. His life was a rollercoaster of stunning success and fame, vilification and exile, public humiliation, scandal, and devastating personal tragedy. He was controversial, notorious, provocative, and above all, unpredictable—an epitome of excess in an age of propriety.

Wright challenged, indeed demanded, all those who came in contact with him to see all of architecture anew; to understand how a house “works”; to rethink the role of home and family and automobile in an increasingly complicated modern world; and finally, he wanted to impart his own almost Emersonian sensitivity and reverence for nature, in Wright’s

view, the Supreme Architect of the Universe. He had developed this deeply held respect during the summers he spent as a boy in the exquisite and idyllic Wisconsin countryside, and it never left him. “For Wright, what an artist is,” the historian William Cronin said in our film, “is a person who transforms nature by looking at nature, passing it through the soul, and in the expression of what the soul experiences in nature, something more natural than nature itself emerges. Which is,” Cronin said of Wright, “as close as we get to God.”

Art, including architecture, is one reminder of how that human refinement might take place, or at least a reminder that it is possible. As Wright would say, “to live under fewer, higher laws.” Which makes the long and dramatic, challenging and tragic, frustrating and inspiring life of Frank Lloyd Wright such a paradox. There is, despite his rich legacy of creation, something inexcusable about him, as if a true and accurate accounting of his life and work must necessarily take in much of the extraneous clutter that the great man left wherever he went, whomever he touched.

All building that is done, *all* building that is done, whether physical or creative, leaves much material unused, like the sculptor’s pile of rubble when the statue is finished. It is the scaffolding and false work, the crude residue of intention and effort that remains, essential during construction, superfluous now, usually discarded at its end. It is the negative space of artistic endeavor, and it sits



■ Murray Horwitz and Ken Burns

in striking contrast to the finished work; it is material untransformed, incapable of being returned to nature. Yet, the true artist always appreciates what is left behind, for it has been as essential to the process of creation as what finally endures, and in the end that “rubble” always speaks volumes. Without a doubt, Frank Lloyd Wright left a big mess.

Those closest—family, friends, professional associates—suffered what we routinely excuse in our more tolerant times as the necessary byproducts of artistic success and celebrity: his relentless self-promotion and narcissistic self-absorption, his over-weening ambition and periodic philosophical silliness, and his life-long inability ever to live within his means. Wright abandoned one family with six children with hardly a backward glance, took credit for what work his mentor Louis Sullivan had done, borrowed money and rarely paid it back—the Sheriff of Oak Park, Illinois, once had to spend the night in his kitchen for fear he would leave town before one of his checks had safely cleared. He bragged about his genius with a bombast that outraged his many enemies and bewildered his friends, and risked his career in a series of scandalous affairs.

His greatest biographer, Meryle Secrest, is both troubled by and attracted to the contradictions Wright manifested in nearly every gesture. “One can look at him and be awed by the dimensions of the achievement,” she says, “because we are looking at something we very seldom see in real life, which is genius. On the other hand, when you look at who he was, he’s at the other spectrum. He’s barely a human being.” His biographer!

There are no longer these grand personalities, as Frank Lloyd Wright surely was, no longer the great American lives spanning unquestionably American centuries—in this case, from just after Appomattox to just before Sputnik—leaving legacies of fundamentally transforming work and art. It is tempting always with someone who has left such a complicated legacy to concentrate solely on the art, to catalogue the many treasures of his rich and perpetually changing architecture and leave it at that. It’s simpler that way, to dismiss as gossip his less than perfect love life, to

forgive his frequent transgressions against family and friends, clients and creditors, to ignore the conversation between the public and private, to avoid asking questions about the cost and pressure and difficulty of living with genius, or the way in which that genius interacts with the world and constantly breaks its rules. But Frank Lloyd Wright’s life does not permit that. And sometimes, when the two seemingly parallel tracks of his remarkable life—one personal, the other professional—bend and meet, it’s possible, I think, to see into the very nature of genius itself.

Listen. Mark Twain once said, “I think we never become really and genuinely our entire and honest selves until we are dead—and not then until we have been dead years and years. People ought to start dead,” he said, “and then they would be honest so much earlier.”

