

Bradley Foundation: Acclaimed scholar, historian and author Wilfred McClay selected as a 2022 Bradley Prize winner

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Milwaukee, WI - [The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation](#) announced today that Wilfred McClay, an eminent scholar, historian and author, has been selected to receive a 2022 Bradley Prize. The honor recognizes individuals whose outstanding achievements reflect The Bradley Foundation's mission to restore, strengthen and protect the principles and institutions of American exceptionalism. McClay will receive the award at the 18th annual Bradley Prizes ceremony on Tuesday, May 17th at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C.

"Bill is one of those rare scholars whose work can inspire a veteran who lived through World War II as much as it can a teenager who is just beginning to learn about it," said Rick Graber, president and CEO of The Bradley Foundation. "His masterful prose on America's founding, history, and principles transcends generational and political divides and promotes much needed civil discourse about who we are as a country. We look forward to celebrating his achievements at the Prizes Ceremony."

This year's award winners were chosen by the Bradley Prizes Selection Committee, which included notable leaders in various fields, after careful review of over 100 distinguished nominations. Each award carries a stipend of \$250,000.

Here are some of Professor McClay's thoughts about the importance of history:

“Done rightly, history should be the most humanizing of subjects. It opens reality to us in all its stupendous variety, from the earthbound lives of ordinary peasants and servants to the rarefied universe of the mighty and wealthy, and the astonishing range of human experiences in between. It seeks to provide a balanced and honest record of humanity’s achievements and enormities alike, generous enough to acknowledge the mixture of motives that every one of us flawed humans bring to life’s tasks.

“That, at any rate, is how it ought to be. But instead of expanding our minds and hearts,

history is increasingly used to narrow them. Instead of helping us to deepen our souls and take a mature and complex view of the past, history is increasingly being employed as a simple bludgeon, a nakedly political weapon which picks its targets mechanically—often based on little more than a popular cliché—and strikes.

“But that cannot last forever. Once history becomes nothing more than a club, it quickly loses its credibility as history. And without it, we will then be left cut off, marooned on a desert island called the present, with no horizons to gaze toward, and no memories to reach back for. That is why our very humanity, and the future of our civilization, are at stake in the restoration of history.

“I’m grateful beyond my power to express it for the Bradley Foundation’s support of me and of this important work, which has been one of their consistent themes for at least four decades. No other foundation can say the same.”

McClay holds the Victor Davis Hanson Chair in Classical History and Western Civilization at Hillsdale College. Before coming to Hillsdale in the fall of 2021, he was the G.T. and Libby Blankenship Chair in the History of Liberty at the University of Oklahoma, and the Director of the Center for the History of Liberty.

His book, *The Masterless: Self and Society in Modern America*, received the 1995 Merle Curti Award of the Organization of American Historians for the best book in American intellectual history. His most recent book, *Land of Hope: An Invitation to the Great American Story*, won the Intercollegiate Studies Institute 2020 Conservative Book of the Year Award.

McClay has served on the National Council on the Humanities and the advisory board for the National Endowment for the Humanities. He is currently a member of the U.S. Commission on the Semiquincentennial and president of The Philadelphia Society. He has been the recipient of fellowships from the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the National Academy of Education, and served as a Fulbright Senior Lecturer in American History at the University of Rome.

About The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation: Founded in 1985, the Milwaukee-based Bradley Foundation supports organizations that strengthen families and communities, inform and educate citizens, advance economic growth and encourage self-reliance. The Foundation's approach to philanthropy is guided by four core principles: fidelity to the U.S. Constitution with its principles of limited government, federalism, separation of powers, and individual liberties; commitment to free markets; dedication to the formation of informed and capable citizens; and commitment to the institutions of civil society that cultivate individuals capable of self-governance.