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INTERNATIONAL LITERACY ASSOCIATION NAMES STEVE GRAHAM RECIPIENT OF 2021 WILLIAM S. GRAY CITATION OF MERIT

Awards and grants winners also announced for outstanding research, service to the field and more

Newark, Del. (July 1, 2021) — The International Literacy Association (ILA) today announced the recipients of its 2021 awards and grants, including the William S. Gray Citation of Merit—ILA’s highest honor—which was awarded to Arizona State University’s (ASU) Steve Graham.

The William S. Gray Citation of Merit honors a nationally or internationally known individual for their outstanding contributions to multiple facets of literacy development—research, theory, practice and policy. Past recipients have included P. David Pearson, Roger Farr and Jeanne Chall.

Graham, an ILA member since 2007 and the Mary Emily Warner Professor in the Division of Educational Leadership at ASU’s Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, is a leading expert on the educational psychology of writing and the connections between reading and writing. His research, spanning over 30 years, focuses on identifying the factors that contribute to writing development and difficulties, developing and validating effective instructional procedures for teaching writing and the use of technology to enhance writing performance.

“The news that I was awarded the William S. Gray Citation of Merit came the way that news so often comes today—over the web, and in this case, through email. I looked once, and then a second time, and finally on the third look, I was literally dancing on the moon,” Graham said. “I learned to read with Dick and Jane books, which Gray played a part in developing, and I have always admired his careful and methodical approach to research and instruction. I am honored to be a member of the impactful group of scholars who previously received this recognition.”

Along with being a current member of ILA’s Literacy Research Panel, Graham is a frequent conference presenter and contributor to ILA’s journals. He is coauthor of the *Handbook of Writing Research*, *Handbook of Learning Disabilities*, *Powerful Writing Strategies for All Students* and more. He is the former editor of several journals, including *Exceptional Children*, *Journal of Writing Research* and the *Journal of Educational Psychology*.

Graham has also served as an advisor to a variety of organizations, including UNESCO, National Institutes of Health, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative and National Writing Project. He was elected to the Reading Hall of Fame in 2018.

“Steve’s work is influencing veteran and emerging scholars, classroom teachers and school administrators, policymakers and legislators,” said ILA Executive Director Marcie Craig Post. “We are thankful for his service to our organization and the field, and we are honored to present him with this award.”

Joining Graham in this year’s ILA awards and grants program are nine other educators and literacy leaders, including Yukie Toyama, University of California, Berkeley. Toyama received the Timothy & Cynthia Shanahan Outstanding Dissertation Award for her dissertation, “What Makes Reading

Difficult? An Investigation of the Contribution of Passage, Task, and Reader Characteristics on Item Difficulty, Using Explanatory Item Response Models.”

Other award recipients include the following:

- Corwin Literacy Leader Award, presented to Connie Obrochta, Evanston/Skokie School District 65, Illinois
- Diane Lapp & James Flood Professional Collaborator Award, presented to Sonia Q. Cabell, Florida State University, and Tricia Zucker, University of Texas Health Science Center
- Jeanne S. Chall Research Fellowship, presented to Lori Bruner, Michigan State University
- Jerry Johns Outstanding Teacher Educator in Reading Award, presented to Kelly Wissman, University at Albany, State University of New York
- Leaders Inspiring Readers Award, sponsored by Achieve 3000, presented to Holly Lane, University of Florida
- Maryann Manning Special Service Award, presented to Kathy Champeau, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
- Steven A. Stahl Research Grant, presented to Cortney Dilgard, Jacksonville City Schools, Alabama

The full list of awards/grants and recipients can be found [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 128 countries. With over 60 years of experience, ILA has set the standard for how literacy is defined, taught and evaluated. ILA's Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals 2017 provides an evidence-based benchmark for the development and evaluation of literacy professional preparation programs. 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. ILA publishes *The Reading Teacher*, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* and *Reading Research Quarterly*, which are peer reviewed and edited by leaders in the field. For more information, visit literacyworldwide.org.

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