

Mass Humanities Newsletter Goes Green

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Above & Beyond

Talk of a crisis in the humanities spins a woeful web about our chosen field, and the headlines have us caught between plunging budgets and sagging numbers of students majoring in the humanities. Some numbers, though, are going up, including our age—Mass Humanities marks its 40th anniversary in 2014—and to celebrate, we reviewed our four-decade history. It is remarkable the extent to which the grants we made and programs we ran have indisputably enhanced and improved civic life in the Commonwealth.

Since our inception in 1974, Mass Humanities has emphasized the public value of the humanities. Two decades into our mission, the editorial in the newsletter that celebrated our 20th anniversary remarked that the careful balance of commitment, collaboration, and community were the “well-springs of our program”—and indeed, they are still. What we found in our history illuminates the strengths of the humanities, showing that no matter the challenges, we can meet and exceed expectations.

Today, the focus is largely on job creation and career preparation, evinced by opinion pieces and editorials in numerous media outlets that emphasize these

as the most salient criteria for evaluating our work. The American Academy of Arts & Sciences recently issued a much-discussed report entitled *The Heart of the Matter* that outlines a plan for the humanities to take a central role in improving the nation. The report sets long-term goals for achieving economic well-being and strengthening civil society and its core

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rubric for success is meeting future workforce needs. The report is indicative of a trend among humanities scholars who increasingly recognize the value of public engagement. Scholars glean lessons from outside the academy and equip students of all stripes with the tools they need to establish, maintain, and succeed in their careers.

Continued on page 7

40th Anniversary Milestones

1986 to 1988 *Shifting Gears* Statewide

Our first major statewide project, in partnership with the Heritage State Parks, focused on six once prosperous manufacturing communities and provided residents with a powerful record of their hometown memories through the lens of the ever-changing nature of work in Massachusetts.



1992 to 1995 *Different People, Different Places* Statewide

On the occasion of the 500th anniversary of Columbus’s “discovery” of the New World, more than 2,000 Massachusetts residents examined the environmental and cultural legacy of the European encounter with the Americas through readings and scholar-led discussions in public libraries.



Reflections on Mass Humanities' 40th anniversary year

By David Tebaldi



When people ask me how long I have been Executive Director of Mass Humanities, my reply is often met with mild astonishment. It is rare anymore for someone to stay in the same position with the same organization for 29 years. The 40th anniversary of the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities seems like an appropriate occasion to explain why I feel so privileged to have led this organization for nearly three decades.

Having been professionally trained in the humanities—disciplines, let's be honest, that are too often written off as useless and get little respect in the world at large—it does me good to devote my professional life to demonstrating the crucial role that the humanities play both in personal development and in community life. There are of course many different ways of doing this, but none more effective or personally rewarding as working in the public humanities.

What is unique about the state humanities councils is that they do this through an unusual process of collaboration—face-to-face encounters—between the academy and the practical world from which both benefit greatly. Our boards themselves are such collaborations, consisting as they do of roughly equal numbers of scholars and members of the public broadly representative of each state's diversity. Every program we offer and every humanities project we support through our grants bring scholars and community leaders together to deepen our understanding of issues that matter to us, as individuals and as members of our communities. We bring the life of the mind to the turmoil of life.

This work is always interesting and informative. At times it can be revelatory and exhilarating.

Yes, sometimes I feel a little like Moses, 40 years wandering in the desert in search of the Promised Land. My "desert" is a social, political and cultural environment hostile to the humanities, one in which economic values reign supreme, crass commercialism dominates our culture, and self-regard takes precedence over the common good.

"My "Promised Land" is a robust public square where history, literature, philosophy, and the other humanities disciplines are valued by all"

My "Promised Land" is a robust public square where history, literature, philosophy, and the other humanities disciplines are valued by all—but especially by our political leaders—both for themselves and for their ability to illuminate our common concerns and help us imagine a better world. It is a place where political disagreements are resolved through thoughtful reflection and reasoned discussion, where ideas are more important than ideology. It is a place where the complexity and nuance that characterize almost every aspect of human relations are understood and appreciated.

Needless to say, we are not there yet, but we are a lot closer to the Promised Land (here in Massachusetts at least) than when we set out in 1974 on what one of our long ago board chairs—a motorcycle riding, poetry-writing Republican business executive from Orange—called "this noble enterprise."

