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Nominees announced for the 2026 EANC Henrik Visnapuu Award

The Estonian American National Council (EANC), in partnership with the Estonian Writers' Union and Luunja Municipality, is pleased to announce the five nominees, selected from among 14 excellent candidates, for the 2026 EANC Henrik Visnapuu Award for Culture and Literature.

Estonian American National Council Announces the 2026 EANC Visnapuu Award Nominees (in alphabetical order):

Janika Kronberg has made a significant contribution to the study and preservation of Estonia literature in exile, thus strengthening cultural dialogue in Estonia. She has given talks in Estonian communities around the world, collected valuable archival material, and made new information available through audiovisual projects. Her most important essay collections include "*Rännud kuue teejuhiga*" (Travels with Six Guides), "*Hästi valitud sõbrad*" (Well-Chosen Friends) and "*Tiibhobu märgi all*" (Under the Winged Horse Sign), as well as "*Kröits ehk Ristikivi*" (Kröits or Ristikivi), compiled together with Brita Melts. His recent works include *Kolm Karli* (Three Karls, 2024) and *Loetud ja seostatud* (Read and Connected, 2025), which contain also previously unpublished essays.

Helga Merits – is nominated for the Henrik Visnapuu Literature and Culture Award for her lifelong work documenting the fate of Estonians displaced by WWII and promoting Estonian culture globally. She has created six films, shown in 12 countries, combining archival research with personal interviews. Key works include *Class of 1943* (2012), *The Story of the Baltic University* (2015), *Coming Home Soon* (2018), and *The Paradox of Seabrook Farms* (2024). Her films highlight the refugee experience of loss, resilience, and cultural continuity.

Juhani Salokannel is the foremost expert on Estonian literature in Finland. Over the course of fifty years, he has written numerous articles and reviews on Estonian literature in both Finnish and Estonian publications, published a study on literary relations between Finland and Estonia, written introductory works on Estonian literature and writers (Jaan Kross, A. H.



Tammsaare) and translated Estonian literature into Finnish (A.H. Tammsaare, J. Kross, T. Önnepalu, etc.). His first translations of Estonian literature appeared in the 1970s, and his most recent translation is A. H. Tammsaare's "*Põrgupõhja uue Vanapagana*" (The New Old Devil of Põrgupõhja), which will be published this year. In addition to promoting Estonian literature, Salokannel has contributed to the advancement of cultural relations between Estonia and Finland as the director of the Finnish Institute in Tallinn from 1997 to 2000 and as the director of the Tuglas Society in Helsinki from 2006 to 2012. As director of the Tuglas Society, Juhani Salokannel was also editor-in-chief of the society's cultural magazine *Elo*. Through his life's work, Juhani Salokannel has made Estonia bigger and better known in the world.

Reijo Roos – poetry collection "*tere kas tohib / tere kas võisõ*" and other activities.

Reijo Roos began working on preserving the Estonian-Finnish poetry bridge a few years ago by compiling the Estonian-Finnish poetry anthology "*Sinisild/Sinisilta*," which collected the experiences of poets from both sides of the border. Last year, he published his second poetry collection, "*tere kas tohib / tere kas võisõ*," which describes in three languages (Estonian, Finnish, and Võro) the mental world and life experiences of today's young Talsinki people who feel at home both in Estonia and in Finland. In addition, Reijo Roos has created the Estonian Writers' Union Youth Association and organized events on both sides of the border, given creative writing workshops, etc. Currently, maintaining the Finnish bridge is not only a creative and spiritual issue, but also a matter of defense policy and action. That is why we recommend recognizing Roos's contribution as a young creator and also as an organizer, a unifier, and one of the maintainers of today's poetry bridge.

Jaak Treiman -- Memoir „*Carried by a Magic Fan: Memoir of an Estonian Refugee Family*“ and life's work

Jaak Treiman has served as Estonia's diplomat in America for over 35 years, making him the longest-serving representative of our nation there. He was mentored by Estonia's original Consul General. His memoir is rooted in the legacy of World War II and framed by the birth, loss, and rebirth of Estonia. Chronicling a Baltic refugee family's escape to the United States, it spans nine decades and three continents. Drawing on archival documents and letters, Treiman tells a story shared by many: the pursuit of the American dream while preserving memories of homeland through political engagement, dissident collaboration, legal battles, and meetings with U.S. presidents.

This year, EANC and partners will award two awards: one lifetime achievement award and one for outstanding upcoming talent. The winners of the award will be announced on 2 January 2026, the anniversary of Henrik Visnapuu's birth.

This year's jury consists of literary scholar Epp Annus, PhD, representing EANC; poet Jürgen Rooste, representing the Estonian Writers' Union; and educator Toomas Liivamägi, representing Luunja Municipality.



Estonian American National Council
Eesti Rahvuskomitee Ühendriikides

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Read more about the EANC Visnapuu Award at www.estosite.org/eanc-henrik-visnapuu-award

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