



El Béisbol Advisor Awarded National Humanities Medal at White House by President Obama

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New Haven, Conn. — Roberto González Echevarría, Sterling Professor of Hispanic and Comparative Literature, was awarded a National Humanities Medal by President Barack Obama in a White House ceremony on March 2.

The Yale professor is among 10 distinguished individuals to receive the honor, which recognizes those "whose work has deepened the nation's understanding of the humanities, broadened our citizens' engagement with the humanities, or helped preserve and expand Americans' access to important resources in the humanities." Up to 12 medals can be awarded each year.

Among the other National Humanities Medal honorees are poet, novelist and conservationist Wendell E. Berry; novelists Joyce Carol Oates and Philip Roth; biographer and literary critic Arnold Rampersad; and American Council of Learned Societies director Stanley Nider Katz. During the ceremony, Obama also honored this year's 10 recipients of the National Medal of Arts.

González Echevarría was honored in the East Room ceremony for his contributions to Spanish and Latin American literary criticism. He is considered one of the world's foremost experts on Spanish and Latin American literature. He is the author of "Alejo Carpentier: The Pilgrim at Home," "The Voice of the Masters: Writing and Authority in Modern Latin American Literature," "Myth and Archive: A Theory of Latin American Narrative" (which was awarded outstanding book prizes from the Modern Language Association and the Latin American Studies Association), "Celestina's Brood:

Continuities of the Baroque in Spanish and Latin American Literatures" and "Crítica práctica, práctica crítica." He co-edited the three-volume "Cambridge History of Latin American Literature" and edited the "Oxford Book of Latin American Short Stories." He also edited a CD-ROM on the life and work of Miguel de Cervantes, for which he received Choice magazine's Outstanding Academic Book Award for 1998.

A native of Cuba and former semi-professional baseball player, González Echevarría received widespread media attention for his 1999 book "The Pride of Havana: A History of Cuban Baseball." His most recent book, "Cuban Fiestas," is forthcoming from Yale University Press, and he is currently writing a history of modern Latin American literature for an Oxford University Press series.

González Echevarría is a graduate of the University of South Florida. He earned his M.A. at the University of Indiana and his M.Phil. and Ph.D. degrees at Yale in 1968 and 1970, respectively. He was an assistant professor at Yale 1970-1971 before teaching for six years at Cornell University, returning to Yale in 1977. He became a full professor in 1980 and five years later was appointed the R. Selden Rose Professor of Spanish, the first endowed chair ever granted by Yale in the field of Spanish. He became the Bass Professor of Hispanic and Comparative Literatures in 1991 and was honored with the Sterling Professorship in 1995. He has served as chair of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese for more than 16 years, in different terms, and has also chaired Yale's Council on Latin American Studies.

In 2001, González Echevarría was named a William Clyde DeVane Professor, a major University tribute. As such, he taught a semester-long undergraduate course, "Love and the Law in Cervantes," and offered public lectures on the topic. A book of the same title, based on those lectures, was published in 2005.

The literary scholar has been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship and grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Social Science Research Council. He has been an invited lecturer at universities in the United States, Europe and Latin America, and was the first Hispanist invited to teach in the School for Criticism and Theory. He has received honorary degrees from Colgate University and the University of South Florida, and was elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1999.

González Echevarría is also a private pilot who has been active in Yale Aviation and has served as a member of its board.

He is the fourth Yale faculty member to receive a National Humanities Medal since the award was inaugurated in 1997. The other Yale professors to be so honored are all historians: Edmund Morgan, Donald Kagan and John Lewis Gaddis.

Two of this year's National Medal of Arts recipients also have Yale connections. Actress Meryl Streep is a 1976 graduate of the Yale School of Drama, and theatrical critic,

producer, playwright and educator Robert Brustein served as dean of the School of Drama from 1966 to 1979 and founded the Yale Repertory Theatre. In addition, the sons of two other recipients of this year's National Humanities Medal — historians Bernard Bailyn and Gordon Wood — are members of the Yale faculty: Charles Bailyn, the Thomas E. Donnelley Professor of Astronomy and Physics, and Christopher Wood, professor of history of art.

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