I'm often asked by those same people who are curious about my tenure, of the hundreds of projects Mass Humanities has supported

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Mass Humanities promotes the use of history, literature, philosophy, and the other humanities disciplines to deepen our understanding of the issues of the day, strengthen our sense of common purpose, and enrich individual and community life. We take the humanities out of the classroom and into the community.

Mass Humanities, a private, nonprofit, educational organization, receives funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities; the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency; and private sources.

1999 State House Women's Leadership Sculpture dedicated at State House Boston

The contributions of six women to public life in the Commonwealth are commemorated in a permanent work of art commissioned for the Massachusetts State House. The project included a middle school curriculum called *Making A Difference* used by more than 400 teachers.

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or conducted, which is your favorite? This is kind of annoying—like being asked to name your favorite book. There are too many wonderful possibilities to choose a favorite. But here are a few projects that have meant a lot to me and helped advance the mission of Mass Humanities in significant, and significantly different, ways:

SHIFTING GEARS: The Changing Meaning of Work in Massachusetts, 1920-1980

was our first attempt to have a state-wide impact with a single project. Working with the state Department of Environmental Management (as it was then called), we placed scholars in residence in six of the Commonwealth's Heritage State Parks (in Holyoke, North Adams, Gardner, Lawrence, Fall River, and the Blackstone Valley) to lead groups of local residents in explorations of the changes in the local economies over time and how those changes affected each community's understanding of itself. It was an ambitious and largely successful two-year undertaking and one that quite literally put the foundation on the map in Massachusetts.

The State House Women's Leadership Project

deserves special mention not only because of the quality of its concept and execution, but also because of its permanence. At the request of the state senate, Mass Humanities took responsibility for funding and overseeing a long-overdue effort to commemorate the contributions of women to public life in the Commonwealth. The stunning result was *HEAR US*, an elegant and eloquent work of art permanently installed in the State House in 1999. The large-scale sculptures executed in marble and bronze memorial-

ize the contributions of six women (Dorothea Dix, Lucy Stone, Sarah Parker Remond, Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, Mary Kenney O'Sullivan and Florence Luscombe) and the effects of their life's work on the laws of the Commonwealth. Even the very best humanities programs tend to be ephemeral. They live on, when they do, only in archives or in the memories of those who experienced them first-hand. *HEAR US* is forever.

Mass Moments, our electronic archive of Massachusetts history, was groundbreaking (at least for state humanities councils) when it was launched in our 30th anniversary year—combining a rich and engaging website, email delivery of each day's moment available by (free) subscription, and an associated series of one-minute radio spots aired daily on stations across the Commonwealth. An unexpected bonus has been the use to which the original research and outstanding writing done for *Mass Moments* has been used (and cited) by historians, writers and classroom teachers.

The **Clemente Course in the Humanities**, of course. Readers of this newsletter know it well. A remarkable collaboration between Mass Humanities, local social service agencies, and area colleges and universities, the Clemente Course provides college-level humanities classes in five subject areas free of charge to low-income adults. Established first in Holyoke in 1999, the program has also been offered in Boston, New Bedford, Worcester and, beginning this fall, in Brockton. Nothing Mass Humanities does has a more profound or lasting impact on the lives of individuals than Clemente.

Finally, a quick mention of our annual fall symposium—as we mark its anniversary in this its tenth year—in which we bring a group of prominent scholars and practitioners together to critically examine some fundamental aspect of our democracy or the interplay between our democracy and other important social or cultural institutions. Generously hosted by Boston College, the symposium now has a devoted following of nearly 400 intellectually curious and politically engaged adults. Better than any of our other programs perhaps, the symposium fulfills the mandate given to the state humanities councils by Congress when they were created in the early 1970s: *to demonstrate the relevance of the humanities to the contemporary concerns of our national life.*

It was a different Congress in 1974. Unlike Moses and the Israelites, we have not been cast out although we could be if the current House Republicans on the Interior and Environment Appropriations Committee have their way. They have proposed 49% cuts for the NEH and the NEA for 2014. No other federal agencies have been singled out in this way. And the effect of such a reduction on the federal budget deficit would be insignificant to say the least. Clearly this is not about the money. What is it about?

2000 Debut Massachusetts Clemente Course in the Humanities established Holyoke

The Care Center in Holyoke was our first partner in bringing this life-transforming program to Massachusetts. The Clemente Course provides college level humanities courses in five subject areas free of charge to low income adults in Boston, Brockton and New Bedford.

