

ABOUT THE AWARD

The International Literacy Association (ILA) William S. Gray Citation of Merit is reserved for those ILA members who have made outstanding contributions to multiple facets of literacy development, including but not limited to research, theory, and practice. It is the highest individual honor awarded by ILA.

ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Candidates for the William S. Gray Citation of Merit must have made outstanding contributions to the literacy field in both theory and practice. In addition, candidates must have

- Produced definitive material or undertaken important restructuring of existing material critical to literacy teaching and learning across the globe
- Served in several important capacities, including but not limited to researcher, scholar, academic, clinician, and/or school-based educator
- Been a notable influence through publications, presentations, and new media (e.g., webinars, videos, podcasts, blogs, and other online platforms)
- Demonstrated leadership in and service to the field throughout their career

To be eligible, a candidate must be an ILA member in good standing and maintain active membership through **June 30, 2028**.

NOMINATION PROCESS

Nominations must be submitted through [an online application process](#). Supporting documentation is required and may be supplied in the body of the form, as a PDF attachment, and/or by linking to relevant material (such as a CV) provided that the source is reputable and up to date. Be sure to read the nomination form carefully and include all requested information. Complete submissions are crucial for a thorough and fair evaluation process, ensuring that all candidates are judged based on the full scope of their contributions.

Candidates may self-nominate or be nominated by a colleague. Please note that **candidates who have been nominated by a colleague are no longer required to complete a separate application**.

Once submitted, nominations remain active for a total of three (3) years. Should a candidate be nominated more than once, each individual nomination will still expire three (3) years after it was first submitted. In order to maintain eligibility during the three years, an active ILA membership must also be maintained. Note that nominees/applicants are encouraged to submit a new application if they have updated information they would like to share.

Recipients of the ILA William S. Gray Citation of Merit are not eligible for future consideration. Please review the list of [past honorees](#) before submitting a nomination.

SUBMISSION TIMELINE

Nominations are accepted on a rolling basis. To be considered for the 2026 William S. Gray Citation of Merit, **nomination forms must be completed and received no later than February 1, 2027, at 11:59 p.m. ET.** Applicants will be notified of the results before June 30, 2027.

SELECTION PROCESS

The ILA William S. Gray Citation of Merit Committee will review the completed applications and submitted supporting materials of all eligible candidates. Members of the ILA William S. Gray Citation of Merit Committee may also choose to put forth additional candidates for consideration during the discussion and deliberation phases. Please note that all applications—self-submitted, nominated, and internal—will be given equal consideration.

Decisions will be made based on the candidate's body of work and the impact of their contributions. Additional factors such as timeliness, global influence, relevance, and representation may also apply.

Please direct any questions about eligibility, selection criteria, the nomination process, and/or the selection process to ILAAwards@reading.org.