

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THE INTERNATIONAL LITERACY ASSOCIATION HONORS RECIPIENTS OF THE 2015  
ILA AWARDS FOR ACHIEVEMENT IN LITERACY INSTRUCTION AND RESEARCH**

NEWARK, Del. (August 4, 2015) —The 2015 International Literacy Association (ILA) Awards for achievement in literacy instruction and research were presented to a distinguished group of members and councils during the ILA 2015 Conference held from July 18–20 in St. Louis, Mo. The annual ILA Awards recognize members and councils who are working actively to advance the field of literacy and reading in their schools and communities.

“We are thrilled to recognize the important contributions of the recipients of the 2015 ILA Awards,” said Marcie Craig Post, Executive Director, International Literacy Association. “The impressive work they are doing in their schools and communities is critical to ILA’s mission of advancing literacy for all.”

**Jerry Johns**, distinguished teaching professor emeritus at Northern Illinois University, received the **William S. Gray Citation of Merit** for his outstanding contributions to the field of reading. Johns served as president of ILA (then the International Reading Association) from 2002–2003, and was also a past president of the Illinois Reading Council, the Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers, the College Reading Association and the Northern Illinois Reading Council. He has authored or coauthored nearly 300 articles, monographs, research studies and books on literacy.

**The Special Service Award** given periodically for unusual and distinguished service to ILA was awarded to **Carrice Cummins**, endowed professor of education at Louisiana Tech University in Ruston, La., and past president of ILA (then the International Reading Association) from 2012–2013. Cummins also served as a member of the ILA Board of Directors from 2003–2006, as well a number of ILA committees and special interest groups, including the Teacher Education Task Force and the Early Childhood Commission.

**Theresa A. Deeney**, associate professor at University of Rhode Island, received the **Jerry Johns Outstanding Teacher Educator in Reading Award**, given to college or university teachers of reading methods or reading-related courses. For over twenty years, Deeney served as teacher, principal, reading specialist and consultant. Her work currently focuses on teacher education and instruction for students who struggle. She works with teachers in area schools, and has published work on literacy assessment, literacy instruction and clinical practice.

**The Arbuthnot Award** for a member engaged in teacher and/or librarian preparation in reading at the undergraduate and/or graduate level was awarded to **Patricia Austin**, professor of children’s literature, graduate coordinator and curator of the children’s literature library collection at the University of New Orleans. A former editor of the *Journal of Children’s Literature*, she has served on the Notables Committee for Language Arts as a longtime book reviewer for Booklist, and has been the children’s book review columnist for the *Louisiana reading journal* for 25 years.

**The Technology and Reading Awards** for educators of grades K–12 who are making an innovative contribution to the use of technology in education was awarded to **Libby Curran**,

special education teacher at Richards Elementary School in Newport, N.H., for the application “Reading Train: Learn To Read Books, Songs & Games,” and **Carolyn Fortuna**, English teacher at Franklin High School in Franklin, Mass., for “Reading Meets a 1:1 Digital Environment in Senior High School English.” Curran’s app combines easy fiction and informational picture books with text-based quiz games and songbook rewards to build confidence, develop reading skills and ensure success in reading independently. Fortuna’s innovative digital learning approach integrates structured reading activities that are grounded in print, audio, digital, visual and video modalities.

**Outstanding Dissertation of the Year** was awarded to **Meghan Liebfreund**, assistant professor of literacy in the Department of Elementary Education at Towson University in Towson, Md. for her North Carolina State University dissertation, “Success with Informational Text Comprehension: An Examination of Underlying Factors.” Her research reiterates the importance of educators examining informational text comprehension for different groups of readers and the value of using multiple influencing factors to increase understanding.

The **ILA Exemplary Reading Program Award** was presented to 12 schools for outstanding reading and language arts programs at all grade levels. In addition, six ILA councils received the **ILA Advocacy Award** for their demonstrated efforts to impact educational policy and legislation through effective advocacy at the local, state/provincial and/or national levels.

For a full list of award recipients, visit [Literacy Daily](#). For additional information on ILA Awards, [click here](#).

## **ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL LITERACY ASSOCIATION**

The International Literacy Association (ILA) is a global advocacy and membership organization dedicated to advancing literacy for all through its network of more than 300,000 literacy educators, researchers and experts across 75 countries. With 60 years of experience in the field, ILA believes in the transformative power of literacy to create more successful societies, healthy communities and prosperous economies. ILA collaborates with partners across the world to develop, gather and disseminate high-quality resources, best practices and cutting-edge research to empower educators, inspire students and inform policymakers. The International Literacy Association publishes several peer-reviewed journals, including *The Reading Teacher*, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* and *Reading Research Quarterly*. For more information, visit [literacyworldwide.org](http://literacyworldwide.org).

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