2000 Traveling Humanities Seminars to Cuba opened for registration Statewide

Mass Humanities led people-to-people cultural exchanges in Cuba between 2000-2003 and again in 2010-2012. The program brought more than 500 Massachusetts residents to Cuba for week-long visits with local scholars, artists, and entrepreneurs during a time of transition in the island nation.



Welcome to our New Board Members



BIANCA SIGH is a young professional with unique insight into the Boston art community. After working at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, (MFA) raising corporate funds for the institution she went on to the School of the Museum of Fine Arts (SMFA) to work with emerging artists where her passion for relationship building grew. She currently works as a paralegal at the firm of Nystrom Beckman & Paris LLP in Boston's Fan Pier and serves on the PAC Board at Mass Equality. Bianca graduated from Bowdoin College in 2006 with a Bachelor's degree in art history. She currently resides in Boston.



LAUREN COHEN is a senior vice president at Ruder Finn, a strategic communications firm based in New York City. She has been with Ruder Finn since 2002 and is responsible for driving corporate communications programs across a variety of clients in the healthcare, technology, finance, and non-profit areas. While at Ruder Finn, Lauren's work has helped earn numerous PR industry awards for the agency and her clients. She received her BS in marketing from Lehigh University. She and her husband live in Boston.



ANDREW PETER HELENE is a vice president in the Private Equity Banking Group at RBS Citizens, N.A. in Boston. Drew received his BA in history and economics from Williams College, MBA in finance from Columbia University, and Master's in International Public Policy from the Paul Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. Drew is a former board member of the Cape Cod Technology Council and resides in Brewster. Prior to moving to the Cape in 2004, Drew worked in Washington at the Center for Education Reform and edited *A Tough Act to Follow? The Telecommunications Act of 1996*, by Harold Furchgott-Roth, for the American Enterprise Institute. He also worked for ABN AMRO Bank N.V., syndicating loans for clients on the West Coast and in Canada after beginning his career at the Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company in New York where he covered Dallas and New Orleans.



LINDSEY KIANG is a retired attorney and now an independent scholar and historian. His previous legal career included corporate practice in the software industry, specializing in intellectual property law, and an appointment as general counsel of Yale University. Lindsey is a past chair of the board of trustees of the Massachusetts College of Art and served on the Governor's Commission on the Future of the State Colleges, the board of trustees of the USS Constitution Museum, and the board of overseers of the Isabella Stuart Gardner Museum. He also retired as a reserve officer in the Marine Corps, and after publication of his first book on combat art in Vietnam in 2006, his research interests are now focused on the air war over North Vietnam from 1965-72. Lindsey is a graduate of Yale College and Yale Law School, and he and his wife reside in Chestnut Hill.



JESSIE LITTLE DOE BAIRD is a linguist known for her efforts to revive the Wampanoag language. She received a MacArthur Fellowship in 2010. She has a master's degree from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. According to Wampanoag prophecy, a Wampanoag woman would leave her home to bring back the language, and "the children of those who had had a hand in breaking the language cycle would help heal it." Jesse is featured in the MH-funded PBS documentary, "We Still Live Here—Âs Nutayuneân", by Anne Makepeace. She was appointed to the board by Governor Deval Patrick.

And a Fond Farewell

SONIA NIETO of Amherst, Professor Emerita of Language, Literacy & Culture at the University of Massachusetts School of Education and an internationally respected expert on multicultural education will be retiring from the Mass Humanities board of directors this fall after six years of distinguished service. Sonia served with distinction on the Grant Review Committee, where she advocated for the inclusion of many voices in our grant programs, the Program Evaluation Committee, and the Membership Committee, which she chaired for two years. Sonia was also a member of the Executive Committee. Her perceptive insights and elegant style will be missed by board and staff alike.

Mass Humanities welcomes nominations for board membership, including self-nominations, at any time. Members serve once-renewable three-year terms. Nominees must live or work in Massachusetts and share a deep commitment to the public value of the humanities. Anyone interested in knowing more about the responsibilities and rewards of board service may contact Mass Humanities Executive Director David Tealdi.

2003 Literature & Medicine organized in first five MA hospitals Statewide

Health care professionals from Boston to Pittsfield began hosting literature-based, scholar-led conversations in their hospitals about the challenges and rewards of care giving. In its ten years, *Lit & Med* has been offered 38 times at 15 Massachusetts health institutions.



