

WASHINGTON COLLEGE

CITATION

Bruce Cole

Bruce Cole straddles two worlds: the ethereal realm of Renaissance art and the dizzying sphere of digital technology that brings history and art alive for today's young people. As an art historian, Cole has written extensively, elucidating the nuances of Italian art; as chairman of the National Endowment for Humanities, he is reawakening our American sensibilities—reinventing the way our teachers teach, retooling our nation's classrooms, and revitalizing public programs focused on American history and culture.

NEH's *We the People* initiative—of which Washington College is just one beneficiary—reflects not only the importance of understanding our nation's intellectual and cultural foundations, but also our responsibility to bring the American story to the masses in the digitized language of the 21st century. In addition to summer field experiences for teachers of American history, such as the Chesapeake Journey expedition spearheaded by the College's C.V. Starr Center for the American Experience last July, Cole's *We the People* project is working with the Library of Congress to digitize our nation's historic newspapers. With a nod to the significance of the arts in articulating our cultural experiences, Cole has also launched a program, called "Picturing America," that breathes new life into art appreciation in our nation's schools. Even as he revels in the richness of our past, Bruce Cole embraces innovative approaches to bringing history and the arts alive for our nation's youngest generation.

In recognition of his significant contributions to our understanding of western art and his vision for a more arts-literate citizenry, we hereby present to Bruce Cole the honorary degree, Doctor of Humane Letters.

Baird Tipson
President
May 18, 2008

B I O G R A P H Y

Bruce Cole

A RENAISSANCE SCHOLAR, author and former distinguished professor of art history and comparative literature at Indiana University, Bruce Cole has served as chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities since 2001. As chairman, Cole launched We the People, a federal initiative to encourage the teaching, study and understanding of American history and culture. The initiative, which provided a \$625,000 grant to Washington College in September 2007, includes summer seminars at our nation's historic landmarks to enhance teachers' knowledge of American history, as well as programs to distribute classic children's books to libraries and schools across the country.

A graduate of Case Western Reserve University, Cole earned his master's degree from Oberlin College and his doctorate from Bryn Mawr College. For two years he was the William E. Suida Fellow at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence. He has held fellowships and grants from the Guggenheim Foundation, American Council of Learned Societies, Kress Foundation, American Philosophical Society, and the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. He is a corresponding member of the Accademia Senese degli Intronati, the oldest learned society in Europe, and a founder and former co-president of the Association for Art History.

Cole has written fourteen books, many of them about the Renaissance. They include *The Renaissance Artist at Work*; *Sienese Painting in the Age of the Renaissance*; *Italian Art, 1250-1550: The Relation of Art to Life and Society*; *Titian and Venetian Art, 1450-1590*; and *Art of the Western World: From Ancient Greece to Post- Modernism*. His most recent book is *The Informed Eye: Understanding Masterpieces of Western Art*.