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New England Historic Genealogical Society Honors Pulitzer Prize-winning Author Stacy Schiff at Family History Benefit Dinner with Lifetime Achievement Award

April 29, 2017—Boston, Massachusetts— Best-selling author Stacy Schiff was honored by New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS) with its Lifetime Achievement Award in History and Biography at a Family History Benefit Dinner Friday night in Boston. Serving as emcees were noted historian William M. Fowler Jr. and *Genealogy Roadshow* co-host Mary M. Tedesco. At the same event, President and CEO Brenton Simons announced more than \$10 million in new gifts to the organization.

Ms. Tedesco presented Ms. Schiff with an expertly prepared genealogy of her family—a tradition of NEHGS for many years. All of her great-grandparents were immigrants from Eastern Europe who left during the pogroms of the late 1800s and arrived in the U.S. long before WWII. Six had roots in the area of Russia known as the Pale of Settlement and the remaining two came from Galicia in what was the Austrian Empire. All were laborers who came to the U.S. with minimal resources, armed with a keen entrepreneurial spirit, and worked diligently to send their children to college. In this way they succeeded in realizing the American dream.

Born in North Adams, Massachusetts, Ms. Schiff graduated from Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, and Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts. She is the author of five historical non-fiction books. One of the most widely acclaimed historians of her generation, Ms. Schiff has been praised for her ability to provide fresh insight into some of history's most famous—yet enigmatic—figures. In reference to her latest book, *The Witches: Salem, 1692*, published in 2015 with much of it researched at NEHGS, historian David McCullough said, "History in the hands of Stacy Schiff is invariably full of life, light, shadow, surprise, clarity of insight, and so it is again and then some in her latest work, *The Witches*. Few writers combine as she does superb scholarship and an exceptional gift for language with amazing reach and agility of mind."

Ms. Schiff's first book, *Saint-Exupéry: A Biography* was published in 1994 and was a 1995 Pulitzer Prize finalist. Her second, *Véra (Mrs. Vladimir Nabokov): Portrait of a Marriage* (1999) won the Pulitzer Prize in 2000. *A Great Improvisation: Franklin, France, and the Birth of America* (2005) won the 2006 George Washington Book Prize, the Ambassador Award in American Studies, and the Gilbert Chinard Prize of the Institut Français d'Amérique. Her 2010 publication of *Cleopatra: A Life* was a #1 best seller and earned the 2011 PEN/Jacqueline Bograd Weld Award for Biography.

Past recipients of the NEHGS Lifetime Achievement Award have included Boston Mayor Thomas Menino (2009), Harvard Professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. (2010), documentary filmmaker Ken Burns (2011), former Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis and Kitty Dukakis (2012), CNN senior political correspondent David Gergen (2013), author and presidential historian Doris Kearns Goodwin (2014), actor of stage and screen Dame Angela Lansbury (2014), author HRH Princess Michael of Kent (2015), political consultants Mary Matalin and James Carville (2015), author Nathaniel Philbrick (2015), two of America's legendary television journalists, Bob Schieffer and David Hartmann (2016), and journalist and historian Cokie Roberts (2016).

The dinner's Platinum Benefactor was Wells Fargo. Other benefactors for the evening were Sit Investment Associates and Welch & Forbes LLC. Honorary Co-Chairs were Lionel and Vivian Spiro and Morrison DeS. and Stacie Webb.

NEHGS, with its national headquarters located in Boston's Back Bay, is the oldest and largest genealogical society in America. NEHGS was formally constituted in March of 1845 by an act of the legislature of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and now consists of more than 220,000 constituents engaged in family history nationally and around the world. It is home to a world-class research library and archive, and an expert staff. NEHGS offers an award-winning genealogical research website at AmericanAncestors.org and maintains a publishing division which produces original genealogical research, scholarship, and educational materials.

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