“Art, including architecture, is one reminder of how that human refinement might take place, or at least a reminder that it is possible.”

—Ken Burns

A few years ago, we made a film on the life of Samuel Langhorne Clemens and his famously, irrepressibly rambunctious alter-ego Mark Twain. Here, to me, was an architect of words, a refreshing antidote to the sometimes frustrating inscrutability of Thomas Jefferson and Frank Lloyd Wright. All three men built America in their own unique way, Twain just seemed, at first blush, more honest than the other two.

I was not, however, completely prepared for that Mark Twain and his delicate relationship with Sam Clemens. While Twain, the literary invention, of course, became, as he himself put it, “the most conspicuous person on the planet,” Clemens found himself torn, not unlike both Jefferson and Wright, between the two worlds and now the two identities he inhabited, torn between fame and family, between humor and bitterness, bottomless hunger for success and haunting fears of failure.

It became our mission in this, we believe, our funniest and saddest film, to try to parse the difference between the two personalities; to try to understand the genius of Twain’s exquisite use of

language and his absolutely honest, Zen-like, often painful, but also knee-slapping, head-shaking humor; to try, vainly of course, to experience and fathom the many gut-wrenching tragedies and losses of Clemens' life; to try to see the way Twain, alone among writers in the 19th century, and continually at war with himself, bravely confronted his own demons and those of his countrymen, and almost single-handedly invented and erected an American literature; to try, in the end, to accompany an aging, often bitter, obviously mortal Sam Clemens in his final, as his nurse put it, "agony days," just as his literary twin achieved an artistic immortality reserved only for the best of us.

Unlike the collaborative nature of film—what I do—the art of writing—what he did—is by its nature singular and personal, resisting collective interpretation and true understanding of the mysteries of its mechanics, the mysteries of its architecture. The privateness of the act of writing, especially in Twain's case, tends to shuttle our aesthetic introspection over and off to the distraction and drama of biography and the irresistibility of social issues like race and imperialism. But his style; his joyous, careening collision of words; his surprising use of verbs; his muscular and elaborate metaphors; his confidence in vernacular rhythms and truths; his anthropomorphizing of everything—animals, houses, planets, nations, rivers, even ideas—his repetition; and his godlike sense of time create a music so stunning and so unique in American letters that it is hard to find even the most primitive tools to deconstruct it. Frank Lloyd Wright, I might add, always saw music as "an edifice of sound." With Twain, we hear the cadence of his rhythmic, beguiling writing and realize it is an elaborate architecture as well.

Twain was always sensitive to place and that most important word in the English language, "home." Listen to how he immortalized the magnificent building he had made for his family in Hartford, Connecticut: "To us our house was not unsentient matter, it had a heart and soul and eyes to see us with, and approvals and solitudes and deep sympathies; it was of us, and we were in its confidence, and lived in its grace and in the peace of its benediction. We never came home from an

absence that its face did not light up and speak out its eloquent welcome, and we could not enter it unmoved." In Twain, the architecture of material meets the architecture of words and the result is transcendent, permanent, art.

"What [Twain] left us—this way of seeing, this way of hearing, these marvelous books—are as sturdy as any building, and we do live in them, inhabit them, as if they were physical structures."

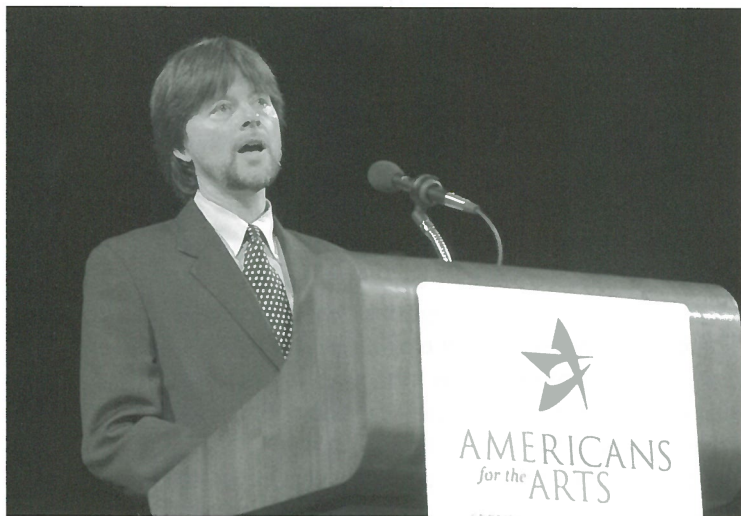
—Ken Burns

As documentary makers who have consciously eschewed the misguided consensus of many of our brethren that film is the enemy of the word, we have instead, across the arc of more than a score of productions chiefly in American history, embraced the poetry in prose and narrative, and have found in Twain's particular example inspiration, brotherhood, and enormous sympathy.

