



THE GILDER LEHRMAN  
INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN HISTORY



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**5 Finalists Announced for the 2011  
National History Teacher of the Year**

New York, NY (September 30, 2011)—The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History announced the five finalists for the 2011 National History Teacher of the Year Award today. They are, in alphabetical order by state: Mary Lee Tung, sixth-grade teacher in the Japanese Partial Immersion Program at Sand Lake Elementary School in Anchorage, AK; Mark Wilensky, fifth-grade teacher at Wheat Ridge 5–8 School in Wheat Ridge, CO; Bruce Freeberg, fifth grade teacher at Crossroads Academy in Lyme, NH; Stacy Hoeflich, fourth grade teacher at John Adams Elementary School in Alexandria, VA; Joan James, fourth and fifth grade teacher at the University of Wyoming Lab School in Laramie, WY. The National History Teacher of the Year Award, co-sponsored by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, HISTORY®, and Preserve America, carries a \$10,000 prize. The winner will be announced at a ceremony at the Frederick Douglass Academy in New York City, NY, where Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg will give remarks.

“We are proud to honor these finalists, first identified from a large pool of nominations submitted from around the country, and now selected as the most remarkable in the nation from the group of fifty-plus state winners,” says Lesley Herrmann, Executive Director of the Gilder Lehrman Institute. “Each of them represents the very best teaching that this country has to offer, and they should be celebrated for their accomplishments.”

The panel of judges included Elaine Reed, former executive director of the National Council for History Education; Nathan McAlister, the 2010 National History Teacher of the Year; and Catherine Clinton, Professor of United States History, Queen’s University, Belfast, and author of many books and publications including *Mrs. Lincoln: A Life*.

The National History Teacher of the Year Award recognizes the country’s most outstanding American history teachers in elementary, middle, and high school classrooms. Winners are chosen from a pool of winners from each of the fifty states, Washington, DC, US Territories, and Department of Defense Schools. Each year, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History administers the award by seeking exemplary history educators who address literacy and content beyond state standards while using primary documents, artifacts, historic sites, and other historical resources. Each state honoree receives \$1,000 and an archive of books and resources from Gilder Lehrman and HISTORY®—co-sponsor of the award—for his or her school’s library.

## **About the Five Finalists**

### Alaska

Mary Lee Tung teaches sixth grade in the Japanese Partial Immersion Program at Sand Lake Elementary School in Anchorage. Ms. Tung has been teaching at the elementary level for the last four years after a career as an Intelligence Officer in the United States Air Force. She is a leader within her district through Teaching American History grants, National History Day, and training other teachers in the use of primary sources. Her students experience American history through a number of hands-on learning techniques including simulations, mock trials, and living-history museums.

### Colorado

Mark Wilensky is a fifth-grade teacher at Wheat Ridge 5-8 School in Wheat Ridge. Mr. Wilensky has taught in the Jefferson County Public Schools for the last thirteen years. He has been involved in numerous Teaching American History grants and serves as an instructor for the National Council for History Education. Mr. Wilensky is the author of *The Elementary Common Sense of Thomas Paine: An Interactive Adaptation for All Ages*. The book takes an in-depth look at the important document and is accompanied by a website with additional materials and activities.

### New Hampshire

Bruce Freeberg teaches fifth grade at Crossroads Academy in Lyme. Dr. Freeberg began his teaching career at the college level after receiving a Ph.D. in Philosophy. He has been teaching at the elementary level for the last eight years where he weaves the study of American history with art, literature, music, and philosophy. Dr. Freeberg conducts an extensive study of the Civil War in his classroom incorporating visits from historians and re-enactors, discussion of the literature of the period, an examination of soldier's letters, a Civil War camp, a research project, and a student performance of period songs.

### Virginia

Stacy Hoeflich is a fourth grade teacher at John Adams Elementary School in Alexandria. Ms. Hoeflich is in her fourteenth year of teaching. She engages her students on the history of Virginia and has guided them to write and produce three student operas on George Mason, Thomas Jefferson, and Virginia's Indians. Ms. Hoeflich serves as an educational consultant to the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University and has presented at the national conferences of the Organization of American Historians, the American Historical Association, and the National Council for the Social Studies.

