



THE SAMI ROHR PRIZE
FOR JEWISH LITERATURE

**Lucette Lagnado Wins the \$100,000
2008 Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature for her memoir:
*The Man in the White Sharkskin Suit:
My Family's Exodus from Old Cairo to the New World***

New York, NY – The Jewish Book Council is pleased to announce Lucette Lagnado as the recipient of the \$100,000 **2008 Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature**. Lagnado wins the prize for her memoir *The Man in the White Sharkskin Suit: My Family's Exodus from Old Cairo to the New World* (HarperCollins/Ecco), a work that *The New York Times Book Review* called “brilliant.” Lagnado, a senior special writer and investigative reporter for the *Wall Street Journal*, was selected based on her demonstration of a fresh vision and evidence of future potential to further contribute to the Jewish literary community.

In the memoir, Lagnado chronicles her family's heartbreaking tale of their exodus from Egypt and eventual resettling in Brooklyn. Through *The Man in the White Sharkskin Suit*, Lagnado has shed light on the untold stories of the nearly one million Jewish refugees across the Middle East, cast out from homelands they cherished and longed to return to until their deaths.

Along with this prestigious award the Jewish Book Council is also pleased to announce the two recipients of the **2008 Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature Choice Award**. The Choice Award is a monetary award in the amount of \$7,500. The two recipients of the 2008 Choice Awards are:

- **Ilana M. Blumberg** for *Houses of Study: A Jewish Woman Among Books* (University of Nebraska Press)
Blumberg is Assistant Professor of Humanities at James Madison College at Michigan State University.
- **Eric L. Goldstein** for *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race and American Identity* (Princeton University Press)
Goldstein is Associate Professor of History and Jewish Studies at Emory University.

The presentation of the **Sami Rohr Prize** and the **Choice Awards** will be held in April 2008 in Jerusalem.

A distinguished panel of judges was responsible for these selections. The members of the panel, who remained anonymous until this publication, are:

- **David Ellenson** Author and President of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR).
- **Samuel G. Freedman** Journalist, author and Professor at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism.
- **Rela Mintz Geffen** Professor of Sociology & Immediate Past President, Baltimore Hebrew University.
- **Ari Goldman** Religion journalist, author, and Professor of journalism at Columbia University.
- **Yossi Klein Halevi** Author and Senior fellow in the Shalem Center's Institute for Zionist History and Thought and the Israel correspondent of the *New Republic*.
- **Deborah Lipstadt** Author and Dorot Professor of Modern Jewish and Holocaust Studies at Emory University.
- **Nessa Rapoport** Author and essayist.
- **Jonathan D. Sarna** Author and Professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University and Director of its Hornstein Jewish Professional Leadership Program.
- **Joseph Telushkin** Author and public speaker.



The **Sami Rohr Prize** is the largest monetary prize of its kind in the Jewish literary world, and one of the largest literary prizes worldwide. In 2006, in celebration of Sami Rohr's 80th birthday, his children and grandchildren inaugurated the **Sami Rohr Prize** to honor his lifelong love of Jewish literature.

The inaugural **Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature** was awarded last year to fiction writer Tamar Yellin for *The Genizah at the House of Shepher* (Toby Press). The Prize considers fiction and non-fiction in alternating years. The Prize honors an emerging author in the field of Jewish literature who has written a book of exceptional literary merit that stimulates an interest in themes of Jewish concern.

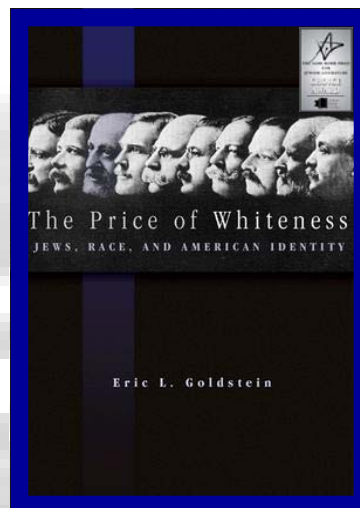
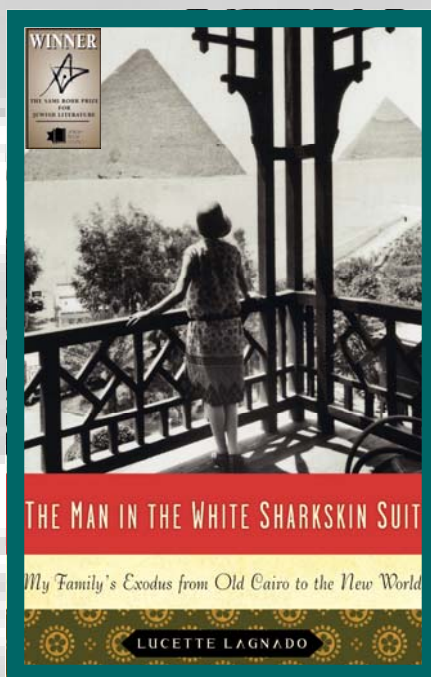
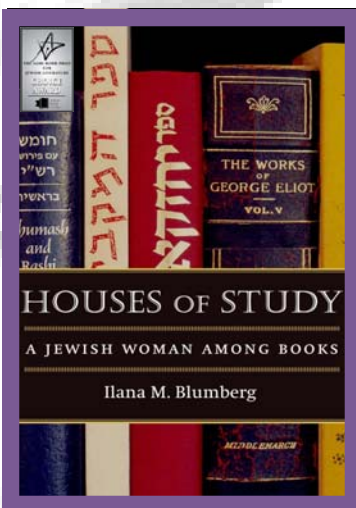
The finalists and judges – from this year's Prize as well as last year's Prize – will meet together this summer at the **Sami Rohr Jewish Literary Institute**, a forum devoted to the continuity of Jewish literature. The Institute, also run under the auspices of the Jewish Book Council, will convene a biennial gathering, creating an environment in which established and emerging writers can meet and exchange ideas and perspectives.

ABOUT SAMI ROHR:

After spending his early years in post WWII Europe, Sami Rohr moved to Bogota, Colombia, where he was a leading real estate developer for over 30 years. He currently lives in Florida and continues to be very active in various business endeavors internationally. His philanthropic commitment to Jewish education and community-building throughout the world is renowned. This Prize is a gift by his family to honor his love of Jewish writing, and to help encourage the continuation of the magnificent legacy of the People of the Book.

ABOUT THE JEWISH BOOK COUNCIL:

The Jewish Book Council is a not-for-profit organization devoted exclusively to the promotion of Jewish-interest literature. Through an ever-growing list of projects and programs, including the National Jewish Book Awards, the Jewish Book NETWORK, and the quarterly publication *Jewish Book World*, the Jewish Book Council serves as a catalyst for the reading, writing, and publishing of books of Jewish interest.



For more information about the Jewish Book Council and the Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature visit www.jewishbookcouncil.org