

Robert Edsel

Author and Founder & President of the Monuments Men Foundation

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About

Robert Edsel, a former nationally ranked tennis player and pioneering oilman, is recognized today as one of the world's foremost advocates for art preservation. While living in Florence, he developed a great passion for art and architecture and became curious as to how so many of the monuments and great works of art survived the thefts and devastation of World War II. What began as a question evolved into an impassioned journey to unravel the secrets and heroics of the Monuments Men, the unsung heroes who saved the world's greatest art and cultural treasures for the benefit of civilization. Edsel has dedicated the last ten years of his life to the meticulous research of these cultural heroes, which culminated in Edsel's *New York Times* best-selling book, *The Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History*.

George Clooney wrote, directed and stars in the film adaptation of *The Monuments Men*, which hit theaters to rave reviews in February 2014. The film features an all-star cast including Clooney, Matt Damon, Cate Blanchett, Bill Murray, and Bob Balaban (*GTN Exclusive*).

At the Podium – [Learn more about Edsel's Speaking Program Here](#)

Robert Edsel delivers an enlightening and interactive presentation that audiences haven't seen from anyone else. He brings together history and culture on stage using slides of treasured monuments, never before seen works of art, and little known historical anecdotes. By bringing the story of the Monuments Men to the forefront—and shedding light on all they risked and sacrificed to preserve art and culture—Edsel compels audiences to explore the question: Is art worth a life?

Biography Details

In 2006, Edsel self-published his first book *Rescuing Da Vinci*, a detailed historical account which includes 460 photographs. Edsel is also the co-producer of the documentary, *The Rape of Europa*, based on the award winning book. The film opened in theatres across the U.S. in September 2007; in November 2008, the film was broadcast on PBS and subsequently received two Emmy nominations.

In June 2009, Edsel published *Beyond the Dreams of Avarice: The Hermann Goering Collection* by Nancy Yeide, an internationally recognized expert in World War II-era provenance research. The thoroughly documented catalogue is the first study devoted to Goering's entire paintings collection.

Robert Edsel's third book, *Saving Italy* (May 2013), follows two Monuments Men as they struggle to protect and save some of the world's greatest treasures located in Italy, including works by Leonardo Da Vinci and Michelangelo.



Edsel is the Founder and President of the Monuments Men Foundation for the Preservation of Art, a not-for-profit entity. The Foundation was one of ten recipients of the 2007 National Humanities Medal, the highest honor given by the United States for excellence in the Humanities field.

Edsel has a long history of philanthropic endeavors. He has served on the Board of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation (Dallas Chapter), the Advisory Board of St. Philip's School and Community Center, and as a volunteer at the Union Gospel Mission. Edsel founded the Cochran Chapel Homeowners Association in Dallas in 1993, serving as its President for the first three years. Additionally, in 2003, Edsel served as Chairman of a committee working to develop a master plan for the Turtle Creek corridor in Dallas.

In 2008, Edsel was a recipient of the President's Call to Service Award and the Hope for Humanity Award from the Dallas Holocaust Museum/Center for Education and Tolerance (DHM/CET). In 2009, Edsel became a member of the Advisory Board for the DHM/CET. In January 2010, Edsel was invited to become a trustee of The National World War II Museum in New Orleans, LA, and serves on the Executive Committee. In 2011, he was presented with the Texas Medal of Arts Award by Governor Rick Perry. He also received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from St. Mark's School of Texas.

Prior to his remarkable career in art preservation and philanthropy, Edsel began his business career in oil and gas exploration in 1981. His company, Gemini Exploration pioneered the use of horizontal drilling technology throughout the early 1990s. By 1995, Gemini had become the second most active driller of horizontal wells in the United States.