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Lori Wright
UNH Media Relations

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DURHAM, N.H. - Charles Simic, University of New Hampshire professor emeritus, has been named the 2011 recipient of the Poetry Society of America’s Robert Frost Medal, presented annually for “lifetime achievement in poetry.” The award is the organization’s highest award, and previous winners include Wallace Stevens, Gwendolyn Brooks, Allen Ginsberg, Marianne Moore, and Lucille Clifton, who was the 2010 Centennial recipient.

Simic will be presented with the 2011 Robert Frost Medal Tuesday, April 19, 2011, at the National Arts Club in New York City. In keeping with tradition, after the presentation of the medal, Simic will deliver the Frost Lecture.

“The Frost Medal is yet another, and a very prestigious one at that, in an impressive collection of honors that have been bestowed upon Professor Simic. UNH is fortunate to have many talented and accomplished faculty members, and Professor Simic has shown once again that he is one of a select few who rise to the top of the best,” said Kenneth Fuld, dean of the UNH College of Liberal Arts.

A Pulitzer Prize winning poet, Simic has published more than 60 collections of poetry, translations, and essays. He emigrated from Yugoslavia to the United States in 1954. His debut collection, “What the Grass Says,” was published in 1967, and he has since published more than 60 collections of poetry, translations, and essays. His poems have appeared in more than 100 literary journals and magazines, and his full-length collections include “White” (1972); “Unending Blues” (1986); “The World Doesn’t End” (1989), for which he won the 1990 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry; “Hotel Insomnia” (1992); and “Walking the Black Cat” (1996), which was a finalist for the National Book Award. His collection, “Jackstraws” (1999), was named a New York Times Notable Book of the Year, and his “Selected Poems: 1963-2003” won the Griffin International Poetry Award.

In 2007, Simic was appointed U.S. Poet Laureate. His other honors and awards include a MacArthur Genius Grant, fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts, and the 2007 Wallace Stevens Award. He also has received the Edgar Allan Poe Award and the PEN Translation Prize, and he was elected a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets in 2000. A life-long educator, Simic has held positions at Boston University, Columbia University, New York University, and UNH.

“I could not be more delighted that one of our country’s most accomplished, prolific, and engaging poets will receive our highest award in our 101st year,” said Ruth Kaplan, president of the Poetry Society of America Board.

The Robert Frost Medal is given by the Poetry Society of America to honor “distinguished lifetime achievement in poetry.” Early recipients of this award, inaugurated in 1930 and originally called the Gold Medal, include Robert Frost, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Wallace Stevens, and Marianne Moore. In 1984, to honor Robert Frost’s longstanding association with the organization, including his tenure as Honorary President from 1940-1963, the award was renamed and subsequent winners include Gwendolyn Brooks, Denise Levertov, Donald Hall, Adrienne Rich, John Ashbery, Sonia Sanchez, Barbara Guest, Michael S. Harper, and most recently Lucille Clifton in 2010.

The Poetry Society of America, the nation’s oldest poetry organization, was founded in 1910 for the purpose of creating a public forum for the advancement, enjoyment, and understanding of poetry. Through a diverse
array of programs, initiatives, contests, and awards, the PSA works to build a larger audience for poetry, to encourage a deeper appreciation of the art, and to place poetry at the crossroads of American life.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state’s flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

PHOTO
http://www.unh.edu/news/img/Charles_Simic.jpg
Charles Simic, University of New Hampshire professor emeritus, and the 2011 recipient of the Poetry Society of America’s Robert Frost Medal.

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Editors and Reporters: Requests for interviews with Charlie Simic should be directed to Rob Casper, programs director at the Poetry Society of America, at 212-254-9628 or rob@poetrysociety.org

Media Contact: Lori Wright | 603-862-0574 | UNH Media Relations