



Contact: Paula M. Krebs
646 576-5102, awards@mla.org

**MLA'S MORTON N. COHEN AWARD TO BE PRESENTED TO SASKIA HAMILTON
FOR *THE DOLPHIN LETTERS, 1970–1979*; TIM FULFORD AND SHARON RUSTON
TO RECEIVE HONORABLE MENTION FOR *THE COLLECTED LETTERS OF
HUMPHRY DAVY***

New York, NY – 6 December 2021 – The Modern Language Association of America today announced it will award the sixteenth Morton N. Cohen Award for a Distinguished Edition of Letters. The winning edition is *The Dolphin Letters, 1970–1979: Elizabeth Hardwick, Robert Lowell, and Their Circle*, edited by Saskia Hamilton, professor of English at Barnard College, and published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Tim Fulford, professor of English at De Montfort University, and Sharon Ruston, professor of English at Lancaster University, will receive an honorable mention for *The Collected Letters of Humphry Davy*, vols. 1–4, published by Oxford University Press. The Cohen Award was established in 1989 by a gift from Morton N. Cohen, professor emeritus of English at the City University of New York.

The Cohen Award is one of eighteen awards that will be presented on 8 January 2022, during the association's annual convention, to be held in Washington, DC. The members of the selection committee were Carrie T. Bramen (Univ. at Buffalo, State Univ. of New York), chair; Mary Helen Dupree (Georgetown Univ.); and Christl Verduyn (Mt. Allison Univ.). The committee's citation for the winning edition reads:

In The Dolphin Letters, 1970–1979, Elizabeth Hardwick, Robert Lowell, and Their Circle, Saskia Hamilton recovers the distinctive voice of Elizabeth Hardwick as she comes to grips with the dissolution of her marriage to the poet Robert Lowell. These letters, which Hardwick assumed were destroyed by either Lowell or his third wife, Caroline Blackwood, narrate the riveting story of betrayal and its aftermath and capture Hardwick's emotional range from grief and rage to resignation and even a period described as creative euphoria. Exchanges with Adrienne Rich, Mary McCarthy, and Elizabeth Bishop reveal additional aspects of Hardwick's personal crises, as well as examples of her acerbic wit, making this volume a genuine page turner. Hamilton's introduction is elegant, and the edition is measured with informative footnotes, some of which identify passages from the letters that Lowell adapted for his Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Dolphin*.

The citation for the honorable mention reads:

The Collected Letters of Sir Humphry Davy marks the first scholarly edition of Davy's extant letters that point to the range of his intellectual pursuits from poetry to chemistry, as well as his personal success as the son of a Cornish wood-carver who became the president of the Royal Society. Tim Fulford and Sharon Ruston provide a highly readable

introduction that underscores the wider significance of Davy in terms of Romantic-era science and literature before either became institutionalized as distinct disciplines. The editors emphasize Davy's participation in Romantic literary culture both as a member of Coleridge's circle in Bristol and as a poet in his own right. This is a well-organized collection, with meticulous footnotes, biographies of correspondents, and other materials that will benefit the specialist as well as the general reader.

The Modern Language Association of America and its over 23,000 members in 100 countries work to strengthen the study and teaching of languages and literature. Founded in 1883, the MLA provides opportunities for its members to share their scholarly findings and teaching experiences with colleagues and to discuss trends in the academy. The MLA sustains one of the finest publication programs in the humanities, producing a variety of publications for language and literature professionals and for the general public. The association publishes the *MLA International Bibliography*, the only comprehensive bibliography in language and literature, available online. More information on MLA programs is available at www.mla.org.

The Morton N. Cohen Award is awarded under the auspices of the MLA's Committee on Honors and Awards. Other awards sponsored by the committee are the William Riley Parker Prize; the James Russell Lowell Prize; the MLA Prize for a First Book; the Howard R. Marraro Prize; the Kenneth W. Mildener Prize; the Mina P. Shaughnessy Prize; the MLA Prize for Independent Scholars; the Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize; the MLA Prizes for a Scholarly Edition and for Collaborative, Bibliographical, or Archival Scholarship; the Lois Roth Award; the William Sanders Scarborough Prize; the Fenia and Yaakov Leviant Memorial Prize in Yiddish Studies; the MLA Prize in United States Latina and Latino and Chicana and Chicano Literary and Cultural Studies; the MLA Prize for Studies in Native American Literatures, Cultures, and Languages; the Matei Calinescu Prize; the MLA Prize for an Edited Collection; the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prizes for Comparative Literary Studies, for French and Francophone Studies, for Italian Studies, for Studies in Germanic Languages and Literatures, for Studies in Slavic Languages and Literatures, for a Translation of a Literary Work, for a Translation of a Scholarly Study of Literature; and the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Publication Award for a Manuscript in Italian Literary Studies. A complete list of current and previous winners can be found on the [MLA website](#).

The donor of the award, Morton Norton Cohen, was born in Calgary, Alberta, and received his BA from Tufts University and his MA and PhD from Columbia University. From 1952 until his retirement in 1980, Cohen taught at City College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. During this time he received research grants from the American Philosophical Society, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. His two-volume edition of *The Letters of Lewis Carroll* was published in 1979; his book *Lewis Carroll and Alice* and his edition of *The Selected Letters of Lewis Carroll* appeared in 1982. His *Lewis Carroll: A Biography* was published in 1995. Cohen was a member of the PEN Club, the Kipling Society, and the Lewis Carroll Society. He resided in New York City and in Puerto Rico until his passing, in 2017.