There is a universal appeal to Twain's writing, his characters, his plotting, the humor, of course, but also his observational genius—the writer Ron Powers calls Twain "an enormous noticer"—and the clarity, common sense, and attractive anger of his outrage and political attack. For Twain, the ordinariness of life and things and events has a mystical possibility. The opposite of all of that, the pretensions, cruelties, and inattentions of human behavior, brought out a ferocious democratic fairness in Twain which found beautiful, touching, and elegant expression in withering criticism of police brutality, racism, anti-Semitism, religious hypocrisy, governmental arrogance, petty tyrants, and safe bourgeois life.

For Clemens, for Twain, it all began with speaking and the sound of words—his mother called his gift for gab "Sammy's long talk"—and it was a gift inherited from the improbable young nation and the mysterious country he was born into, from Sunday schools and Bible readings, from slave stories and the singing of spirituals and jubilees, from the palpable danger and vivifying experience of life and loss on the frontier. His art gathered momentum in a boyhood filled with

delights, adventures, characters, lies, guilts, and excruciating doubts. Like the “lawless” Mississippi River that remained the highway of his imagination no matter where he went, Clemens’ life and Twain’s art was filled with undercurrents and unseen treacheries. “His exuberant and almost irrepressible humor is always colored,” the novelist William Styron told us, “by this understanding that life is not just one big yuck, but is a serious event in which horrible things happen.” And horrible things did happen to Sam Clemens. Like Jefferson, he lost nearly everyone and everything close to him in spectacularly tragic fashion.



■ Ken Burns

All along, though, Twain writes with an almost Biblical certainty and authority, combining an aw-shucks, distinctively American sense of humor and timing with a seemingly effortless and yet obviously sophisticated choice of words. What he left us—this way of seeing, this way of hearing, these marvelous books—are as sturdy as any building, and we do live in them, inhabit them, as if they were physical structures.

Twain knew from the start that God was the greatest dramatist—the Supreme Architect, as Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Wright both would say—and much of Twain’s genius can be found in simply getting out of the way of a good story. He took for granted that God was everywhere, but his own search disappointed him continually. As a result, on the surface of things he railed constantly—

against that God, injustice, bigotry, greed—but inside it seems he accepted, surrendered, and even, despite the intense bitterness in his later writings, reconciled the mountain of evidence, beautiful and ugly, that was his world and the grist for his art. In essence, Mark Twain saw more. He acknowledged the contradictions in himself and in his country, between white and black, Puritanism and excess, modesty and hubris, and with a self-deprecating wink made himself the butt of his jokes as much as others. All of this, tethered dangerously to a life lived constantly on the edge, like Wright, filled with deaths, failures and blasted trusts, but also riches, love, and recognition beyond example, conspired to make Mark Twain this avatar of American literature—and how could he not be? How could we not adore a man who said, “It’s not that the world is filled with fools, it’s just that lightning isn’t distributed right.”

Listen. Most of us here, whether we know it or not, are in the business of words and ideas, the essential building blocks of our uniquely American architecture, and we hope, with some reasonable expectation, that those words will last. But alas, especially today, those words often evaporate, their precision blunted by neglect, their insight diminished by the sheer volume of their ever-increasing brethren, their force diluted by ancient animosities that seem to set each group against the other.

Few things survive in these cynical days to remind us of the union from which so many of our personal as well as collective blessings flow. And it is hard not to wonder in an age when the present moment consumes and overshadows all else—our bright past and our dim, unknown future—what finally does endure? What catalogs and stores the building material of our civilization, passing down to the next generation, the best of us, what we hope we will be able to construct into something better for our children and our posterity?