2004 First Annual Fall Symposium at Boston College held, on "U.S. Presidents in Perspective: The Shifting Fortunes of Presidential Reputations" Chestnut Hill

Biographers, historians, and other political observers discussed the role of the presidency in our democracy and changing public perceptions of U.S. presidents over time in our first free public symposium. This year, the series marks its tenth annual event.

Heritage and History in Western Mass.



The valleys and hills of Western Massachusetts are peopled with varied ethnicities whose valuable contributions to the region continue to shape its history. The Springfield-based newspaper *The Republican* showcases the area's African American, Jewish, Irish, and Latino history in their *Heritage* series of limited edition pictorial books. Order online at <http://bit.ly/wmheritage>

Public Squared Takes Root

Our Public Squared grant program invites the collaboration of two or more organizations whose work together brings public discourse to life. The first recipient of this grant, Central Square Theater, staged community conversations and other interactive programming alongside their production of *Roots of Liberty: The Haitian Revolution and the American Civil War* in May. The historical pageant traced the relationship between the Haitian Revolution, American abolitionism, and the Civil War while also asking questions about today's race relations. Appropriately timed to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, *Roots of Liberty* drew the support of noted authors, scholars, and actors who contributed to the play and the post-production moderated discussion of the Haitian diaspora.



Residents of the Greater Boston area contributed additional support and co-created the script and puppetry used in the show.

A single Public Squared grant of \$25,000 is awarded once each year. Qualified organizations must meet our Engaging New Audiences initiative criteria and fit within the guidelines for our thematic initiative, Crisis, Community, and Civic Culture.

2005 Mass Moments launched Online

Our digital almanac of Massachusetts history is a popular resource for teachers and lifelong students. In its inaugural year, 60-second spots were aired daily on 18 radio stations from Pittsfield to Provincetown. Multimedia content about each Mass Moment is available daily by (free) subscription.

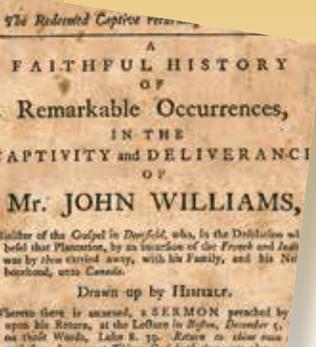
2005 Mass History Conference, "The Commonwealth Around Us: Interpreting Our Spaces and Places" Leominster

Our annual series of Mass History gatherings has become an essential networking opportunity for organizations statewide, showcasing our partners' best local history projects and practices and honoring individuals or organizations for outstanding contributions to public history in the Commonwealth.



2007 The Public Humanist blog published on the Valley Advocate Web site Online

Drawing on the talents of forty Massachusetts writers, filmmakers, and humanities professionals, our blog illustrates how the humanities can inform our public policy conversations and showcases humanities content from Mass Humanities-funded projects.



Recent Grants

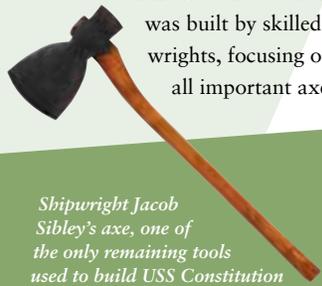
Several of the grants fall under special categories:

□ CCCC: Crisis, Community, and Civic Culture ▲ ENA: Engaging New Audiences ■ RIG: Research Inventory Grant

Boston

\$5,000 to the Boston Book Festival to bring authors of national repute to the Copley Fair festival for three days of varied programs with multiple literary collaborators.

\$3,849 to the USS Constitution Museum to develop a video installation about how Old Ironsides was built by skilled boatwrights, focusing on the all important axe.



Shipwright Jacob Sibley's axe, one of the only remaining tools used to build USS Constitution

\$5,000 to the Bostonian Society in support of French-Canadian historical re-enactors taking part in a public commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the treaty that ended the French and Indian Wars.

\$5,000 to the Paul Revere House in Boston for the design and fabrication of a display about the varied career and entrepreneurship of Paul Revere.

The racial identity of Derek Burrows is the subject of The Mirror of Race's film, "Reflections on Race"



\$10,000 media pre-production grant to The Mirror of Race Project in Auburndale to support a script and trailer for a documentary film about meaning of race in America.

\$10,000 to the Boston-based Trotter Institute for a series of six staged readings of plays from August Wilson's ten-play cycle about the lives of African Americans in the decades of the twentieth century. ■ CCCC

\$5,000 to the Drinking Gourd Project to plan the core exhibit for the Robbins House in Concord, a home built by the son of slavery survivor and Revolutionary War veteran Caesar Robbins in the early 1800s.

