

American Academy of Arts and Letters
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NEWS RELEASE

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THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND LETTERS ANNOUNCES **J. D. McCLATCHY ELECTED 55TH PRESIDENT**



January 22, 2009 – The poet J. D. McClatchy has been elected to a three-year term as president of the American Academy of Arts and Letters succeeding the composer Ezra Laderman. Mr. McClatchy, who was elected to membership in the Academy ten years ago, has frequently served on its award juries.

On learning of his selection, McClatchy said, “I’m grateful for the chance to serve this great institution, and I look forward to working with its staff and my colleagues in continuing our mission to encourage and support the arts in America. At a time when similar organizations are financially threatened, it’s crucial for the Academy – the oldest and most distinguished such group in this country – to set the standard of excellence in its unwavering devotion to the responsibilities of the human imagination.”

J. D. McClatchy is the author of six collections of poems: *Scenes From Another Life* (1981), *Stars Principal* (1986), *The Rest of the Way* (1990), *Ten Commandments* (1998), *Hazmat* (2002), which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, and *Mercury Dressing* (2009). His literary essays are collected in *White Paper* (1989), *Twenty Questions* (1998), and *American Writers at Home* (2004).

McClatchy was born in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, and was educated at Georgetown and Yale, from which he received his Ph.D. Mr. McClatchy has taught at Princeton, Columbia, UCLA, and Johns Hopkins. He now teaches at Yale, where he is Professor of English, and since 1991 has served as editor of *The Yale Review*.

Mr. McClatchy has also written thirteen opera libretti – for William Schumann’s *A Question of Taste*, Francis Thorne’s *Maria and the Magician*, Ned Rorem’s *Our Town*, Lowell Liebermann’s *Miss Lonelyhearts*; and for Elliot Goldenthal and Julie Taymor’s *Grendel*, among others.

He has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. He was a New York Public Library Literary Lion, and has received the 2000 Connecticut Governor’s Arts Award. He was the Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets from 1996 until 2003.

THE ACADEMY

The American Academy of Arts and Letters was established in 1898 to “foster, assist, and sustain an interest in literature, music, and the fine arts.” Election to the Academy is considered the highest formal recognition of artistic merit in this country. Founding members include William Merritt Chase, Kenyon Cox, Daniel Chester French, Child Hassam, Henry James, Theodore Roosevelt, Elihu Vedder, and Woodrow Wilson. The Academy is currently comprised of 250 of America’s leading voices in the fields of Art, Architecture, Literature, and Music. The Academy presents exhibitions of art, architecture, and manuscripts; and readings and performances of new musicals throughout the year, and is located in three landmark buildings on Audubon Terrace at 155 Street and Broadway, New York City.