Ladies and gentlemen, the arts, biography, history, hold an answer. Nothing in our daily life offers more of the comfort of continuity, the generational connection of belonging to a vast and complicated American family, the powerful sense of home, the



■ Robert L. Lynch, Ken Burns, and Murray Horwitz

freedom from time's constraints, and the great gift of accumulated memory than does an active and heartfelt engagement with the artistic glories that echo back from the impressive edifices and the unforgettable individuals that inhabit our shared past. Thank you for your attention.

CONCLUDING REMARKS BY
STEVEN D. SPIESS



Ken Burns and Steven D. Spiess, chair,
Americans for the Arts Board of Directors

Good evening. I'm Steve Spiess, the chairman of the board of Americans for the Arts, and my closing remarks will be brief. But as a first order of business, please, one more time, for just a wonderful speech from Ken Burns.

And I would also like to once again thank Chris Royal and the Howard University Art Ensemble for their wonderful piece.

And, of course, our good friend Murray Horwitz for the introduction.

I've been on the board of Americans for the Arts since its inception in 1996, and I've had the privilege over that time of working with many, many outstanding board members. In the past couple of months, nine of our board members have completed their service with our organization, and together they have contributed 131 years of service to Americans for the Arts and its predecessor organization. So I would like to ask them just to quickly stand and be recognized, and to thank them for their service to the arts in America.

And my final thanks go to all of you for being here tonight and for your support of the Nancy Hanks Lecture Series, and for all that you do every day to support the arts in this country.

And now it is my pleasure to invite you to join us upstairs at the reception in the Atrium, where we'll get to hear some more music and Ken Burns will be up there to say hello to you. There are volunteers and staff people in the back to show you how to get there. Thank you for coming. Look forward to seeing you next year. Goodnight.

About the Lecturer

Ken Burns has been making documentary films for more than 20 years. Since the Academy Award-nominated *Brooklyn Bridge* in 1981, he has gone on to direct and produce some of the most acclaimed historical documentaries ever made.

In January 2001, *JAZZ* was broadcast on PBS. This 19-hour, 10-part film explored in detail the culture, politics, and dreams that gave birth to jazz music and follows this most American of art forms from its origins in blues and ragtime through swing, bebop, and fusion. John Carmen of *The San Francisco Chronicle* wrote: “*JAZZ* informs, astonishes, and entertains. It invites joy, tears, toe-tapping, pride, and shame and maybe an occasional goose bump.”

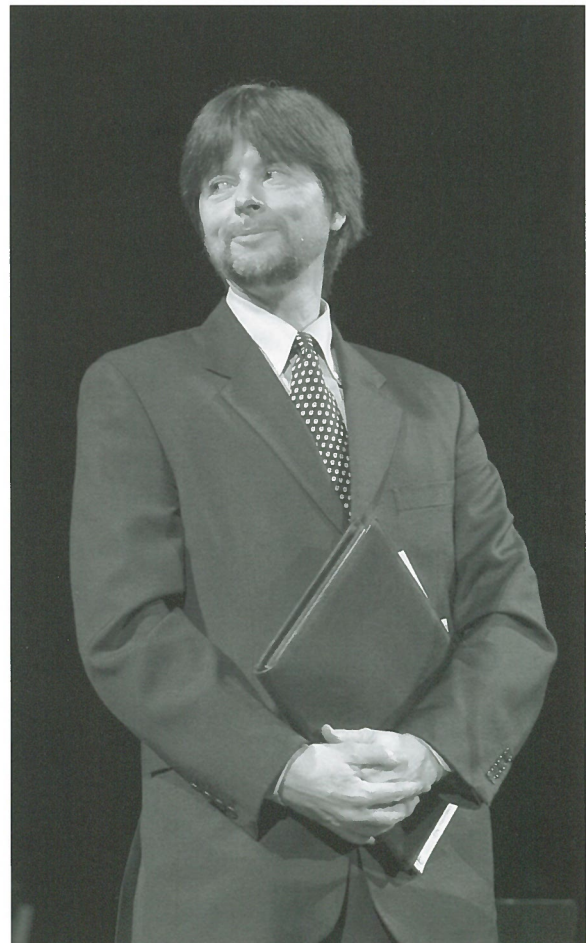
Mr. Burns was the director, producer, co-writer, chief cinematographer, music director, and executive producer of *The Civil War*, which premiered on PBS in 1990. The series has been honored with more than 40 major film and television awards, including two Emmy Awards, two Grammy Awards, Producer of the Year Award from the Producer’s Guild, People’s Choice Award, Peabody Award, duPont-Columbia Award, D.W. Griffith Award, and the \$50,000 Lincoln Prize, among dozens of others.

