

# Robert Penn Warren Studies

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## Eleanor Clark Award

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The Eleanor Clark Award is presented each year at the Robert Penn Warren Circle's annual meeting to the graduate student whose conference paper demonstrates the highest achievement in research, composition, and the application of close reading.

Clark attended Vassar College where--along with Elizabeth Bishop, Mary McCarthy, and Eunice Clark (Eleanor's sister)--she founded *Con Spirito*, a collaboratively-edited, anonymously-published, and extremely short-lived (Feb - May 1933) literary magazine. The Vassar Encyclopedia claims "successfully called into question the established academic, political, and journalistic conventions and caused ripples in the Vassar community."

After college, Clark translated papers for Leon Trotsky's 1937 "trial," and, during World War II, worked in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS, predecessor to the CIA) before winning acclaim as a writer who, like her husband Robert Penn Warren, wrote prolifically and was not constrained by genre.

In 1953, she was a National Book Award finalist in nonfiction for *Rome and a Villa*, which *New York Times* critic Anatole Broyard referred to at its reissue as "perhaps the finest book ever to be written about a city."

In 1964, Clark won the National Book Award in Arts and Letters for *The Oysters of Lochmarioquer*, "the work of a wanderer, of an insatiably curious mind on the loose," according to her reviewer in the *New York Times*, June 28, 1964.

Clark produced five novels, five works of nonfiction, translations, essays, articles, reviews, children's books -- and two children, Rosanna and Gabriel.

On February 16, 1996, she passed away. Her [papers are collected](#) in the Archives at Yale.