
Source 3: 2014 International Women of Courage Awards

Remarks from Michelle Obama

The International Women of Courage Awards are held each year in honor of women who show leadership, bravery, and a willingness to sacrifice for others. These women range from activists to human rights lawyers to medical doctors. The award is given by the U.S. Department of State.

- 10 This is the sixth time that I've had the pleasure of attending this event, and it is one of the highlights of my year because I always walk away feeling inspired by these women, determined to reflect their courage in my own life. And I know I'm not alone in that feeling because every day, with every life they touch and every spirit they raise, these women are creating ripples that stretch across the globe. . . .
- 11 That is what this day is about. It's about understanding that while our circumstances may be different in so many ways, the solutions to our struggles are the same. So when we see these women raise their voices and move their feet and empower others to create change, we need to realize that each of us has that same power and that same obligation. And as I learned about this year's honorees and I thought about how we could support their work, I realized that for most of these women, there is a common foundation for their efforts. It's a foundation of education.
- 12 On stage today, we have doctors and lawyers, we have a bishop, even a classically trained musician. These women have spent years in schools and universities equipping themselves with the knowledge and skills they now use to tackle the challenges before them. And that's a story I can relate to because it's the story of my life. And that is the message I'm sharing with young people across America, urging them to commit to their education so that they too can write their own destiny. . . .
- 13 And as I travel the world, whether I'm in Mexico City or Johannesburg, Mumbai, or later this month when I travel to China, I make it a priority to talk to young people about the power of education to help them achieve their aspirations. I always tell them that getting a good education isn't just about knowing what's going on in your own community or even in your own country, because no

6 But it wasn't only Nazi plunder they had to guard against. It was left to the Monuments Men to figure a way to save da Vinci's *Last Supper*, painted on the refectory wall of the convent at Santa Maria delle Grazie, before the Allies bombed Milan. By [creating] a scaffold of steel bars and sandbags around the wall, they saved the masterpiece. After the raid, it was the only wall in the refectory still standing. By using aerial photos, Monuments Men diverted Allied airmen away from many important sites, including the Chartres Cathedral; when a cultural site ended up an unintended target, Monuments Men rushed in to make repairs.

7 In March 1945, Allied forces discovered the first of Hitler's many secret repositories of art, more than one thousand hiding places in all, stashed mostly in salt mines and castles. That's when the Monuments Men began the serious task of conservation, restoration, and restitution. In all, they restored and returned to their rightful owners more than five million works of art, including works by Rembrandt, Vermeer, Botticelli, Manet, and many others, plus sculptures, tapestries, fine furnishings, books and manuscripts, scrolls, church bells, religious relics, and even the stained glass the Nazis had stolen from the windows of a cathedral. "This was the first time an army fought a war on the one hand and attempted to mitigate damage to cultural treasures at the same time," says Robert Edsel.

8 Edsel has spent eleven years and more than three million dollars researching, piecing together, and championing the little-known story of the group referred to officially as the U.S. Army's Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives section or, more commonly, the Monuments Men. . . .

9 Once their wartime duties were behind them, many of the Monuments Men went on to distinguish themselves in the arts, including Lincoln Kirstein, who founded the New York City Ballet; James Rorimer, who served as director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art; and Charles Parkhurst, chief curator of the National Gallery of Art. But, as the years passed, their wartime contributions sadly slipped from notice. As Edsel himself discovered, there was hardly a mention of the Monuments Men in all the vast literature of World War II. His unrelenting curiosity, energy, and deep admiration have brought honor to those heroes who saved Europe's treasures. "Their search," says Edsel, "was the greatest treasure hunt in history."

"Monuments Men Foundation for the Preservation of Art" by Rosanne Scott, from <http://www.neh.gov/about/awards/national-humanities-medals/monuments-men-foundation-the-preservation-art>