Baseball, an 18-hour series, covers the history of baseball from the 1840s to the present. Through the extensive use of archival photographs and newsreel footage, baseball as a mirror of our larger society premiered in 1994. *Baseball* received numerous awards, including an Emmy, the CINE Golden Eagle Award, the Clarion Award, and the Television Critics Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Sports and Special Programming.

Thomas Jefferson, a three-hour portrait of our third president, aired in 1997. The film explores the contradictions in the man who was revered as the author of the most sacred document in American history and condemned as a lifelong owner of slaves. Mr. Burns co-directed and produced *Frank Lloyd Wright* the following year. In 1999, that film won the Peabody Award.

Among his other films are *Not For Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*; *Lewis and Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery*; *The West*; *The Shakers: Hands to Work, Hearts to God*; *The Statue of Liberty*; *Huey Long*; *The Congress: The History and Promise of Representative Government*; *Thomas Hart Benton*; and *Empire of the Air: The Men Who Made Radio*.

Mr. Burns was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1953. He graduated from Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts, in 1975 and went on to be one of the co-founders of Florentine Films. He resides in Walpole, New Hampshire.



About the Presenters



Americans for the Arts is the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America. With more than 40 years of service, it is dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts. With offices in Washington and New York, and more than 5,000 organizational and individual members across the country, Americans for the Arts is focused on three primary goals: 1) to foster an environment in which the arts can thrive and contribute to the creation of more livable communities; 2) to generate more public- and private-sector resources for the arts and arts education; and 3) to build individual appreciation of the value of the arts. To achieve its goals, Americans for the Arts partners with local, state, and national arts organizations; government agencies; business leaders; individual philanthropists; educators; and funders throughout the country. It provides extensive arts industry research and information and professional development opportunities for community arts leaders via specialized programs and services, including a content-rich website and an annual national convention. Local arts agencies throughout the United States comprise Americans for the Arts' core constituency. A variety of unique partner networks with particular interests like public art, united arts fundraising, arts education, and emerging arts leaders are also supported. Through national visibility campaigns and local outreach, Americans for the Arts strives to motivate and mobilize opinion leaders and decision-makers who can make the arts thrive in America. Americans for the Arts produces annual events that heighten national visibility for the arts, including The National Arts Awards honoring private-sector leadership and the Public Leadership in the Arts Awards (in cooperation with the U.S. Conference of Mayors) honoring elected officials in local, state, and federal government. Americans for the Arts also hosts Arts Advocacy Day annually on Capitol Hill, convening arts advocates from around the country to advance federal support of the arts, humanities, and arts education. For more information about Americans for the Arts, please visit www.AmericansForTheArts.org.



The Kennedy Center

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, overlooking the Potomac River in Washington, D.C., is America's living memorial to President Kennedy. Under the guidance of President Michael M. Kaiser, the seven theaters and stages of the nation's busiest performing arts facility with audiences totaling 2 million; Center-related touring productions, television, and radio broadcasts welcome 20 million more. Now in its 34th season, the Center presents the greatest examples of music, dance, and theater; supports artists in the creation of new work; and serves the nation as a leader in arts education. With its artistic affiliate, the National Symphony Orchestra, the Center's achievements as a commissioner, producer, and nurturer of developing artists have resulted in over 200 theatrical productions, dozens of new ballets, operas, and musical works. The Center has produced and co-produced *Annie*, *Guys and Dolls*, *The King and I*, the American premiere of *Les Misérables*, the highly acclaimed Sondheim Celebration as well as the three-play: *Tennessee Williams Explored*. The Center's Emmy and Peabody Award-winning *The Kennedy Center Honors* is broadcast annually on the CBS Network; *The Kennedy Center Mark Twain Prize* is seen on PBS. Each year more than 11 million people nationwide, take part in innovative and effective education programs initiated by the Center—performances, lecture/demonstrations, open rehearsals, dance and music residencies, master classes, competitions for young actors and musicians, and workshops for teachers. These programs have become models for communities across the country. As part of the Kennedy Center's Performing Arts for Everyone outreach program, the Center and the National Symphony Orchestra stage more than 400 free performances of music, dance, and theater by artists from throughout the world each year on the Center's main stages, and every evening at 6 p.m. on the Millennium Stage. The Center also offers the nation's largest Specially Priced Tickets program for students, seniors, persons with disabilities, military personnel, and others with fixed low incomes.

