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Janet Langhart Cohen Receives Conner Prairie's Spirit of the Prairie Award

Emmy-nominated journalist, author, and playwright Janet Langhart Cohen will receive the award at Conner Prairie's Spirit of the Prairie Awards Dinner on September 12. The award recognizes Hoosiers who have created a distinctly American story with their vision, passion, dedication and courage, and who exemplify the spirit of endeavor that created the rich and ever changing tapestry of the United States. Fellow Hoosier Heritage honorees will include international opera star and Indianapolis native Angela Brown; preservationist, philanthropist and Indiana native Richard E. Ford; and U.S. Senator Richard G. Lugar. In addition, Pleasant Rowland, founder of the Pleasant Company (now known as American Girls) will be honored with the inaugural History Innovator Award.

Langhart Cohen has been at the forefront of race relations throughout her life. Currently, she is taking the first steps on a national tour of her groundbreaking new play, *Anne & Emmett*. Based on an imaginary conversation between the world's most recognized Holocaust victim, fifteen year old Anne Frank, and a young black boy named Emmett Till, whose murder at age fourteen (for whistling at a white woman) sparked the civil rights movement, *Anne & Emmett* premiered to a sold-out audience at George Washington University's Jack Morton Auditorium in Washington, D.C. on June 12, 2009. News of the play was covered nationally and internationally, and now requests for performances are coming in from around the world.

Langhart Cohen is thrilled to be honored by Conner Prairie, the nation's most innovative outdoor history museum, and Indiana's only Smithsonian affiliate. She states, "I am truly honored by this award, and so proud to be receiving it at a history museum located in the state where I was born. History is important, and in finding innovative ways to teach it to our children, I believe we have the opportunity to change America's future. My play, *Anne & Emmett*, takes place in Memory. I wrote it for children, in hopes that in learning about the racial and religious hatred that is a sad part of our history and our present, our children can realize that it does not have to be a part of their future."

Janet Langhart Cohen is an Emmy nominated journalist, author, playwright and activist who dedicates her life to issues of race and reconciliation. She is the author of *From Rage to Reason: My Life in Two Americas*. With her husband, former Secretary of Defense, William S. Cohen, she co-authored *Love in Black and White* and their just released *Race & Reconciliation in America*, a transcription of their acclaimed 2008 Race & Reconciliation in America (RARIA) conference, a forum for people of goodwill, dedicated to the achievement of a more fair and just society embodied in the American Dream. Langhart Cohen, along with Attorney General Eric Holder, was recently invited to speak before the Senate Judiciary Committee on pending Hate Crimes Legislation. With her husband, she will host the third annual Race & Reconciliation Conference in Washington, D.C. in 2010.

Interviews, Speaker Requests, Play Booking, and Inquiries:

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