

Robert M. Edsel

Robert Edsel is recognized as one of the world's foremost advocates for art preservation and the recovery of cultural treasures missing since World War II. The last twenty years of his life have been dedicated to the meticulous research of the Monuments Men and Women, the soldier-scholars who helped save so many of the world's great art and cultural treasures from the destruction of war and theft by the Nazis. In the course of his work, Mr. Edsel has located and interviewed twenty-one Monuments Officers including three Monuments Women, and dozens of family members. Previously, Mr. Edsel had a successful sixteen-year career as Founder and Chairman of Gemini Exploration, an oil and gas exploration company that pioneered the use of horizontal drilling technology in the early 1990s.

Mr. Edsel is the #1 *New York Times* best-selling author of four non-fiction books: *Rescuing Da Vinci*, *The Monuments Men*, *Saving Italy*, and his first book written for young readers, *The Greatest Treasure Hunt in History: The Story of the Monuments Men*. Academy Award® recipient George Clooney wrote, directed and starred in a film based on Mr. Edsel's second book, *The Monuments Men*, helping raise worldwide awareness of these heroes of civilization. The film, which was released in 2014 in more than 100 countries, included acclaimed actors Matt Damon, Cate Blanchett, and Bill Murray among others. Mr. Edsel is also the co-producer of the Emmy-nominated documentary film, *The Rape of Europa*.

Mr. Edsel is the Founder and Chairman of the nonprofit organization Monuments Men Foundation for the Preservation of Art, recipient of the National Humanities Medal, our nation's highest honor for work in the humanities, which was presented by President George W. Bush at the White House in 2007. Among his many honors, Edsel has been awarded the "Texas Medal of Arts" Award; the "President's Call to Service" Award; the "Hope for Humanity" Award, presented by the Dallas Holocaust Museum; the "Distinguished Alumnus Award" from his alma mater, St. Mark's School of Texas; and the "Lifetime Achievement Award" from the National Council for the Promotion of the Italian Language in American Schools.

In November of 2014, the Foundation for the National Archives presented Mr. Edsel with its "Records of Achievement Award," which recognizes an individual whose work has fostered a broader national awareness of the history and identity of the United States through the use of original records. Previous recipients have included Tom Brokaw, Ken Burns, David McCullough, Steven Spielberg, and Tom Hanks.

In 2015, Mr. Edsel received the "Anne Frank Human Writes" Award for his exceptional leadership in combating the sort of intolerance, prejudice and injustice that Anne Frank endured.

On October 22, 2015, following years of advocacy to honor these heroes of civilization, Mr. Edsel participated alongside Speaker of the House John Boehner, and Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, in the presentation of the Congressional Gold Medal to the Monuments Men and Women, our nation's highest civilian award.

Since 2016, Mr. Edsel has donated his time to meet with men and women serving in the U.S. Army Civil Affairs Division, who today perform many of the duties of the Monuments Men of

World War II. In addition to attending briefings, he has delivered pro-bono presentations on base at Ft. Meade, Maryland and Ft. McCoy, Wisconsin.

In 2017, Mr. Edsel was recognized as an Honorary Member of the U.S. Army 88th Infantry Division.

In 2019, Mr. Edsel received the “Pio Alferano Award,” presented by the government of Italy, in recognition of individuals whose work promotes and safeguards historical and archaeological heritage.

In 2021, Mr. Edsel received the “Decoration of Honor Meritorious for Polish Culture,” presented by the government of Poland, for his distinguished contributions to Polish culture and heritage.