

# Dayton Duncan

## ***"National Parks, America's Best Idea"***

Dayton Duncan is an award winning writer, documentary filmmaker, and author of ten books: *Out West: A Journey through Lewis & Clark's America* chronicles his retracing of the Lewis and Clark trail; it was a Book-of-the-Month Club alternate selection and finalist for the Western Writers of America's Spur Award. *Grass Roots: One Year in the Life of the New*



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*Hampshire Presidential Primary* is a unique look at presidential politics through the experiences of grass roots volunteers. *Miles from Nowhere: In Search of the American Frontier* examines the current conditions, history, and people of the most sparsely settled counties in the United States. *Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery*, published in November 1997; *Mark Twain*, published in November 2001; and *Horatio's Drive*, 2003, and *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*, are companion books to documentary films he wrote and produced. *Scenes of Visionary Enchantment: Reflections on Lewis & Clark* is a collection of essays released in conjunction with the Lewis and Clark bicentennial.

Two books for young readers were published in the fall of 1996: *People of the West*, named a Notable Children's Trade Book for 1996 by the National Council of Social Studies and the Children's Book Council, and *The West: An Illustrated History for Children*, which was selected by *The New Yorker* magazine for its "short list" of the 16 best children's books of 1996 and won a Western Heritage award from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame.

Articles of his have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*,

*American Heritage* magazine, *The Old Farmer's Almanac*, and many other publications.

Duncan has also been involved for many years with the work of documentary filmmaker Ken Burns. He was a consultant on Burns' award-winning series for public television, *The Civil War*, *Baseball* and *Jazz*. For a 12-hour series about the history of the American West, broadcast in 1996, Duncan was the co-writer and consulting producer. It won the Erik Barnouw Award from the Organization of American Historians.

He is the writer and producer of *Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery*, a four-hour documentary broadcast in November 1997. The film attained the second-highest ratings (following *The Civil War*) in the history of PBS, and won a Western Heritage award from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame, a Spur Award from the Western Writers of America, and a CINE Golden Eagle, as well as many other honors. He is the co-writer and producer of *Mark Twain*, a four-hour film biography of the great American humorist which was broadcast on PBS in 2002. *Horatio's Drive*, about the first transcontinental automobile trip, which he wrote and produced, won a Christopher Award. His most recent film with Burns is *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*, which he wrote and produced.

In politics, Duncan served as chief of staff to New Hampshire Gov. Hugh Gallen; deputy national press secretary for Walter Mondale's presidential campaign in 1984; and national press secretary for Michael Dukakis' 1988 presidential campaign. President Clinton appointed him chair of the American Heritage Rivers Advisory Committee and Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt appointed him as a director of the National Park Foundation. In the spring of 2009, along with Burns, the director of the National Park Service named Duncan as an Honorary Park Ranger, an honor bestowed on fewer than 50 people in history.

Born and raised in Indianola, Iowa, Duncan graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1971 with a degree in German literature, and was also a

fellow at Harvard's Shorenstein Center for Press, Politics and Public Policy. He holds honorary doctorates from Franklin Pierce University, Keene State College and Drake University. For the last thirty-eight years, he has lived New Hampshire, where he makes his home in the small town of Walpole with his wife, Dianne, and their two children.