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**Mystery Writers of America to Honor Edgar Allan Poe Society,
The Poe House
at 2009 Edgar® Awards**

November 12, 2008 -- New York, NY: Mystery Writers of America (MWA) has chosen the Edgar Allan Poe Society and The Poe House in Baltimore, Maryland, as the 2009 recipients of the organization's prestigious Raven Award.

To be presented at Mystery Writers of America's 63rd Annual Edgar® Awards Banquet at The Grand Hyatt Hotel in New York City on April 30, 2009, the Raven Award is bestowed by MWA's Board of Directors for outstanding achievement in the mystery field outside the realm of creative writing. Among past recipients of the award are the Library of Congress, Center for the Book, and two United States Presidents – Bill Clinton and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

According to MWA's President Harlan Coben, the dual choice of the Poe Society and the Edgar Allan Poe House is doubly appropriate: "Not only does 2009 mark the anniversary of Edgar Allan Poe's 200th birthday, but Mystery Writers of America has long-considered Poe a patron saint. In fact, the Raven Award, itself, is named after Poe's famous poem, and our Edgar® Awards -- or 'Edgars,' as they're more popularly known -- are awarded annually to authors of distinguished work."

Formed in 1923, the Edgar Allan Poe Society organized an annual series of public programs that included musical settings of Poe's poems, readings from his works, exhibitions of information and memorabilia, and lectures about his life and writings. In 1938, the Poe Society led efforts to save a house in Baltimore where Poe lived from 1833 to 1835. The efforts were successful and a bronze plaque was erected at The Poe House to commemorate the location in 1940. A full restoration of the home began in 1947, proceeding as funds and ingenuity permitted.

The Poe Society provided tours of The Poe House from 1950 until 1977, when responsibility for the museum was assumed by the City of Baltimore. Since 1977, the Poe Society has returned its focus to annual commemorative lectures and associated publications. They continue to maintain a website and respond to as many inquires about Poe's life and works as possible. Each year, the society receives letters from around the world, particularly from school children seeking general guidance for reports and other projects on Poe. The Edgar Allan Poe Society is a non-profit organization with no paid employees, relying purely on voluntary efforts.

"The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore is especially proud to receive the honor of the Raven Award during the bicentennial of Poe's birth," says Jeffrey Savoye, secretary/treasurer of the Poe Society. "Generally, we have been quietly carrying out our mission since 1923, promoting the best information available about Poe's life and works. It is gratifying to find that, occasionally, our efforts do not go unrecognized."

The Poe House is now under the control of Baltimore City's Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) and continues to provide tours and education at the site.

"I'm honored beyond words to be chosen for such a prestigious award," says Jeff Jerome, curator of Poe House. "For 30 years I've been aggressively promoting the life and works of Eddie and this award has validated these efforts. The first thing I'm planning to do after receiving this award is to visit the Poe Grave and share it with Eddie."

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