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**GUIDES ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK CITY (GANYC) TO HONOR LEE GELBER,  
“DEAN OF NEW YORK TOUR GUIDES,” AS INAUGURAL GUIDING SPIRIT AWARD WINNER**  
*Legendary NYC Guide to be Feted at 2016 GANYC Apple Awards on March 7*

NEW YORK, January 27 — **The Guides Association of New York City (GANYC)** today announced **Lee Gelber**, the “dean of New York Tour Guides,” will be honored as its 2016 Guiding Spirit Award winner. Gelber will be presented with the award at the second-annual **GANYC Apple Awards** ceremony on **Monday, March 7, 2016** at **The Leonard Nimoy Thalia at Symphony Space** in Manhattan. These annual awards honor organizations and individuals that encourage and promote New York City tourism, culture and preservation while supporting the work and contributions of professional New York City tour guides.

Gelber’s two-plus decades of service to the tour guiding industry epitomizes why GANYC is introducing the Guiding Spirit Award at its second-annual Apple Awards. He earned the nickname “Dean of Guides” from *New York Times* Practical Traveler columnist Betsy Wade after attending one of his weekly tour-guide-training seminars. He trained guides at Gray Line New York and taught a course at the Learning Annex entitled “How to Be a New York City Tour Guide” for more than five years. He also served on the faculty of NYC & Co.’s Tour Guide Enhancement Program.

A member of GANYC since the mid-1990s, Gelber served as co-president of the association from 2007-2009, helping stabilize the organization after several years of upheaval. He is a long-standing member of GANYC’s Government Relations Committee and is a regular contributor to the GANYC newsletter, *Guidelines*.

“The Guiding Spirit Award honors an experienced guide who has not only gained great stature in our industry and throughout New York City, but who has given generously of him/herself to our professional community,” stated **GANYC President Michael Dillinger**. “To truly earn the title of Guiding Spirit, a guide must demonstrate leadership and mentorship for other guides, share the craft of touring and the contagious passion for the city with the next generation, and make New York a better place for travelers and residents alike. With this in mind, Lee Gelber is the perfect choice to be the inaugural recipient of GANYC’s Guiding Spirit Award.”

Gelber currently is the principal of Outside In Tours and Here is New York Tours, the latter a nod to the classic E.B. White book “Here is New York.” He cites the book as having a huge influence in his personal and professional life — he first read it while a high school student at DeWitt Clinton High School in his native Bronx, sparking his love for exploring New York City. His career in tourism began in 1993 as a double-decker bus guide for the now-defunct New York Apple Tours, following a distinguished career as an executive in the toy and games industry. He also worked for Gray Line New York and City Sights NY in several capacities, including tour guide and tour development in addition to guide training. He is a two-time contributor to the acclaimed anthology “City Secrets – New York,” and is currently

## Dean of New York Tour Guides Honored with GANYC Guiding Spirit Award - 2

working on two book projects: “What’s That Edifice, Rex – an informal guide to architectural gems and clunkers of New York,” and “Ghosts of Shopping Past,” a necrology of New York retailing.

“Guiding has given me many hours of enjoyment and intellectual stimulation — I still discover wonderful nuggets and tidbits about this great city,” Gelber said, adding that this second career finally allowed him to put both his history major and his Army specialty as a truck dispatcher to use. “My involvement in GANYC has enabled me to learn, provided a great level of professional respect, and allowed me to make new friends as we share a love affair with our great city.”

When not leading or researching tours throughout New York, the Queens College alumnus spends his time rooting for his beloved Yankees, listening to jazz and adding to his prolific fountain pen collection. He is a patron subscriber of the New York Philharmonic and member of the Alexander Hamilton Circle of the Museum of the City of New York (which is a 2016 Apple Awards Nominee in the category of Outstanding Achievement in Support of New York City Culture).

“Being honored as the first recipient of the Guiding Spirit Award by GANYC has provided a great rush of emotions — I’m touched, honored, thrilled and above all most appreciative of the special tribute from my colleagues and friends,” Gelber added. “It will be an unforgettable night.”

The 2016 GANYC Apple Awards ceremony will present awards in 13 categories, including Outstanding Achievements in New York City culture, tourism, preservation, food, website, books (fiction and nonfiction), essay/article/series writing, museum exhibition, radio/podcast and photography.

The 44 nominees were determined by the GANYC Awards Committee and announced in December. The GANYC membership will vote on the nominees through mid-January, with the winners announced at the second-annual awards ceremony on March 7, 2016 at the Leonard Nimoy Thalia in Manhattan. The event kicks off with a red-carpet event and cocktail party at 6:30 pm. Doors to the theater will open at 7:30 pm, and the ceremony will commence at 8 pm.

Tickets to the 2016 GANYC Apple Awards are being sold by Symphony Space and are available by visiting [www.symphonyspace.org/event/9115/Theatre/2016-ganyc-apple-awards](http://www.symphonyspace.org/event/9115/Theatre/2016-ganyc-apple-awards).

For more on the 2016 GANYC Apple Awards, including a list of nominees and sponsorship opportunities, please visit [www.GANYC.org/2016-ganyc-apple-awards](http://www.GANYC.org/2016-ganyc-apple-awards).

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**ABOUT GANYC:** The Guides Association of New York City (GANYC) is New York City’s professional tour guides association. Founded in 1974 by licensed guides for licensed guides, GANYC is one of the oldest and most active tour-guide associations in America. All GANYC members are licensed by the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs. For more information about GANYC, please visit [www.ganyc.org](http://www.ganyc.org).