

IHC Awards 2024 Outstanding Achievement in the Humanities Award to Rochelle Johnson

Rochelle Johnson, professor at the College of Idaho, was recognized for her outstanding achievements in the humanities by the Idaho Humanities Council.

BOISE, ID, UNITED STATES, September 17, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Idaho Humanities Council](#) (IHC) is pleased to announce Dr. Rochelle Johnson from the College of Idaho as the recipient of our 2024 Outstanding Achievement in the Humanities Award. Dr. Johnson was recognized at a ceremony at Ardinger House in downtown Boise on Monday, September 8th. Her contributions to the humanities in Idaho were celebrated by colleagues, friends, family and the IHC board of directors. While the IHC has presented this award every year since 1986, this year the award was uncertain due to the termination of funding to state humanities councils from the National Endowment for the Humanities which cut funding to IHC by over 50%. During the ceremony, the chair of IHC's board of directors, Dulce Kersting-Lark noted, "It is such a joy to be celebrating the humanities tonight during a challenging year for the IHC and our humanities community. Thanks to your support and donations, we stand as strong as ever and can recognize the extraordinary contributions that Dr. Rochelle Johnson has made to the humanities."



Winner of the 2024 Outstanding Achievement in the Humanities Award, Dr. Rochelle Johnson

[Rochelle L. Johnson](#) holds the Bernie McCain Chair in the Humanities at the College of Idaho, where she has taught literature, writing, and environmental studies. A recipient of the Carnegie Foundation's Idaho Professor of the Year award, she has earned several research fellowships from the IHC, as well as fellowships from the American Antiquarian Society, Yale's Beinecke Library, and—three times—from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Known for her deeply interdisciplinary approach to learning, Rochelle's courses include "Knowing Birds," "Visions of Environment," "Science Writing," and "Natural History & Ethics at the Museum." Rochelle has authored or co-edited seven scholarly books, most recently *Thoreau in an Age of Crisis: Essays on an American Icon*. She is a scholar of American landscape aesthetics, and her

writings on environmental literary history and environmental pedagogy appear in various journals and anthologies. Rochelle is also a creative writer. Her “Phantom Pains” essay won the Georgia Review Prose Prize in 2025. Other creative nonfiction appears in Baltimore Review, The Revelator, and the Thoreau Society Bulletin, where she published quarterly columns during her four years as president of the Thoreau Society (2020-2024). Summertime often finds her teaching for the Bread Loaf School of English.

Rochelle places great value on providing service to her communities. At the College of Idaho, in addition to serving as chair of both English and Environmental Studies, she organized the Henberg Environmental Lecture since its inception in 2014 and directed the honors program for 18 years. A lecturer for the IHC Summer Teacher Institute, she assisted IHC with an NEH review, participated in the Let’s Talk About It series, and served as state scholar for the Smithsonian traveling exhibit, Crossroads: Change in Rural America. In Boise, she taught for Osher Institute of Lifelong Learning. In Caldwell she involved dozens of students in efforts to uncover Indian Creek and revitalize downtown, including orchestrating a collaboration of 36 students on a book-length natural history of Indian Creek. Regionally and nationally, Rochelle served on the boards of several organizations,

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Dulce Kersting-Lark

including the Orma J. Smith Museum of Natural History in Caldwell. A past president of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE), she currently chairs the award committee for the Thoreau Prize in Literary Nature Writing. Current projects involve a museum exhibit on Susan Fenimore Cooper and climate change, consulting with Ken Burns/Ewers Brothers Films on a documentary on Thoreau, and finalizing her next book, *Amputated: Flourishing with a Forgotten Naturalist in a World of Wounds*.



2024 Outstanding Achievement in the Humanities Award Winner Dr. Rochelle Johnson and IHC Board Chair Dulce Kersting-Lark

David Pettyjohn, the executive director of the Idaho

Humanities Council, summed up Dr. Rochelle Johnson’s impact on the humanities by saying, “The Idaho Humanities Council is very proud to recognize the accomplishments of Rochelle Johnson. She has had an exceptional career as a teacher, scholar, writer, mentor and more. The

humanities help us understand what it means to be human, and Rochelle has taught us more about how we as humans interact with nature and the world around us, to the benefit of us all.”

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Ceremony honoring 2024 Outstanding Achievement in the Humanities Award winner Dr. Rochelle Johnson

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