

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:
Lauren R. Dolan, 312-799-2161

BELOVED ORAL HISTORIAN AND AUTHOR
STUDS TERKEL DIES AT AGE 96

CHICAGO (October 31, 2008) – Studs Terkel, the first appointed Distinguished Scholar-in-Residence at the Chicago History Museum (CHM) died today at the age of 96. Studs Terkel, revered as the nation's leading and most prolific oral historian, amassed a wealth of stories in his more than fifty years as a radio host and author. Guided by his eclectic interest in culture and society and his burning curiosity about the world, Terkel has engaged in a lifelong conversation with America.

Terkel drew and expanded on his exceptional skill as a radio interviewer investigating historical, social events and cultural trends that lead to fourteen books. His talent for exploring life has brought Terkel numerous accolades. His first book, an introduction to American jazz, *Giants of Jazz*, (1957), was highly praised by The New York Times and Saturday Review. Subsequent books have been universally well received, winning the Pulitzer Prize in 1985, the Irita Van Doren Book Award, and two National Book Award nominations. Terkel has been the recipient of the Presidential National Humanities Medal, the Illinois Governor's Award for the Arts, and the Clarence Darrow Commemorative Award, and he has been cited by the Friends of Literature for his "unique contributions to the cultural life of Chicago." His radio programs have been honored with the Prix Italia, three Ohio State Awards, three Major Armstrong Awards, and the prestigious Peabody Award for excellence in broadcasting.

CHM owns approximately 6,000 reels and 5,000 hours of sound recordings of the Studs Terkel Program, donated to the Society by Terkel, WFMT, and the Radio Network in

-more-

1998. These recordings comprise the WFMT/Stud Terkel Archive. These sound recordings, in addition to the taped interviews conducted for the books, offer a unique and remarkably rich history of the ideas, knowledge, opinions, and beliefs of many influential thinkers, creative personalities, and political figures living in the second half of the twentieth century.

In 2005, this great oral historian was honored with *The Studs Terkel Center for Oral History* designated at the Chicago History Museum. *The Center* not only contains Terkel's extensive recordings, but will also include other oral history holdings. Many of them directly relate to exhibitions or research projects as well as oral history projects from other Chicago organizations. The collection includes, for example, oral histories from Chicago's Global Communities project, focusing on Mexican, Southeast Asian, Polish, and Asian Indian populations. Oral histories documenting various neighborhoods in Chicago including the Near West Side, East Garfield Park, Pilsen, Little Village, Rogers Park and the Polonia collection. There are 350 hours of interviews and typed transcripts relating to the lives of 140 Chicagoans of Polish decent who immigrated to America between 1880 and 1930. There is also a collection of recordings that touch on the gay and lesbian culture of Chicago from historian, Gregory Sprague.

CHM President, Gary T. Johnson remembers Terkel by saying, "Few writers have so successfully captured the essence of our daily lives as Studs. From the halls of government and corporate boardroom to the factory floor and the picket line, Studs has engaged thousands of citizens in conversation about their memories of the past and their hopes and dreams for the future. For Studs, there was not a voice that should not be heard, a story that could not be told. He believed that everyone had the right to be heard and had something important to say, he was there to listen, to chronicle, and to make sure their stories are remembered."

###

The Chicago History Museum, a major museum and research center for Chicago and American history, is located at 1601 N. Clark Street. The Museum can be reached by CTA buses 11, 22, 36, 72, 151, and 156. Parking is conveniently located one block north of the Museum at Clark and LaSalle Streets (enter on Stockton Drive). Admission to the Museum is \$14 adults with audio tour, \$12 seniors/students with audio tour, free for children 12 years and younger. General Admission is free on Mondays. Please call 312.642.4600 or visit us at www.chicagohistory.org. The Chicago History Museum is affiliated with the Chicago Historical Society and acknowledges the Chicago Park District's generous support of all the Museum's activities.

