

Tulane University's Walter Isaacson receives National Humanities Medal

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Tulane's Walter Isaacson was awarded a National Humanities Medal, one of the nation's highest honors, from President Joe Biden.

Walter Isaacson, the renowned bestselling biographer, Tulane professor of history and co-chair of the [New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University](#), was awarded a National Humanities Medal by President Joe Biden at a White House ceremony on Tuesday, March 21. The ceremony can be viewed [here](#).

The National Humanities Medal, one of the nation's highest honors, recognizes individuals and organizations whose work has deepened our nation's understanding of and engagement with history, literature, languages, philosophy and other humanities subjects.

"This is such a profound and well-deserved honor for Walter, who is one of America's great public intellectuals," Tulane President Michael A. Fitts said. "Whether he is teaching in the classroom or penning another bestselling biography, Walter is driven by an intense interest in human curiosity and the nature, meaning and impacts of innovation. Walter's own curiosity enables him to be an amazing teacher and to vividly tell the stories of the people behind many of the achievements that have defined, shaped and advanced our society. He is an academic icon."

Isaacson's books include *The Code Breaker: Jennifer Doudna, Gene Editing, and the Future of the Human Race* (2021), *Leonardo da Vinci* (2017), *The Innovators: How a Group of Hackers, Geniuses, and Geeks Created the Digital Revolution* (2014), *Steve Jobs* (2011), *Einstein: His Life and Universe* (2007), *Benjamin Franklin: An American Life* (2003) and *Kissinger: A Biography* (1992). He is also coauthor of *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made* (1986).

"I'm grateful to President Biden for celebrating the humanities and to Tulane University for being a place where students and researchers connect the humanities to the sciences, business and other fields of endeavor," said Isaacson.

The Leonard A. Lauder Professor of American History and Values in Tulane's [School of Liberal Arts](#), Isaacson is the former editor of Time Magazine. He was previously CEO and Chairman of CNN and CEO of the Aspen Institute. He is also a cohost of the PBS show *Amanpour & Co.*, a CNBC contributor and a host of the podcast "Trailblazers," from Dell Technologies.

"I am thrilled to see Walter being recognized in this way," said Robin Forman, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost. "He has emerged as one of the preeminent biographers of our generation, chronicling the lives of innovators who transformed the world and expanded the universe of what is possible. He is a passionate supporter for the arts and humanities, and a consistent theme in his books and speeches is an idea that underlies our vision for Tulane - bringing people and perspectives together from across disciplines is crucial for creating an environment in which creativity can flourish."

A member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Royal Society of the Arts and the American Philosophical Society, Isaacson serves on the board of United Airlines, Halliburton Labs, the New Orleans City Planning Commission, the New Orleans Tricentennial Commission, Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Society of American Historians and My Brother's Keeper Alliance.

"When the president of the United States honors a Tulane professor with our nation's highest honor in the humanities, it brings honor to all members of our faculty," said Brian Edwards, dean of the School of Liberal Arts. "Walter Isaacson has been a tremendous inspiration to our approach to interdisciplinary research and teaching. His books and classroom teaching show the multiplicity of ways in which the creativity of the humanities and arts combine with discoveries in science to fuel innovations in engineering, which in turn prove revolutionary for society at large. This is at the core of what makes Tulane so special – and also America."

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