### Wyoming

Joan James teaches both fourth and fifth graders at the University of Wyoming Lab School in Laramie. Ms. James's teaching career has spanned more than thirty-five years. Her students experience history through simulations from topics ranging from the American Revolution to the Civil Rights Movement, and they experience their own state and local history firsthand through a three-day trip around Wyoming visiting historic sites to culminate their unit on Westward Movement. Her students are engaged in their community through Project Citizen.

## **Nominations are open year round for grades K-12**

Nominations can be made by a student, parent, colleague, supervisor, or other education professional who is familiar with the teacher's work. To be considered for the 2012 award, middle and high school teachers must be nominated by February 1, 2012. For more information about the nomination process for 2012, visit [www.gilderlehrman.org/nhtoy](http://www.gilderlehrman.org/nhtoy).

### ***About Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg***

Michael R. Bloomberg was elected the 108th Mayor of the City of New York in 2001. He began his career in 1966 at Salomon Brothers, and after being let go in 1981, he began Bloomberg LP, a start-up financial news and information company that now has more than 11,000 employees around the world. As Mayor, Bloomberg has cut crime 35 percent, revitalized the waterfront, implemented ambitious public health strategies, including the successful ban on smoking in restaurants and bars, and expanded support for arts and culture. His education reforms have driven graduation rates up by 40 percent since 2005. The Mayor's economic policies have helped New York City avoid the level of job losses that many other cities experienced. Since October 2009, the nation has gained back only one out of every four jobs that were lost in the national recession. Meanwhile, New York City has gained back nearly all of its lost jobs. Mayor Bloomberg attended Johns Hopkins University and Harvard Business School, and is the father of two daughters, Emma and Georgina.

### ***About the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History***

Founded in 1994, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that promotes the study and love of American history, by focusing on document-based history education and working through an array of national programs. The Institute seeks to instill in every individual an understanding of America's past, and its value in today's world and the future. Gilder Lehrman creates and works closely with history-focused schools through its Affiliate School Program; organizes teacher seminars and development programs; produces print and digital publications and traveling exhibitions; hosts lectures by eminent historians; administers a History Teacher of the Year Award in every state and US territory; and offers national book prizes. The Gilder Lehrman website, [www.gilderlehrman.org](http://www.gilderlehrman.org), serves as a gateway to American history online with rich resources for educators designed specifically for K-12 teachers and students.

### ***About HISTORY®***

HISTORY® and HISTORY HD® are the leading destinations for revealing, award-winning original non-fiction series and event specials that connect history with viewers in an informative, immersive, and entertaining manner across multiple platforms. Programming covers a diverse variety of historical genres ranging from military history to contemporary history, technology to natural history, as well as science, archaeology, and pop culture. Among the network's program offerings are hit series such as *American Pickers*, *Ax Men*, *Brad Meltzer's Decoded*, *Ice Road Truckers*, *Top Gear*, *Pawn Stars*, and *Top Shot*, as well as acclaimed specials including *America the Story of Us*, *WWII in HD*, *102 Minutes That Changed America*, *The President's Book of Secrets*, and *Life After People*. HISTORY has earned four Peabody Awards, seven Primetime Emmy® Awards, and twelve News & Documentary Emmy® Awards and received the prestigious Governor's Award from the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences for the network's *Save Our History®* campaign dedicated to historic preservation and history education. *Take a Veteran to School Day* is the network's signature initiative connecting America's schools and communities with veterans from all wars. The HISTORY website, located at [www.history.com](http://www.history.com), is the leading online resource for all things history, featuring over 20,000 videos, images, audio clips, articles, and interactive features that allow visitors to dig deeper into a broad range of thousands of historical topics.

### ***About Preserve America***

Preserve America is a federal partnership program begun in 2003 that encourages and highlights community efforts to preserve and enhance the priceless cultural heritage of the United States as well as associated natural resources. The program's goals include fostering greater public knowledge of, and appreciation for, the nation's past and its cultural traditions; encouraging broader support for saving the special places that help document and tell the story of America; strengthening civic pride and participation in ways that help build and sustain communities by

preserving, enhancing, and using cultural heritage; and improving local economic vitality and livability through heritage development and heritage tourism. The Preserve America program is administered by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in cooperation with the White House, the U.S. Department of the Interior, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.