

"Collecting folklore is great and necessary work for the preservation of our memory and heritage, because in an instant, everything becomes history and deserves to be preserved," President Toomas Hendrik Ilves said, as he presented the Folklore Prizes at the Estonian Literary Museum.

The laureates included Anna Rinne, the oldest folklore correspondent in Estonia, who is five years older than the Republic of Estonia; Jaan Malin, a collector from the younger generation, who also records modern subjects; and Maret Lehto, who records folklore and folk tales on Muhu Island.

The Head of State separately thanked Eda Kalmre, who instructs and encourages the archive's correspondents, and who preserves the tradition of collecting folklore.

"The preservation of oral stories and memories and writing them down—this a mark of a cultural people," said President Ilves. "By collecting folklore, we appreciate and preserve those wisdoms, experiences as well as warnings that are the basis for our value judgments and upon which our state is founded. In the maelstrom of change, we must remember that this is the guarantee of our survival. I hope that we remember this as we look to the future from the ninetieth anniversary of our state."

The Head of State Award for the best folklore collector, which was established in pre-war Estonia, was reinstated in 1993 at the initiative of the Estonian Literary Museum with the support of the President's Cultural Foundation. The size of the monetary prize is determined by the Cultural Foundation at the recommendation of the Estonian Literary Museum, and it is presented by the President of the Republic.

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