

Herman Wekker Prize 2013:

The Professor Herman Wekker Prize is awarded during each biennial *Nationaal Congres Engels* to a journalist from the Netherlands who has given outstanding service to the spread of information about English-speaking countries and cultures among the Dutch public.

The prize is named in honour of the late Herman Wekker, former Professor of English Language at the University of Groningen and one of the founders of this national conference. He had an international vision and recognised the central importance of responsible and exciting journalism in sharing insight and understanding between cultures. Before his early death in 1997 he was very active among English language scholars, teachers and writers in the Netherlands. It was he who conceived the idea of this award, an award which, over the years, has become widely appreciated among journalists in this country

The winners to date are:

1995: Hans Bouman

1997: Tine van Houts

1999: Charles Groenhuijsen

2001: Peter Sierksma

2003: Max Westerman

2005: Hans Steketee

2007: Lia van Bekhoven

2009: Tom-Jan Meeus

2011: Hieke Jippes

But to whom will the prize be given this year?

The jury consisting of the members who have organised this conference, faced the task of answering this question on your behalf.

This jury had lively debates about the award of the 2013 Herman Wekker Prize, largely for the positive reason that there was a strong field of excellent candidates

working in a variety of different media, including daily papers, weekly journals and magazines, television, radio and the internet.

2012 was a very special year for Great Britain where the queen celebrated her golden jubilee, where The Olympic Games were held and where prince William locked Kate Middleton into his arms. But there were other important events in the world. In the United States, for example, there were presidential elections and the whole world was wondering what the outcome would be. Everyone realized that the 'Yes, we can' euphoria of 4 years ago had disappeared and many Americans were disappointed in their president. Would he succeed in being elected for a second term? Or would we get Maarten van Rossem for president? Lots of journalists kept us informed of the developments and most people watched television and heard, but also saw what was going on in the States. There was a journalist who travelled all over America to confront us with the many different opinions of very different Americans. He followed the debates closely and introduced us to a lot of interesting characters. Although you might have thought that he sympathised with Obama, he gave Romney a fair deal. His contributions kept us informed and interested. However, when Obama was elected, it also meant the end of his five years' post as a reporter in the USA for the NOS. He regretted this and a lot of people in Holland regretted it as well, because in the course of these five years we saw him in all sorts of places in the States making us familiar with all some surprising aspects of American life. He also reported on Sandy and we pitied him when we saw him standing in a torrential rain. At least that was what we thought. Recently he told the Volkskrant that he was actually standing in a shelter. Something to look forward to is no doubt his book 'We kunnen wel voor onszelf zorgen', which will be published in September

Ladies and gentlemen, the winner told me that he is the more pleased with this award, because Herman Wekker was a professor of Groningen University his own Alma Mater, where he already devoted himself to American Studies. It is with great pleasure that we propose to award the Herman Wekker Prize for 2013 to the NOS correspondent, Eelco Bosch van Rosenthal.

Jan Valkenburg, Nijmegen, March 2013