Nancy Hanks

About The Nancy Hanks Lecture

Nancy Hanks was president of Americans for the Arts (formerly the American Council for the Arts) from 1968–69, when she was appointed chair of the National Endowment for the Arts, a position she held for eight years. During her tenure at the National Endowment for the Arts, the agency's budget grew 1,400 percent. This year marks the 18th Annual Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy, established to honor her memory and to provide an opportunity for public discourse at the highest levels on the importance of the arts and culture to our nation's well-being.

Past Nancy Hanks Lecturers

- 2004 Doris Kearns Goodwin, historian and author
- 2003 Robert Redford, artist and activist
- 2002 Zelda Fichandler, Founding Director of Arena Stage in Washington, DC, and Chair of the Graduate Acting Program at New York University
- 2001 Frank Rich, op-ed columnist for *The New York Times*
- 2000 Terry Semel, past Chairman and Co-CEO of Warner Bros. and Warner Music Group
- 1999 Wendy Wasserstein, playwright
- 1998 Dr. Billy Taylor, jazz musician and educator
- 1997 Alan K. Simpson, former U.S. Senator
- 1996 Carlos Fuentes, author
- 1995 Winton Malcolm Blount, Chairman of Blount, Inc., philanthropist, and former U.S. Postmaster General
- 1994 David McCullough, historian
- 1993 Barbara Jordan, former U.S. Congresswoman
- 1992 Franklin D. Murphy, former CEO of the Times Mirror Company
- 1991 John Brademas, former U.S. Congressman and President Emeritus of New York University
- 1990 Maya Angelou, poet
- 1989 Leonard Garment, Special Counsel to Presidents Nixon and Ford
- 1988 Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., historian

Americans for the Arts Board of Directors

Steven D. Spiess, Chair
Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP

Alejandro J. Aguirre
Diario Las Américas

Ramona Baker
Indianapolis, IN

Maria Bell
Los Angeles, CA

Madeleine Berman
Franklin, MI

Elena Brokaw Myles
City of Ventura

Carol R. Brown
Pittsburgh, PA

Susan Coliton
Paul G. Allen Family Foundation

Peter Donnelly
ArtsFund

Giancarlo Esposito
Ridgefield, CT

C. Kendric Fergeson
NBanC

Nancy Glaze
David and Lucile Packard Foundation

Susan S. Goode
Norfolk, VA

John Haworth
National Museum of the American Indian

Glen Howard
Fannie Mae Foundation

Leslie A. Ito
Visual Communications

Fred Lazarus IV
The Maryland Institute, College of Art

William Lehr, Jr.
Hershey, PA

Liz Lerman
Liz Lerman Dance Exchange

Abel Lopez
GALA Hispanic Theatre

Mary McCullough-Hudson
Cincinnati Fine Arts Fund

Nancy Matheny
Easton, PA

Julie Muraco
NASDAQ

Veronica Njoku
Fulton County Arts Council

Kathy Pavlick
Bronx, NY

Margie Johnson Reese
City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department

Barbara S. Robinson
Cleveland, OH

Victoria Rowell
Los Angeles, CA

Barbara Rubin
Stamford, CT

Harriet Sanford
Charlotte, NC

Emily Malino Scheuer
Washington, DC

Ann E. Sheffer
Betty R. Sheffer Foundation

Joan F. Small
Chicago, IL

Michael Spring
Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs

Michael Verruto
HPI Capital LLC

Shirley P. Wilhite
Shreveport, LA

Robert L. Lynch
Americans for the Arts