\$5,000 to the Filmmakers Collaborative for an on-line exhibit and archive of images, film clips and sound files related to the early years of WBCN FM in Boston and protest movements on Boston Common.

Northeast

\$1,500 to the Lowell History Society to archive the city's Division of Planning and Development Collection, including photographs and handwritten field-notes from the 1970s onward. ■ RIG

Central

\$5,000 to the Worcester Center for Craft to mount an exhibit and programs exploring the history and culture of Carnival in eight communities in Europe and the Americas.

\$10,000 media pre-production grant to ValleyCAST for a script and trailer for a documentary about the Whitin family's mills in Whitinsville and the employees in this company town.

Western

\$7,500 to the Museum of Contemporary Art at UMass Amherst for Springfield-based programs featuring artists whose new work about the vision of W.E.B. Du Bois will be exhibited at the museum. ▲ ENA

Berkshires

\$9,980 to WAM Theatre in Lee to involve local young women in the production of a play about the life of Émilie de Breteuil, a French enlightenment scientist/philosopher. ▲ ENA



Madame Émilie de Breteuil at her Desk, depicted by an unknown French artist

Out of State

\$10,000 to WAMC Northeast Public Radio to produce three one-hour radio segments taking a look at civility (and the lack thereof) in public discourse. ■ CCCC



2008 Family Adventures in Reading (FAIR) first hosted by MA libraries Statewide

Caregivers and children alike have enjoyed five years of FAIR, which has introduced the pleasures and rewards of reading and storytelling to thousands.

2009 First Reading Frederick Douglass event held Boston

Now in its fifth year, our award-winning program facilitates communal readings of Douglass's most famous speech *The Meaning of the Fourth of July for the Negro* in various communities throughout Massachusetts.



Above & Beyond, continued from page 1

Our programs have prepared participants for further learning and career advancement. The Clemente Course in the Humanities has awarded college credit to more than 400 low-income adults in the last 14 years. The majority—77%—go on to higher education, access to which has been made easier by their participation in our program, and 92% report that their life goals have been furthered. The Clemente course brings renewed passion and a way forward to underserved communities, rewarding students in the process with professional skills like project management, collaboration, and communication.

More than 800 participants in our workplace program *Literature & Medicine* know the value of ongoing career education. For the past ten of our forty years, hospital workers and volunteers alike have read and discussed literary works that help them reflect on their vocations as medical practitioners. The scholar-led conversations that occur at these sessions result in improved interpersonal relations with patients and colleagues, according to 64% of respondents, and 62% went on to say the program has increased their job satisfaction.

Of course, the true value of the humanities does not lie in quantitative analyses of workforce preparedness. Rather it derives from their ability to inform and enlighten our individual and collective choices, so at the same time that we celebrate the humanities quantitatively, we need also do what the tradition calls on us to do and describe their value qualitatively. The humanities ensure not only that suitable candidates enter the workforce, but that the full spectrum of learning is available to all. We advocate on behalf of the humanities because curiosity is not quantifiable; the value of humanistic inquiry—not unlike the value of basic

scientific research—stands apart from metrics. Just as scientific inquiry provides a deeper understanding of the physical universe, humanistic inquiry provides a more profound understanding of ourselves.

For decades, we have known that focusing on public issues is the best way to connect with the people of Massachusetts. The significant work being done by our grantees and collaborators receives our attention and support because it reflects and strengthens our state and national ideals. These same principles are explored each year in our public symposium, celebrating its tenth anniversary this fall. Scholars and journalists join public officials and citizens in exploring issues that are both timely and of enduring importance to our democracy and the conversations that take place at the symposium encourage and inform civic engagement.

This combination of humanities scholarship with an engaging and accessible format also characterizes our grant program, of course, which has served virtually every municipality in the state in our 40 years. We have made a renewed effort recently to extend our grant program's reach. Those project proposals that can engage new audiences with historically limited access to the humanities receive special consideration. We have also allocated additional grant dollars to such programming and since it began, the *Engaging New Audiences* initiative has been continuously successful and growing. To date, Mass Humanities has funded projects engaging veterans through community conversations, urban youth through poetry and storytelling, and immigrant popula-

At 40, we have a long track record of successfully inspiring audiences across the state and we hope that you will join us in ensuring that this important work continues for years to come.

tions through oral histories, to name only a select few.

