



AMERICAN  
**PRAIRIE**  
RESERVE

Celebrating  
the Indomitable  
American Spirit

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## David McCullough awarded Ken Burns American Heritage Prize

*Prize presented by American Prairie Reserve to celebrate the indomitable American spirit*

**NEW YORK** — Bestselling author and renowned historian **David McCullough** accepted the first **Ken Burns American Heritage Prize** here on Wednesday.

After tributes from both Tom Brokaw and Mr. Burns, the latter of whom noted that Mr. McCullough “has almost singlehandedly put the word ‘story’ back in ‘history,’” Mr. McCullough joked, “I think I just peaked.”

Calling American Prairie Reserve “a very worthy cause,” he urged the more than 500 attendees to explore their own horizons and find a place in their hearts for the project, which will restore a fully-functioning prairie ecosystem on the Great Plains of northeastern Montana.

“This project is optimistic,” Mr. McCullough noted. “That’s indescribably important, because that’s what gets things done.

“Almost nothing of consequence is ever accomplished alone,” Mr. McCullough added. “It must be a joint effort. America is a joint effort.”

Named in honor of America’s most revered visual historian and documentary filmmaker, the **Ken Burns American Heritage Prize** recognizes an individual whose body of work has advanced our collective understanding of the indomitable American spirit. Nominees for the Prize, which will be awarded annually, consist of visionary artists, authors, conservationists, educators, filmmakers, historians and scientists.

The Prize also serves to inspire public support for American Prairie Reserve, a modern-day embodiment of America’s optimistic and boundless approach to accomplishing the unprecedented — in this case, by creating the largest park in the continental United States.

“Just as David McCullough has restored and preserved our most seminal and definitive American stories, so too has the American Prairie Reserve sought to save a part of our magnificent continent, return it to its natural state — the way Lewis and Clark found it — and keep us all connected to what is essential,” Mr. Burns said.

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Mr. McCullough received the honor from Mr. Burns and others during the Prize's inaugural presentation event on May 3, 2017, at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. The evening's festivities included remarks by these gentlemen as well as the Prize's National Jury Chair, Former U.S. Ambassador to Finland Barbara Barrett, and renowned NBC news anchor Tom Brokaw. The more than 500 guests on hand also were treated to live, specially-commissioned music.

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#### **About American Prairie Reserve**

[American Prairie Reserve's](#) mission is to create the largest nature reserve in the continental United States, a spectacular refuge for people and wildlife preserved forever as part of America's heritage. When complete, the Reserve will be larger than Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks combined and will support all the animals that historically called the Great Plains home. Learn more at [americanprairie.org](#) and [kenburnsprize.com](#).

#### **About Ken Burns**

[Ken Burns](#) has been making documentary films for almost forty years. Since the Academy Award-nominated *Brooklyn Bridge* in 1981, Mr. Burns has gone on to direct and produce some of the most acclaimed historical documentaries ever made, including *The Civil War*; *Baseball*; *Jazz*; *The Statue of Liberty*; *Huey Long*; *Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery*; *Frank Lloyd Wright*; *Mark Twain*; *Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson*; *The War*; *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*; *The Roosevelts: An Intimate History*; *Jackie Robinson*; and, most recently, *Defying the Nazis: The Sharps' War*. His films have been honored with dozens of major awards, including fifteen Emmy Awards, two Grammy Awards and two Oscar nominations; and in September of 2008, at the News & Documentary Emmy Awards, Mr. Burns was honored by the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

#### **About David McCullough**

[David McCullough](#) has been acclaimed as a master of the art of narrative history. In the words of the citation accompanying his honorary degree from Yale, "As an historian, he paints with words, giving us pictures of the American people that live, breathe, and above all, confront the fundamental issues of courage, achievement, and moral character." During his crowded, productive career, Mr. McCullough has been an editor, teacher, lecturer, familiar presence on public television, and narrator of numerous documentaries including *The Civil War*, one of many collaborations with Ken Burns. He is a two-time winner of both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award, and has received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian award. His recent book, the widely praised [The Wright Brothers](#), was a #1 *New York Times* Bestseller and remained on the list for nine months. His book [1776](#) has been acclaimed "a classic," while [John Adams](#), published in 2001, remains one of the most praised and widely-read American biographies of all time. In April, he published [The American Spirit: Who We Are and What We Stand For](#), a collection of some of his most important speeches in a brief volume designed to identify important principles and characteristics that are particularly American. Mr. McCullough's other books include [The Johnstown Flood](#), [The Great Bridge](#), [The Path between the Seas](#), [Mornings on Horseback](#), [Brave Companions](#), [Truman](#) and [The Greater Journey: Americans in Paris](#). His books have been published in 19 languages and as may be said of few writers, none of his books has ever been out of print.