None of this would be possible, of course, without the generous contributions of time, talent and money from board members and friends, project scholars, project scholars and members of the general public who attend and value our programs. We are profoundly grateful for their, for *your* support.

And we owe a special debt of gratitude to the National Endowment for the Humanities for its support, both over the decades and particularly now, as we connect with those who have limited access to the humanities. Indeed, our ongoing Inspire campaign to endow the Fund for New Communities has been boosted by a prestigious Challenge Grant from the NEH. Our objective for Inspire is to raise \$3 million in order to further our capacity to share the humanities with those same communities served by the Clemente program and the *Engaging New Audiences* initiative. Already we have raised over \$1 million, and meeting our goal would mean we could enhance both of those programs, expanding the Clemente Course and transforming more lives with the power of the humanities.

At 40, we have a long track record of successfully inspiring audiences across the state and we hope that you will join us in ensuring that this important work continues for years to come.

2012 Civility and American Democracy: A National Forum Boston

The Center for Civil Discourse at UMass Boston's McCormack Graduate School and Mass Humanities organized this program, which put leading scholars and journalists in discussion about the role civility plays in American politics and civic life.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF GRANTEES

2013 The Inspire campaign established Statewide

The Inspire campaign is an ongoing effort to sustain and extend our work to new and underserved communities. The endowment will enliven, inspire, challenge, and engage the Commonwealth through the gifts of the humanities and is supported by a prestigious NEH Challenge Grant and donors like you.





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10th Annual Fall Symposium Save the Date

E Pluribus Paralysis: Can We Make Our Democracy Work?

Saturday, November 9, 2013

12:30 PM, Boston College

The corrupting influence of money, the manipulation of elections, and the enduring legacy of social, racial, and gender divisions have eroded confidence in America's political system. The Mass Humanities Fall Symposium will focus on constructive ideas for making our democracy work.

Moderated by award-winning broadcast journalist **Jane Clayson**

Capital Ideas: Reducing the influence of money in our democracy

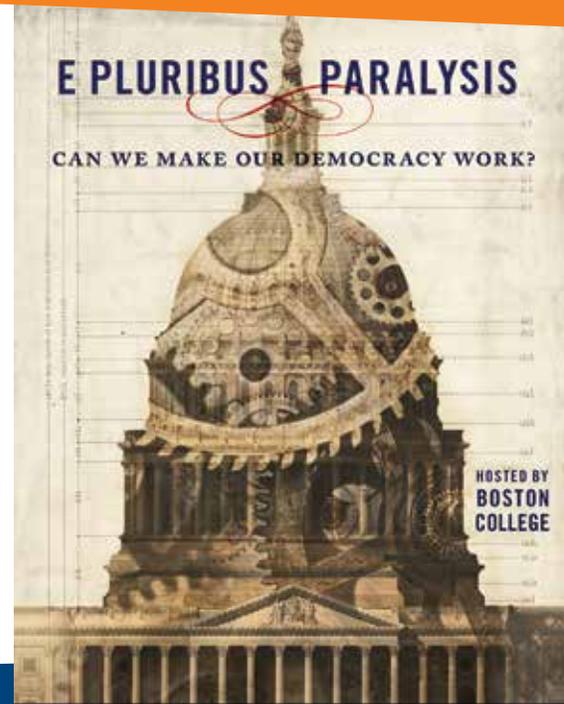
Thomas Mann, W. Averell Harriman Chair and Senior Fellow in Governance Studies, The Brookings Institution; **Zephyr Teachout**, Associate Professor of Law, Fordham University; **Alan Wolfe**, Professor of Political Science and Director of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life, Boston College

Righting Voting Wrongs: Making our republic more democratic

Heather Gerken, Professor of Law, Yale Law School; **Alexander Keyssar**, Professor of History and Social Policy, John F. Kennedy School of Government; **Khalil Gibran Muhammad**, Director, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Bending the Arc of History: Toward equality and democracy

Reniqua Allen, Freelance Journalist and Schwartz Fellow, New America Foundation; **Kenneth Feinberg**, Administrator, One Fund Boston; **Glenn Loury**, Merton P. Stoltz Professor of the Social Sciences and Professor of Economics and Public Policy, Brown University



Register and interact with us at: masshumanities.org/mbsymposium

MASS HUMANITIES 10th Annual Fall Symposium
Saturday, November 9, 2013, 12:30 - 5:00 pm